

THE KARABAKH ISSUE IN RELATION WITH ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN (1918-1920)

Nigar GOZALOVA

Supreme Attestation Commission Under the
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan



Introduction

To understand the causes of events related to the Karabakh issue, one should consider the historical background and causes of the Armenian-Azerbaijan contradictions in the region. Like every other conflict, the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict also has its roots. In order to reach a better understanding of its essence, it is necessary to shed light on the core of the conflict, for which we have to go back to the XVIII. and early XIX. centuries, as the very origins of the conflict lay there. Its basis starts with the first quarter of XVIII. century military and political expansion of Russia in the South Caucasus, where the Armenian element was assigned the role of social support for the Russians in the region as well as the Christian outpost in the fight against Muslim Turkey and Iran. After winning two Russo-Iranian wars (1804-1813; 1826-1828) and Russo-Turkish wars (1828-1829) Russia ultimately augmented its power in the South Caucasus. Thus, the special article of Turkmanchay (Article XV) and Adrianopole (or Edirne) (Article XIII) created a favorable atmosphere for the mass resettlement of Turkish and Iran Armenians to the South Caucasus territories, which started the process lasting for a century.¹

¹ In 1978, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh celebrated the 150th anniversary of their resettlement, and in honor of this, a monument was erected in the village of Leninavan (Maragashen) of the Mardakert (Agdara) region.

Having established its control on the Georgian lands, Russia at the beginning of XIX. century approached to the borders of Azerbaijan. During the course of long negotiations, Russians threatened Azerbaijani khanates and demanded that they consider the sad experience of Ganja² and, taking into consideration the military might of Russia, accept its protection without resistance. In that circumstance, Azerbaijani rulers were forced to accept the demands of the Russian military authorities. On May 14, 1805, between the representatives of the Russian commands in the Caucasus and Ibrahim Khalil Khan of Karabakh, the Kurekchay Treaty was signed, which officially transferred the Karabakh khanate under Russia's dominion.³

The conquest of the strategically important Karabakh khanate in practice meant the beginning of the complete conquest of all the khanates of South Caucasus. The mountainous part of this khanate allowed the effective control over all the western regions of South Caucasus. Appreciating the importance of the annexation of Karabakh to Russia, General P.D. Tsitsianov, after the conclusion of the Kurekchay Treaty of 1805, informed the Russian Emperor that Karabakh, by its geographical location, was the gateway to Iran.⁴

After the first Russo-Iranian war (1804-1813) which resulted in the occupation of all South Caucasus excluding the Nakhchivan and Irevan khanates, the Russian colonial control system was established in the South Caucasus. Thus, the commander-in-chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus, A. Yermolov (1816-1827), abolished all of the khanates of South Caucasus. Thereby, the Karabakh khanate was liquidated in 1822,⁵ so the Kurekchay Treaty was abolished seventeen years later (despite the fact that according to Article 10 of the treaty, this was due to last indefinitely). At the same time, even during those seventeen years, when this treaty was in force, it was violated, mainly by Russia, including by the brutal murder of Ibrahim Khalil Khan and his family members in 1806.⁶ Despite all this, after the Russian conquest, Karabakh continued to be one of the socio-economic, political, and cultural centers of Azerbaijan, as one of its inseparable part, and progressed in the general direction of development of the country's history.

2 General P.D. Tsitsianov, who commanded Russian forces in the Caucasus, laid siege to Ganja, the largest of the cities of Azerbaijan, in March 1803. Having overcome the serious resistance of the population led by Javad Khan, Russian forces entered the city on January 3, 1804. The capital of khanate was renamed to Elisabethpol by Russian government.

3 AKAK, т. II, с.705; Left in a desperate situation, the treaty was signed a week later, May 21, 1805 with the Sheki Khan, Selim Khan, and December 25, 1805 with the Shemakha Khan, Mustafa Khan. (AKAK, т. II, с.646, 674)

4 AKAK, т. II, с.698.

5 *Записки А.П.Ермолова. 1798-1826*, (Москва: Высшая школа, 1991), 338, 366, 382.

6 For more detail, see - Atkin Muriel, "The strange death of Ibrahim Khalil Khan of Qarabagh", *Iranian Studies*, Published in the USA, Vol. XII, no.1-2 (1979):79-107.

Karabakh as a part of the Russian Empire (*administrative division and resettlement policy*)

After the liquidation of the Karabakh khanate, the region was renamed the Karabakh province or, officially, the *Karabakh region*, and was considered as a Muslim province; together with other territories of Azerbaijan, was administered by the head of the military district of the “Transcaucasian Muslim Countries”. In 1840, the territory of the Karabakh province was transformed into Shusha *uyezd* (district). This administrative unit became part of the *Caspian region*. Since 1868, Shusha *uyezd* was part of Elizavetpol (Ganja) province.⁷ In 1868, the Zangezur *uyezd*, and in 1883 Javanshir and Karyagin (Jabrayil) *uyezds* were established. In 1917, in the period of the Provisional Government in Russian Empire, Shusha *uyezd* as a part of the Elizavetpol province was subordinate to the Special Transcaucasian Committee (‘Особому Закавказскому Комитету’), and later as a part of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920) was included in the Karabakh general-governorship.⁸

The first official document providing detailed information on the ethnic composition of the population of Karabakh⁹ was the “Description of the Karabakh Province” prepared by the Russian administration in 1823,¹⁰ reflecting statistical information about the population of this region and its ethno-confessional composition. In the Karabakh region, there were 600 registered villages, (450 Muslim, i.e. Turkic, and 150 Christian). Thus from, 20,095 families lived in Karabakh, 15729 of which were Muslims and 4366 (21.7%) were Christians.

With the conquest of the Russian Empire of the South Caucasus in the early XIX. century, there emerged a new political situation. The Russian government began to encourage the resettlement of Armenians to the newly obtained “Russian” lands in the South Caucasus. Following the second Russo-Iranian war of 1826-1828, the question of how to keep the newly annexed regions secure was vital for the Russian imperial strategy in the region. The Russian Empire’s policy was to force out the numerous local Turkish populations with the help of the Christian minority

7 Under the new provision of December 9, 1867, the South Caucasus was divided into five provinces (*guberniya*): Kutaisi, Tiflis, Irevan, Elizavetpol, and Baku. In the Tiflis and Baku provinces, six counties were included, and five counties to the Irevan, Elizavetpol and Kutais provinces. *Guberniya* (provinces) were formed according to the following principle: the territory of the county should not exceed 6500 sq. verst (Old Russian measurement), and while the population should not exceed 80,000 people. This administrative-territorial division, with minor changes, was preserved until 1917.

8 Источники по Азербайджанской истории, (Баку: Изд-во АГУ, 1989):276.

9 According to Russian sources, for 1810, the population of Karabakh was 12,000 families, including 9500 Turkic-Muslim and 2500 Christian. (АКАК, т. IV, с.38-39) Considering that Muslim families traditionally had more in composition than Armenian families, the ratio of Armenians and Turks in the absolute dimension was in favor of the latter.

10 For more detail see - Описание Карабахской провинции, (составленное на 1823г. по распоряжению главноуправляющего в Грузии Ермолова, действительным статским советником Могилевским и полковником Ермоловым 2-м), (Тифлис: Типография Управления Наместника Кавказа, 1866).

(Armenians), as they considered them unreliable. This process of resettling Armenians was an integral part of the Russian colonial policy; Russian government began resettling the “loyal” population, namely, Armenians to newly obtained lands bordering Qajar Iran and Ottoman Empire to strengthen its positions in the region.

The policy of the Russian Empire aimed at creating a socio-ethnic support of the Armenians, led to the strengthening of the Christian element in Karabakh. So, the essence of the conflict observed today can be traced all the way back to those times.

According to the official Russian sources, of 8249 Armenian families resettled from Qajar Iran,¹¹ 6946¹² were resettled in the “Armenian region”,¹³ 1303 families were resettled in Karabakh and Zangezur. According to the Russian ethnographer and historian S.P. Zelinsky, with the exception of the population of the three Zangezur villages, the residents of all Armenian villages were resettled from the border provinces of Qajar Iran - Karadag, Germeli, Khoy, and Salmas.¹⁴

The fact that Karabakh became the main direction of Armenian immigration is evidenced by the fact that:

“Unexpected resettlement of people in the newly conquered region, caused in them a lack of bread. At this time, Lazarev (who led the process of resettlement of Armenians from Qajar Iran) was instead instructed to try to direct the path of the settlers of the Khanates of Nakhichevan and Irevan, into the Khanate of Karabakh, where it was expected to find abundant and reliable reserves.”¹⁵

According to official Russian sources, a total of 1144 families or about 90,000 persons from the territories of Erzurum, Mush, Beyazit, Kara and Akhaltsy Pashalyks (provinces) of the Ottoman Empire were resettled.¹⁶ Thus, as a result

11 This number is based on the official information of the report on the results of the resettlement activity made by L. Lazarev who led the resettlement organization, which he presented to the Minister of Internal Affairs, A.A. Zakrevsky. (РГИА Ф. 383. Оп. 29. Д.539, л.12 (об))

12 Arzumanlı Vaqif Minad oğlu and Mustafa Nazim *Tarixin qara səhifələri: Deportasiya. Soyqırım. Qaçqınlıq*, (Bakı: Qartal, 1998): 25-32.

13 On March 21, 1828, Nicholas I (1825-1855) issued the special decree on creating the so-called “Armenian oblast” on the territory of Irevan and Nakhichevan khanates with its center in Irevan, which was headed by the Russian superintendent. (АКАК, т. VII, p.253) In 1840, it was liquidated, the area of these two units was transferred to the newly organized Georgia-Imeretia guberniya, then included in the newly established Tiflis guberniya in 1846.

14 Зелинский С. П. *Экономический быт государственных крестьян Зангезурского уезда Елизаветпольской губернии*, (т.4, Тифлис:МИЭБГКЗК, 1886): 10; *История Азербайджана по документам и публикациям*, (Баку: Элм, 1990): 39.

15 Глинка С. Н. *Описание переселения армян Аддербиджанских в пределы России*, (Москва: Типография Лазаревых Института восточных языков, 1831): 87.

16 АКАК, т. VII, с.847; Ушаков Н.И. *История военных действий в Азиатской Турции в 1828 и 1829 годах*. Часть вторая, (СПб.: Тип. Эдуарда Праца и Ко, 1836): 291.

The Centennial of the Independence of the Three South Caucasus States: Historical Background, Contemporary Developments and Prospects of Peace and Prosperity

of the resettlement of Armenians, the ethnic composition of the South Caucasus began to change.

The further growth of the number of Armenians in the South Caucasus mainly occurred from the territory of the Ottoman Empire. The main stages of this migration, which lasted a whole century, coincided with the results of the Crimean (1853-1856) and Russo-Turkish wars (1877-1878), anti-Ottoman revolts of Armenians (1895-1896), as well as the results of the First World War. According to the 1897 census, Karabakh, which was then part of the Elizavetpol province,¹⁷ consisted of four districts - Javanshir, Jabrail, Shusha, and Zangezur. As a result of mass resettlements in Shusha *uyezd* (in 1897 – 75,410 Turks and 66,501 Armenians), which included the present territory of Nagorno (*Dağlıq*)-Karabakh, the number of Armenians already constituted 58% of the total population.¹⁸ As a whole, the ratio of the population of Karabakh according to the 1897 census was 53% of Azerbaijani Turks and 45% of Armenian-settlers, respectively.¹⁹

According to the information of the Caucasian calendar, of January 1, 1916, the total population of Karabakh was 241,449 Armenians²⁰ and 321,487 Muslims. This means, however, that even after their mass resettlement, the number of Armenians in Karabakh never exceeded Azerbaijani Turks. That is, even after the unceasing emigration of Azerbaijanis²¹ and the immigration of Armenians encouraged by Russia, Azerbaijani still outnumbered Armenians. As the Russian publicist N. Shavrov wrote:

*“Of the 1 million 300 thousand Armenians living in the Trans-Caucasus, over one million is not indigenous population, but was resettled by us.”*²² Shavrov added; *“Armenians were located, mainly, on the fertile lands of Elizavetpol and Erivan province, where they were negligible. The mountainous part of the Elizavetpol province (Nagorno-Karabakh and Zangezur) and the shores of Lake Goycha were inhabited by these Armenians.”*²³

17 Elizavetpol province consisted of 8 *uyezd*, the Azerbaijani population was a majority of 7.

18 *Кавказский календарь на 1896 г.*, под ред. Е.Кондратенко; (Тифлис: издан по распоряжению главноначальствующаго гражданской частью на Кавказе, 1895): 48-61.

19 *Кавказский календарь Российской империи 1897 г.*, LXIII - Elizavetпольская губерния. (СПб, 1904): 3.

20 As known from the report of the employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ADR A. Shchepot'ev, many Armenian craftsmen and workers were attributed to the number of Karabakh Armenians, who did not really constitute the settled population of Karabakh. (Щепотьев А. *О спорных Кавказских территориях, на которые имеют права самоопределившиеся азербайджанские турки*, (Баку: Gənclik , 2016): 43).

21 АКАК, т. V, ч. II, с. 579.

22 During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1879, 85,000 Armenians were resettled to the South Caucasus. (Шавров Н. *Новая угроза русскому делу в Закавказье: предстоящая распродажа Мугани инородцам*. (С.-Петербург: Рус. собрание, 1911): 59) In 1894, 90,000 Armenian resettled from the Ottoman Empire to the South Caucasus, and in 1897 – 10,000 Armenians. Already in 1896, in the South Caucasus, the number of Armenian settlers reached 900,000. In 1908, the number of Armenians in the South Caucasus at the expense of the resettles reached 1,300,000, 1 million of whom were resettled by the tsarist government from other countries. (Шавров Н. Н. *Новая угроза русскому делу в Закавказье*, 60)

23 Шавров Н. *Новая угроза русскому делу в Закавказье*, 59-61.

Demographic changes in the territory of Karabakh (according to the census of the Russian Empire)

Years of the census	Christians (including Armenian-settlers)		Muslims (Azerbaijani Turks)		Others (Kurds, Highlanders, Russians, etc.)		Total
	absolute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%	
1810 ²⁴	12,500 (2500 families ²⁵)	21%	47,500 (9500 families)	79%	—	—	60,000 ²⁶
1823 ²⁷	21,830 (4366 families)	21.7%	78,645 (15,729 families)	79%	—	—	100,475 ²⁸
1832 ²⁹	32,455 (6491 houses)	29.6%	69,825 (13,965 houses)	63.6%	7402	6.8%	109,682 ³⁰
1897 ³¹	201818	45%	23,8500	53%	4380	2%	444,698
1916 ³²	242603	41.4%	321,712	54.9%	21142	3.7%	585,457

Resettling Armenians implied various political and economic purposes but, ultimately, it overlapped with the desire to Christianize the region, which was carried out not only for sake of pure religion but also in order to increase the “loyal” population on the Muslim-dominated frontiers. The geographical consideration, the expansion into Qajar Iran and Ottoman domains was the important factor in this regard.

Thus, demography was gradually turning into a political instrument. The implementation of demographic policies resulted in the mass resettlement of Armenians in the South Caucasian lands within a very short period of time. These events started a lengthy process which led to forming Armenian numerical dominance on the territory of the South Caucasus. So, the national policies of

24 АКАК, т. IV, с.38-39.

25 If we assume an average of 5 people per family.

26 This is an assumed number, based on the fact that there were 5 people in each family.

27 *Описание Карабахской провинции, (составленное на 1823г. по распоряжению главноуправляющего в Грузии Ермолова, действительным статским советником Могилевским и полковником Ермоловым 2-м).*

28 This is an assumed number, based on the fact that there were 5 people in each family.

29 *Обозрение Российских владений за Кавказом, в статистическом, этнографическом, топографическом и финансовом отношениях, произведенное и изданное по высочайшему соизволению, Часть III.* (СПб.: В тип. Деп. Внешней торговли, 1836): 267.

30 According to Russian sources, there were a total of 54,841 men living in the province. Accordingly, if we assume that the number of women was equal to the number of men, we can conclude that the total number of the population was approximately 109,682. (*Обозрение российских владений за Кавказом в историческом, финансовом, этнографическом отношениях, ч. III*, 267)

31 *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г. Елисаветпольская губерния.* Том LXIII. (СПб.: Изд-во Центрального статистического комитета МВД, 1904): 60-61.

32 *Кавказский календарь на 1917 год.* Под редакцией Н.П. Стельмашука. (Тифлис, Типография Канцелярии Наместника Е.И.В. на Кавказе. 1916): 190-197.

Russian Empire intensified the ethnic conflicts and were a reason for the major conflicts between the two nations at the beginning of XX. century.

The Karabakh Conflict of 1918-1920

The Karabakh conflict, as one of the longest in the post-Soviet space, was born in its present form in connection with the large-scale geopolitical and ethnic transformations that took place in the South Caucasus after the collapse of the Russian Empire.

Until the beginning of the XX. century, historical sources did not record the facts ethnic confrontation between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The first large-scale ethnic armed clash between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, including in Karabakh, refers to the period of the First Russian Revolution (1905-1907), which shocked the foundations of the Russian Empire and seriously weakened the state.³³

The ethnic and territorial demarcation of the South Caucasus in 1918 violated the economic and life structure of its population that had developed over the centuries, thus provoking acute conflicts about future borders between nation states. This is clearly demonstrated by the example of a region such as Karabakh, which in 1918 became one of the main objects of Armenia's territorial claims to Azerbaijan.

From the date of establishment of the first Armenian state -the Ararat Republic³⁴- in the South Caucasus (the end of May 1918), its government got down to implementing plans for the establishment of "Great Armenia" at the expense of neighboring Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Thus, the myth about "Great Armenia", propagated by the Dashnak government,³⁵ became the national idea of all Armenian people. The Dashnaks put forward definite territorial claims to

33 For more detail see - Фархад Джаббаров, *Армянский экстремизм на Южном Кавказе: вторая половина XIX — начало XX вв.* (Баку: TEAS PRESS, 2018).

34 The name of Ararat Republic was often used by Ottoman Armenians because the country "was only a dusty province without Ottoman Armenia whose salvation Armenians had been seeking for 40 years". (Christopher, Walker J. *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*. (New York: St. Martin's Press. 1990), 272–273.) It has also been known as the Dashnak Republic due to the fact that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, better known as Dashnaksutun or simply Dashnak, was the dominant political force in the country. (Ronald, G. Suny. *Looking toward Ararat Armenia in modern history*. (Bloomington: Indiana university press. 1993), 131) Other names of the country include also Democratic Republic of Armenia.

35 In 1890, leaders of Armenian nationalists in Tiflis made decision of creation of Armenian national party. The publishing organ of the party became newspaper issued in Geneva – "Droshak" ("The Banner"). Then the title "Dashnaksutun" was given to the party. Total title of the party meant "Union (Federation) of Dashnaksutun's Armenian Revolutionaries". It is sometimes deciphered as "Armenian Revolutionary Federative Party". Already at that time, i.e. at the stage of its raising, "Dashnaksutun" was discerned by radical extremism, which the motto elected for the Armenian nationalist movement testifies: "Freedom or death". The "Dashnaksutun" was one of the most prominent political forces around which the history the first Ararat Republic (1918-1920) revolved.

Azerbaijan districts (Nakhchivan, Zangezur, and Karabakh) that had already been part of the Azerbaijan Republic, as well as to Georgia (Borchaly, Akhaltsikh, and Akhalkalaki districts).³⁶

If before 1918 the term Nagorno-Karabakh had only geographical significance, then, with the formation of independent states in the South Caucasus, Armenians began to invest in it politically. Taking advantage of the fact that, in the first months of independence, the government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) was entirely occupied with the issue of the liberation of Baku, Karabakh Armenians convened at the so-called Congress, on July 22, 1918, and decided to create their own administrative authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh, headed by the National Council. In the summer and autumn of 1918, the territory of Karabakh was attacked by Armenian armed groups led by Andranik Ozanian.³⁷ The bloody results of Andranik's attacks were recorded in the dates of the Extraordinary Investigation Commission formed by the ADR government. According to the information of the member of the Extraordinary Investigation Commission, N. Mikhailov, 115 Azerbaijani villages were destroyed in Zangezur just during summer and autumn of 1918. In these villages, according to incomplete information, 10,068 Azerbaijanis were killed and mutilated and 50,000 Azerbaijanis were forced to leave Zangezur, becoming refugees.³⁸

The Azerbaijani government tried to take control of the situation in Karabakh, appointing commandants to Shusha, Agdam, and Karyagin from Turkish officers. To prevent further escalation of violence in the region, Turkish forces led by Cemil Cevad Bey entered Shusha in early October 1918 and demanded that Armenians should be disarmed in exchange for a guarantee of their life and property. Armenian leaders immediately convened an extraordinary congress, which decided to recognize the power of Azerbaijan. Despite these peaceful steps, the situation in Karabakh, reinforced by various rumors about the imminent new offensive of Andranik's troops, and after departure of the Turkish troops, the control over the region passed into the hands of the British troops who arrived in Azerbaijan in the second half of November 1918.³⁹

36 "Guram Markhulia: 'Dashnaksutun' and its politics in 1918-1920," accessed 17 January, 2018. <https://iberiana.wordpress.com/armenia-georgia/markhulia-6/>

37 Andranik Ozanian, the commander of the Armenian armed detachments, who was later declared an Armenian national hero, and others known for their radical enmity against the Turks such as Njdeh, Dro, Dolukhanyan and others.

38 Маммадов И.М., Мусаев Т.Ф. *Армяно-азербайджанский конфликт: История, Право, Посредничество*, (Баку: б. и., 2008), 32-33.

39 After the defeat of the Turkish-German alliance in World War I, the Turkish troops had to leave Azerbaijan. In accordance with terms and conditions of the Mudros Armistice signed on October 30, 1918, Turkish troops left the South Caucasus. Under the terms of the Mudros armistice treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain, representing the Allied powers, the South Caucasus was declared a sphere of influence of Great Britain.

W. Thomson commanded the British troops which entered Baku on November 17, 1918, following the withdrawal of the Turkish troops. Upon his arrival in Baku, Thomson declared a state of martial law and proclaimed himself General-Governor of Baku. Shortly after, the British troops occupied the whole South Caucasus. A total of 30,000 British soldiers and officers were stationed in the South Caucasus at the time.

It should be noted that territorial conflicts between three South Caucasian states disturbed the British occupation authorities forcing them to send troops to various regions in the South Caucasus to reconcile the conflicting parties. As an authority to maintain “law and order” in the South Caucasus, Great Britain partook in resolving practically all international and other conflicts in the region.⁴⁰

Because of Armenia’s military aggressions against Karabakh in December 1918, it became necessary to send a British military mission to Shusha with small contingents under the command of Col. Lieutenant Gibbon of Worcester Regiment. The official position of the British commandment appeared to be supporting the Azerbaijani government, condemning the Armenian aggression, and maintaining peace in the region. By Gen. W. Thomson’s initiative, a mixed Britain-Armenian-Azerbaijani delegation was sent to Karabakh and telegrams were sent to Armenian leaders calling them to refrain from aggressive actions towards the Azerbaijani Turkic population.⁴¹

To resolve the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Karabakh and Zangezur, in mid-January 1919, the British command chose a model of territorial isolation of the conflict area through establishing there a special administration of the Governor-General led by Dr. Khosrov Bey Sultanov⁴². The British commanders controlled him through their military representative, who was a member of the administration leadership and retained a strong right of vote, and six Armenians to meet the needs of all nationalities. All employees of the general-governorship were kept at the expense of the Azerbaijani treasury. In addition, any movement of troops within the borders of the governor-general and issuing of orders had to

40 A Tiflis-based headquarters of the British occupation troops and sometimes the Chief Commander of the “Black Sea Army” in Istanbul were responsible for identifying a party to the conflict to be backed. After the troops were pulled out, the British government established a post of Tiflis-headquartered High Commissioner for South Caucasus. Gen. O. Wardrop was the first British High Commissioner since July, 1919. Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920, the Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 157; Andersen, Andrew, and Egge Georg. *The Second Phase of Territorial Formation: Insurgencies, Destabilization and Decrease of Western Support*. Last modified January 17, 2018. <http://www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/Armenia/restoration%20and%20terr%20issue/T4.html>

41 Юсиф-заде, С.З. *Азербайджано-британские отношения в начале XX века*. (Баку: Тахсил, 2008), 48.

42 Khosrov bey Sultanov was appointed the Minister of Defense in the first government of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (May 28 - June 17, 1918). In January 1919, the British forces commander General William M. Thomson approved Sultanov’s appointment as provisional Governor General of Karabakh and Zangezur.

be coordinated with the British command in advance. Finally, the British command, apparently trying not to provoke an acute reaction from the Armenian leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Armenian government, decided to create a governor-general under the leadership of Azerbaijan and especially stipulated that all disputable issues would be finally resolved in the Paris Peace Conference.⁴³

However, alarming reports from Karabakh continued even despite the measures taken. The Chief Commander of British troops in Thessaloniki, Gen. J.F. Milne, reported on February 6, 1919 to London to the head of the Imperial Headquarters the following communication:

“at the time of our occupation of Baku by two Turkish battalions, and was almost to be attacked by Andranik’s Armenian army. It has now been overrun by Armenians, who are murdering the Tatars, who are naturally retaliating, though their Government is trying its best to keep order. It has been necessary to send a company of British infantry to maintain order, but a battalion would be safer”.⁴⁴

A weekly report of the Intelligence Bureau of April 10, 1919, as well, noted:

“The situation in the Shusha district is stated to remain unsatisfactory owing to attitude adopted by the Armenians, who comprise the majority of the population of the district. They are obstruction the local Tartar administration and hold the view that Sultanov, the Tartar Governor General, is Turkish agent.

The Armenian government has been warned that no good is gained by obstruction, and it has been pointed that both Sultanov and the Azerbaijan Government are responsible to the British for the situation in the Shusha district”.⁴⁵

However, the measures taken by the British command were ineffective and ceased aggression of the Armenian gangs only temporarily. Since the first days of the existence of the Karabakh governor-general, the Armenian government and representatives of the so-called Armenian Council of Nagorno-Karabakh strongly opposed it. As expressed in the statements of its representatives on the status of the governor-general of Karabakh, the first measures of the British command - influenced by the pressure of the Armenian side- were inconsistent. During the meetings with the representatives of the Karabakh Armenians and the Armenian

43 *Нагорный Карабах в 1918-1923 гг. Сборник документов и материалов.* (Ереван: Изд-во АН Армении, 1992), 62-63.

44 *Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Great Britain’s Archrivals Documents*, ed. N.A.Maxwell. (Baku: Chashiogly, 2008), 236.

45 *Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Great Britain’s Archrivals Documents*, 390.

government, General V. Thomson and the representative of the British mission in Shusha, Colonel D.I. Shuttleworth, stated that the stay of the Azerbaijani administration and troops in Karabakh did not foretell that in the future this territory should belong to Azerbaijan, since the final fate of Karabakh would be resolved at the Peace Conference.⁴⁶ Such statements by the British command gave the Armenian separatists of Nagorno-Karabakh the opportunity to intensify their efforts. Only after the command of the British troops in Karabakh through the Colonel D.I. Shuttleworth on April 4, 1919 was the Governor-General H. Sultanov reaffirmed as the only supreme authority and the population was called upon to carry out all his orders without exception. Through this, the actions of the British became more consistent.⁴⁷ However, the measures taken by the British command were ineffective, stopping the excesses of Armenian gangs only for a while. The British troops left Shusha by the end of June 1919, and the representative of Great Britain remained there until the end of August.

The governor-general of Karabakh exercised effective control over the whole territory of Karabakh, to which the Armenians were forced to concede. This was evidenced by certain changes in the political mood of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and its leaders. An example for this is the decisions of the Congress of the Armenians of Karabakh, held on August 15, 1919 in Shusha; the Congress adopted the “Provisional Agreement of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh with the Azerbaijani government”. This agreement was the only official document until 1921 to settle the relations between the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and the government of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a peace agreement in Tiflis on November 23, 1919, according to which the parties pledged to end armed clashes and resolve all disputes peacefully.⁴⁸ According to the agreement of November 23, Azerbaijan withdrew its troops from Zangezur. However, after a few days, the Armenian troops again attacked Azerbaijan, thus violating the agreement. In late 1919 - early 1920, regular Armenian army of 10,000 passed through Zangezur to Karabakh, destroying all Azerbaijani villages that lay on its way. In reports of British mission’s representatives to the South Caucasus sent to the region on a special mission by the British government, it was noted that the Armenian armed forces demonstrated no restraint and used the most disturbing methods against

46 *Нагорный Карабах в 1918-1923 гг. Сборник документов и материалов*, 102-103,133.

47 *Нагорный Карабах в 1918-1923 гг. Сборник документов и материалов*, 149.

48 In the middle of November, US and British representatives in the Caucasus Sir Oliver Wardrop and Colonel James Rhea addressed the governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia and demanded that the undeclared war between the two republics should be stopped immediately. Peace talks started on November 20 in Tiflis (Georgia) and came to an end three days later with no breakthrough. On November 23, 1919, the Prime Ministers of the two countries (Alexandre Khatisian and Nasib Bey Yusifbeyli) signed an agreement that was in fact nothing more but a declaration of intent. Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*. Vol. II: From Versailles to London. 1919-1920 (London: University of California Press, 1982), 223.

Azerbaijani population of the Karabakh, Zangezur, and Nakhchivan districts of ADR. Reports sent by Britain's High Commissioner in Caucasus, Sir Oliver Wardrope to his government were full of such observations. In his report from December 11, 1919, Sir O. Wardrope noted:

“On December 1st regular Armenian troops with two guns and 6 machine guns attacked 9 Tatar villages in Kigy pass and burnt and looted them.

On November 26th peaceful Mussulmans of Okhchi district were collected and all men military age blown up with dynamite and others including women and children slaughtered in mosque.

*Zangezur Mussulms fleeing in panic”.*⁴⁹

In a report of December 3, 1919, Wardrop wrote that Prime Minister of ADR complained that Armenian Government, despite the agreement of November 23, was continuing military operations and had destroyed nine villages.⁵⁰ In his report sent the next day, he noted that Azerbaijan Government informed him about the situation in Zangezur and Deralagauz and recent actions by regular Armenian troops culminated with the massacre of hundreds and the destruction of fifteen villages.⁵¹

In a report of December 15, 1919 Wardrop mentioned that Prime Minister of Azerbaijan sent him a long telegram accusing Armenian regular troops with massacre by artillery and destruction of villages in Zangezur. He noted that on December 9 the villages of Kedeklu, Askerlu, and Perchevan south-east of Gerus were destroyed, and that besieged Azerbaijani villages in Ohchi and Kigy Glens south-west of Gerus were destroyed by artillery, while the majority of inhabitants were slaughtered.⁵²

In a report of December 30, 1919,⁵³ Wardrop mentioned that according to various reports, Armenian government on December 21 attacked the population of Zangibazar district, destroyed the village of Kargabazar and also attacked Ulukhanlu on December 22. Fighting continued in the villages of Chobanker Karakishlakh. Wardrop concluded that Armenia had undoubtedly been violating the agreement of November 23.

The aggression of the Armenian Republic against Azerbaijan forced the ADR government to send its troops to the region under the command of Major-General

49 IOR/L/P&S/11/161, Decipher № 196 from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 11, 1919).

50 IOR/L/P&S/11/161, Decipher № 173 from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 3, 1919).

51 IOR/L/P&S/11/161, Decipher № 179 from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 4, 1919).

52 IOR/L/P&S/11/161, Decipher № 202 from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 15, 1919).

53 IOR/L/P&S/11/166, Telegram from 'en clair' from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 30, 1919).

The Centennial of the Independence of the Three South Caucasus States: Historical Background, Contemporary Developments and Prospects of Peace and Prosperity

Javad bey Shikhlinsky, who managed to stop the advance of Armenian military formations. In April 1919, the Azerbaijani army ousted Andranik's troops from the country. The Governor-General Sultanov took the necessary measures to restore the relative order in Karabakh.

In connection with the aggression of Armenia, on December 30, 1919, the Azerbaijani government demanded that W. Huskell, High Commissioner of the Union States in the South Caucasus, take urgent measures to end the aggressions and massacres against Azerbaijani population. Nevertheless, Armenia's aggressions increased.

A new round of Armenian aggression in the Karabakh direction began in March 1920. Simultaneously, these actions were closely coordinated with the leadership of Soviet Russia, which soon embarked on the implementation of the plan for the invasion of Azerbaijan. On the night of March 22-23, 1920, on the day of Novruz holiday in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenian armed detachments suddenly and simultaneously attacked the military units of Azerbaijan stationed in Shusha, Khankendi, Askeran, and other regions. Part of the regular army of Armenia arrived to lend their aid. The Armenian armed forces managed to capture the Askeran fortress. The road between Shusha and Agdam was cut and fell under the control of the Armenian armed forces. As a result of the Armenian capture of the strategically significant Askeran fortress, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with the rest of Azerbaijan was in the hands of Armenian gangs.

The Azerbaijani government sent a 20,000-strong corps headed by Major-General Habib Bey Salimov to Karabakh. During the fighting, on April 2, Azerbaijani units under the command of General G. Salimov liberated Askeran, and on April 3 without a fight entered Khankendi. Until the end of April, the whole of Karabakh was liberated from Armenian troops. Azerbaijani troops were aiming at the complete suppression of Armenian aggression in the direction of Zangezur as well. On April 27, 1920, Major General Salimov asked the Military Ministry of the order to advance deeper into Zangezur. The Armenian aggressors suffered a crushing defeat. However, neither he nor his soldiers could know that this day would be the last in the history of their independent state. Moving most of the military forces of ADR to the western regions of the country, aimed at suppressing the Armenian aggression, played into the hands of the XI. Red Army, which, facing no resistance, immediately crossed to the northern borders of Azerbaijan and moved to Baku. Thus, on the eve of the invasion of the XI. Army of Soviet Russia, the Azerbaijani government managed to regain control over the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh but ultimately lost its sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

The independent development stage of Azerbaijan and Armenia is the origin of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict on Karabakh, the basis of which lays in Armenia's attempts to tear apart this region from Azerbaijan. This conflict developed in the context of an intense geopolitical struggle in the region in the years of 1918-1920 between the world's leading powers – Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, and Russia, at the epicenter of which was the struggle for control of Azerbaijan and Baku oil. Each of the interested powers tried to use the “Armenian factor”, or more precisely, Armenia's territorial claims to Azerbaijani territories of Karabakh and Zangezur. Armenia's claims was a result of its aim to preserve and strengthen its influence in the strategically important region of Azerbaijan, providing access to the Caucasus, Middle East, and Central Asia, and for counteracting the strengthening of Azerbaijan and its process of independence.

The agreements on the peaceful settlement of territorial problems between Armenia and Azerbaijan, reached at the peace conferences periodically convened in 1919-early 1920, with the participation of representatives of the three independent republics of the South Caucasus, remained only on paper. The hope of resolving the complex of South Caucasian territorial contradictions at the Paris Peace Conference soon also collapsed. Numerous visits by Allied representatives (W. Haskell, J. Harbord, O. Wardrop) to the South Caucasus region in order to get acquainted with the situation on the spot and make certain suggestions to the parties to the conflict also had no effect. Thus, after the withdrawal of British troops from the South Caucasus, the national republics were left alone with its acute problems. In this difficult situation, even the recognition by the Supreme Council of the Entente countries on January 11, 1920 of the de facto independence of Azerbaijan, and on January 19, of Armenia, did not bring to these countries anything but moral satisfaction. The border conflicts had left very fragile hopes for the possibility to preserve the independence before a real threat from the north came. In the meantime, the victories of the Red Army in the North Caucasus by the beginning of 1920 made Russia the main player once again, allowing it to draw the political map of the region.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andersen, Andrew, and Egge Georg. *The Second Phase of Territorial Formation: Insurgencies, Destabilization and Decrease of Western Support*. Accessed 17 January 2018.

<http://www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/Armenia/restoration%20and%20terror%20issue/T4.html>

Arzumanlı V., and Mustafa N., *Tarixin qara səhifələri: Deportasiya. Soyqırım. Qaçqınlıq*. Bakı: Qartal, 1998.

Atkin Muriel, “The strange death of Ibrahim Khalil Khan of Qarabagh”, *Iranian Studies*, Published in the USA, Vol. XII, no.1-2 (1979): p.79-107.

British Library, India Office Records, Political and Secret Department Records, Secret Letters and Enclosures from Persia (IOR). Political and Secret Department records (L/PS) -Report of Islamic Information Bureau.

IOR/L/P&S/11/161, Decipher № 173 from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 3, 1919).

IOR/L/P&S/11/161, Decipher № 179 from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 4, 1919).

IOR/L/P&S/11/161, Decipher № 196 from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 11, 1919).

IOR/L/P&S/11/161, Decipher № 202 from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 15, 1919).

IOR/L/P&S/11/166, Telegram from ‘en clair’ from Mr. O. Wardrop (December 30, 1919).

Christopher, Walker J. *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*. New York: St. Martin’s Press. 1990.

Markhulia, Guram. “‘Dashnaktsutun’ and its politics in 1918-1920.” Accessed January 17, 2018.

<https://iberiana.wordpress.com/armenia-georgia/markhulia-6/>

Maxwell, N.A ed. *Azerbaijan Democratic Republic: Great Britain’s Archrivals Documents*. Baku: Chashiogly, 2008.

Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*. Vol. II: From Versailles to London. 1919-1920. London: University of California Press, 1982.

Suny, Ronald G. *Looking toward Ararat Armenia in modern history*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1993.

Swietochowski, Tadeusz. *Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

- Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика.* (Документы и материалы). Баку: Азербайджан, 1998.
- Акты, собранные Кавказской археологической комиссией.* Архив Главного управления наместника кавказского. [АКАК]. под ред. А.П. Берже, Том II, Тифлис: Тип. Главного Управления Наместника Кавказского, 1868.
- Акты, собранные Кавказской археологической комиссией.* Архив Главного управления наместника кавказского. [АКАК]. под ред. А.П. Берже, Том IV, Тифлис: Тип. Главного Управления Наместника Кавказского, 1870.
- Акты, собранные Кавказской археологической комиссией.* Архив Главного управления наместника кавказского. [АКАК]. под ред. А.П. Берже, Том VII. Тифлис: Тип. Главного Управления Наместника Кавказского, 1878.
- Гасанлы Дж.П. *Русская революция и Азербайджан: Трудный путь к независимости (1917–1920).* Москва: Флинта, 2011.
- Глинка С. *Описание переселения армян азербиджанских в пределы России,* Москва: Типография Лазаревых Института восточных языков, 1831.
- Джаббаров Ф. *Армянский экстремизм на Южном Кавказе: вторая половина XIX — начало XX вв.* Баку: TEAS PRESS, 2018.
- Записки А.П.Ермолова. 1798-1826. Москва: Высшая школа, 1991.
- Зелинский С. П. *Экономический быт государственных крестьян Зангезурского уезда Елизаветпольской губернии.* МИЭБКГКЗК. т. 4, Тифлис, 1886.
- История Азербайджана по документам и публикациям.* Баку: Элм, 1990
- Кавказский календарь на 1896 г.,* Под ред. Е.Кондратенко. Тифлис: Издан по распоряжению главноначальствующаго гражданской частью на Кавказе, 1895.
- Кавказский календарь Российской империи 1897 г., LXIII - Елизаветпольская губерния.* СПб, 1904.
- Кавказский календарь на 1917 год.* Под редакцией Н.П. Стельмашука. Тифлис, Типография Канцелярии Наместника Е.И.В. на Кавказе. 1916.
- Маммадов И.М., Мусаев Т.Ф. *Армяно-азербайджанский конфликт: История, Право, Посредничество.* Баку: б. и., 2008.
- Нагорный Карабах в 1918-1923 гг.* Сборник документов и материалов. Ереван: Изд-во АН Армении, 1992.

The Centennial of the Independence of the Three South Caucasus States: Historical Background, Contemporary Developments and Prospects of Peace and Prosperity

- Обозрение Российских владений за Кавказом, в статистическом, этнографическом, топографическом и финансовом отношениях, произведенное и изданное по высочайшему соизволению, Часть III. СПб.: В тип. Деп. Внешней торговли, 1836.
- Обзор Елисаветпольской губернии за 1913 год. Тифлис: Типо-лит. и переплет. т-ва Либерман и К^о, 1915.
- Описание Карабахской провинции, (составленное на 1823г. по распоряжению главноуправляющего в Грузии Ермолова, действительным статским советником Могилевским и полковником Ермоловым 2-м, Тифлис: Типография Управления Наместика Кавказа. 1866 г.*
- Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г. Елисаветпольская губерния. Том LXIII. СПб.: Изд-во Центрального статистического комитета МВД, 1904.*
- Российский Государственный Исторический Архив [РГИА], Ф. 383. (Дела по управлению иностранными колониями) Оп. 29. Д.539.
- Ушаков Н.И. *История военных действий в Азиатской Турции в 1828 и 1829 годах. Часть вторая.* СПб.: Тип. Эдуарда Праца и Ко, 1836.
- Шавров Н.Н. *Новая угроза русскому делу в Закавказье: предстоящая распродажа Мугани инородцам.* С.-Петербург: Рус. собрание, 1911.
- Щербатов А.П. *Генерал-фельдмаршал князь Паскевич. Его жизнь и деятельность.* Т. III, (в 9 томах). СПб.: Тип. Р Голике, 1891.
- Щепотьев А. *О спорных Кавказских территориях, на которые имеют права самоопределившиеся азербайджанские турки.* Баку: Gənclik , 2016.
- Юсиф-заде С.З. *Азербайджано-британские отношения в начале XX века,* Баку: Тахсил. 2008.