At that stage of the struggle for the Mountainous Karabakh independence started after Marshall Stalin’s generous present of this Armenian populated part in the Caucases under the jurisdiction of Soviet Azerbaijan, the Supreme Council of the self-proclaimed Republic of the Mountainous Karabakh was located in the building of the former Executive Committee of the Autonomous Region of Mountainous Karabakh facing the greens in the round square of Piatachok (‘5-kopeck coin’ in Russian).

The Press-Center by the SC of RMK was one room with one window, one door and two sizable desks (yes, put to form a capital letter ‘T’) on the second floor to the right. The staff comprised Press-Center boss Guegham, hi s secretary Aghavnee, the operator of the professional video camera Bennic and the analyst Sehrguey.

The room was densely packed with cigarette smoke and multi-national correspondent, both in groups and solitary, equipped with photo- and video cameras, rucksacks and other travelling necesities who arrived from the former brotherly camp of socialism and more fortunate European countries to witness that the old bogey of the USSR was no more there. Though, it was clear even from outside that the great Union of the Republics of victorious Socialism with Human Face (to distinguish it from Sweden counterfeit, or the repulsive Made-in-China sham by Chairman Mao) got safely palsied, collapsed and desintegrated, yet it was interesting to check how fare the Mountainous Karabakh Armenians who were the first to throw the spanner under the hood of the Soviet terror machine and rallied for the mass meetings on the Stepanakert main square in front of the Regional Committee of the CPSU building filled it to the brim posters of the clenched fist aloof and their own live fists over the heads in the chanting crowd “We de-mand!” ,“We de-mand!”. To keep the internationally practices for such occasions, the Regional Executive Committee made the decision to send to both Baku and Moscow petition to transfer the region under the jurisdiction of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. Everyday rallies on the main square went on until there had come the response. No water cannons, neither tear gas was used to disperse the meetings in Stepanakert. The development unheard of in all the time under the Soviet rule was answered in another city. The Sumgait tragedy. The three days and nights of pogroms in the city 36 kilometers, 42 minutes, from the Baku-City the capital of Azerbaijan.

3 days of killing, rape, torture, dropping people from their apartment-blocks balconies, pulling with motorbikes noosed baby corpses, you name it. It was unthinkable, it could have happened in somewhat Ruanda, or Jacarta but not in our mutual united Homeland. 3 days and nights of genocide when they break the door of your home, do unspeakable things things to your family before your eyes and finally murder you just because your last name ending is ‘-ian’. Ironically, there were ‘-ians’ in the gangs of beasts too because Sumgait, the city of youthful oil-drillers, was built by zeks many of whom stayed living there having done their time. In the best tradition of Soviet urban planning: Zona breaks the ground for a town to grow up. So, ex-zeks and ‘chemists’ were set loose, lots of ordinary Azeri citizens joined the crowd other Azeri citizens were giving shelter and hide-outs to their neighbors of Armenian origin. Humanity and nationality are different things.

After 3 days-and-nights military troops of the Soviet army restored order in the city of Sumgait. End that year Mikhail Gorbachov was elected the first President of the USSR which at once disintegrated into a number of independent states because in too many places people started to ,“We de-mand!”. In short, they became independent states, The USSR collapsed and the Armenians of the Mountainous Karabakh had to defend their land and lives in the war for independence while all kinds of correspondents from the international (mostly European) mass-media arrived from Yerevan (the capital of the independent Republic of Armenia) to Stapanakert (the capital of the self-proclaimed-but-never-recognized Republic of the Mountainous Karabakh) by choppers flown at night to avoid too much shooting at in the toombs and hand their business cards to Guegam to be dumped in the drawer in his desk with heaps of the like pieces of paper.

Besides, by the same night flights, yet seldomer, there arrived activists of different political parties that hugely proliferated in the former regions and capitals of the former USSR to enhance their personal political rating, like, ‘I have even been in the warring Karabakh!’. There were neither hotels nor restaurants in Stepanakert but lots of artillery and rocket shelling plus aviation bombardments at that time so the visitors of both kinds did not stay for long (except the for the 2-meter tall blonde of a Viking from Holland who lost his way in the toombs and was captured by the Azeri combatants but a week later returned to the same forest and directed along the road to the nearest Armenian village because the representatives of mass-media and international community presented the Baku authorities with strong demarches on his behalf).

The champion of long-staying became an engineer from Moscow who’s arrived just to see his relatives. He managed to stay in Karabakh for about 10 days. Because his parents moved to Moscow when he was just a child, during his marathon stay he sometimes visited the Press-Center room to pull a chair from the row along the wall and draw it to my end of the subordinate desk so as to chat in Russian which, practically, became his native tongue while the rest Check-Greek-Hollandian-Estonian-(you-name-it) crowd sat around Guegam’s desk smoking their cigarettes and exchanging enthusiastic clues in Mass-Median…Oh! Sorry! The Hollander was a non-smoker.

Anyway, the engineer wanted a gossip without an accent and the relatives he came on a visit to could not provide such a treat for him. Though, there might have been a certain hidden agenda as well because he was pestered with a question he couldn’t find an answer to – Why was he here? So he turned to me, like, for the help of a specialist. An analyst should know answers, right?

The case developed as follows: one of many engineers at one of many plants in Moscow, an almost autohtonous Moscovite Armenian, at the end of a working day peacefully leaves his plant through the check-entrance to be met with an invitation to get seated into a waiting black Volga car and taken to the KGB (he did not get accustomed by that time to pronounce FSS). In a spacey office there he was politely asked to pay a visit to his relatives in Stepanakert, all his travel expences would be met, the CEO of his plant already signed the papers to present him a leave for an unspecified stretch. And what’s his mission there? No mission whatsoever, except staying by his dear relatives he missed so much since being taken to Moscow at the age of four…And now he’s here, hand-secondly swallowing all that cigarette smoke, looking into my eyes and asking through the mutual hubbab : ‘What for?’

Two days after the Arthur’s murder he dropped in to say good-bye because they signaled him to come back to Moscow and off he went taking away the puzzlement in his eyes: ‘Why am I here?’

For my personal usage, I handled him ‘a weather baloon’, they use such balloons to send special devices to upper atmosperical layers for recording meteorological state at those layers. When back to Mocow, he’d get another free ride and a polite conversation in the spacey office. A quite desultory talk of this and that and nothing in particular because a weather balloon is not supposed to know what namely registered the recording devices. But then the talk might turn out a quite short one, a pure formality what to go deeper for if the mission got accomplished? Well done, brunette from the Armenian KGB…damn!..well, Committe of National Security of the independent Republic of Armenia.

A confidential session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh is under way. The Mountainous Karabakh got locked within unsurpassable blocade, Azeri forces widely apply GRAD installations for bombardments of Stepanakert, villages change hands in stubborn fights, especially bad news – the enemy acquires