

Historical Background of the Karabakh Conflict and Shusha, the Cultural Capital

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By

Vefa Kurban

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



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This book first published 2023

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-1263-0

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-1263-4

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PREFACE

Following the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan regained its independence after hard struggles. However, during this period, 20% of its territory was occupied by Armenia and more than 1 million Azerbaijanis were forced to leave the occupied territories. Azerbaijani lands remained occupied for about 30 years.

The 44-day Karabakh War took place between Azerbaijan and Armenia between September 27 and November 10, 2020. This war marked the end of an issue that had not been resolved through diplomacy for nearly 30 years. Since international organizations did not take action despite acknowledging that Karabakh and the 7 rayons occupied by Armenia were part of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the plans made by the OSCE Minsk group towards the solution of the issue were not followed, Azerbaijan initiated efforts to clear its lands by organizing operations within its borders.

In this war, i.e. the Karabakh War, Azerbaijan clearly outlined the criteria for success: re-establishing the sovereignty of Azerbaijan by expelling the invaders from the occupied regions.

After their victory in the 44-day war, the Azerbaijani forces were horrified by the sights they witnessed in the areas they liberated from occupation, during which all historical and cultural structures had been damaged, transformed into something else, or completely destroyed.

This book addresses the past and present of Azerbaijan, Karabakh and especially Shusha, the center of Karabakh, and historical and cultural structures in Shusha and the damage done to these structures during the occupation.

The history of the region is discussed based on archival documents in the first chapter of the book, and the 44-day Karabakh War and Shusha are discussed in the following chapters.

The historical and cultural structures that are of significance and located in Shusha were examined one by one and recorded in the archives during the Soviet Union rule. These archival documents are preserved in the Archive Administration of the Ministry of Culture of Azerbaijan. Each of these documents was examined within the scope of the study and they are discussed in the last chapter.

After Shusha was liberated from the occupation, I went there within the scope of the project called "**Shusha - Before and After the Armenian**

Occupation", which I conducted with the support of the Azerbaijan Embassy in Ankara. After visiting and examining the historical and cultural structures in their original place, I accessed data about each structure available in the archives, and I aim to display the results in this book.

The news that appeared in the world press during the 44-day war, which I also included in the book, was carefully followed and discussed day by day within the scope of the project titled **"Echoes of the Karabakh War of September 27-November 10, 2020 in the World Public"** that I conducted with the students of the Institute of Turkish World Studies of Ege University. I would like to thank the researchers and students of the institute who took part in this project.

I would like to thank my esteemed colleague Dr. Telman Kerimli for his unwavering support while preparing the study, as well as my husband Dr. Asif Kurban, my son Tural and my daughter Tunay, whose support I always feel.

I would like to thank Senior Commissioning Editor Rebecca Gladders, Commissioning Editor Adam Rummens, Designers Sophie Edminson and Courtney Dixon, Typesetting Manager Amanda Millar and the whole CSP family.

İzmir-2023
Prof. Dr. Vefa KURBAN

INTRODUCTION

Located in the South Caucasus region, which empires have clashed throughout the history in and plays a key role in intercontinental traffic, Azerbaijan regained its independence in the new world order that emerged following the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It attracts attention thanks to its geopolitical position, and energy and economic potential in the global power equation. Conflicts arose after the declaration of independence due to the power struggle in this geography, which is considered the heart of the new geopolitics.

Although Azerbaijan regained its independence, it was once again left alone with the Karabakh conflict. As is known, due to its geographical location, this region has always been at the center of attention for great powers such as Iran, the Ottoman Empire and especially Russia. Russia took a close interest in the region during the Tsarist period and had great conflicts with Iran. In fact, it consciously tried to establish dominance in the territory of Azerbaijan by interfering with the demographic structure of the region. During this process, thanks to the support by the Tsardom, the Armenians, who dream about establishing a “United Armenia stretching from the Caucasus to the Black Sea”, were put into play, and they were made to migrate from the Iranian and Ottoman lands to Azerbaijan, which paved the way for an international problem that has been going on for decades.

Some issues were covered up and left unsolved during the Soviet period. One of these issues is the Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

This regional ethnic issue in the South Caucasus flared up again in the last days of the Soviet Union.

The South Caucasus, which is also called the Balkans of Eurasia, is of geopolitical significance. How significant the region is cannot be explained by its underground and aboveground riches and geography alone. It is necessary to introduce some of its other features to do so.¹ These features include its geographical location at an important crossing point on the old

¹ İsmayıl Toğrul & Toprak Murat Kağan, (2021). The Difference between Turkey and Russia: Strategic Partnership? Tactical Cooperation? In Vefa Kurban, & Çağdaş Duman (Eds.). *Turkish-Russian Relations in the Context of Social Economic and Political Progress in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 39-57). Lyon: Livre De Lyon.

Silk Road, being the gateway to the Near East, being at an important crossroads in energy trade, serving as a transit zone between Europe and Asia and as a natural border connecting the Middle East and the Russian Federation. In addition, the Caucasus is located on the route various tribes used while migrating.²

The Caspian Sea, which is located in the South Caucasus, contains substantial oil and natural gas reserves, making the region even more important. The pipelines used while transporting these reserves to Europe through the open seas also pass through the South Caucasus. This makes the South Caucasus a big area of competition for the western states, whose dependence on energy is increasing day by day.³

There are three states in the South Caucasus that gained independence after the 1990s. These are Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. Each has geopolitical contributions to the region thanks to their individual characteristics. Azerbaijan provides distinctive geopolitical importance to the South Caucasus region thanks to its coast to the Caspian Sea, rich underground and surface resources, being at a geographical location crucial for the transportation of these resources, having an ethnic and cultural bond with Turkey, i.e. one of the important actors in the region, and its ability to make Turkey quickly get involved in case of a problem to be experienced in the region.⁴

The distinctive geographical importance Georgia has results from the fact that it is the gateway of the Caucasus to the Black Sea. It does not possess as many rich underground resources as Azerbaijan. However, its geographical location in the transportation of energy resources is such that it can put Russia out of the game. For this reason, for Russia, Georgia is a vital country not to be lost to the West. If Georgia got out of the Russian influence, first Azerbaijan and then Armenia would approach the western bloc.⁵ Finally, Armenia, thanks to its relationship with Russia, which is

² Ancak Okan (2020). Yeni Avrasyacılık Bağlamında Güney Kafkasya’da Türkiye ve Rusya. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 75(3), 1113-1144.

³ İsmayıl Toğrul & Toprak Murat Kağan, (2021). The Difference between Turkey and Russia: Strategic Partnership? Tactical Cooperation? In Vefa Kurban, & Çağdaş Duman (Eds.). *Turkish-Russian Relations in the Context of Social Economic and Political Progress in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 39-57). Lyon: Livre De Lyon.

⁴ İsmayıl Toğrul & Toprak Murat Kağan (2021). The Difference between Turkey and Russia: Strategic Partnership? Tactical Cooperation? In Vefa Kurban, & Çağdaş Duman (Eds.). *Turkish-Russian Relations in the Context of Social Economic and Political Progress in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 39-57). Lyon: Livre De Lyon.

⁵ Ünal, L. (2019). Tarihsel Gerçeklik Işığında Türkiye’nin Transkafkasya Politikası. *Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 13(26), 555-576.

similar to the one between Azerbaijan and Turkey, ensures Russia's continuous involvement in the region and thus has strategic importance.⁶

As emphasized above, ethnic conflicts that had been covered up during the Soviet period flared up again in the South Caucasus region in the last years of the Soviet Union. Armenia occupied Karabakh, which was also recognized as Azerbaijani territory by international organizations, and 7 rayons of Azerbaijan - all of which corresponds to 20% of Azerbaijani territory - and committed brutal massacres in this process. A ceasefire was signed between the parties in 1994 and diplomatic negotiations were held, but did not yield any results for 30 years. The decisions international organizations, in particular the United Nations Security Council, took and the principles of international law acknowledged that Karabakh and other occupied territories belonged to Azerbaijan, but no concrete steps were taken. The United Nations Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 were not implemented.⁷ The Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) remained passive in this matter. Azerbaijan resolved this issue, which diplomacy could not, by using military means and freed its lands from occupation.

At this juncture, Russia, which is an important power in the Caucasus and made the best use of the security, political power and rich energy resources of the region back in the day, is now trying not to let it slip through its fingers. Meanwhile, actors such as the USA, China, the EU, Turkey and Iran started to pursue active policies in the region.

In this area of competition, Turkey stands out with its proximity to the region and its cultural and historical ties with the countries there. The South Caucasus falls into the axis of Turkey's strategic regional interests. In addition, Russia considers this region in its "near abroad" region. It also considers the former Soviet territory, which used to be a huge source for its financial power and capabilities, that is, the countries that gained their independence in this territory as its backyard.⁸

It would not be right to discuss the geopolitics of the Caucasus independently of Iran and Turkestan (Iran and Turan) in terms of the

⁶ İsmayıl Toğrul & Toprak Murat Kağan (2021). The Difference between Turkey and Russia: Strategic Partnership? Tactical Cooperation? In Vefa Kurban, & Çağdaş Duman (Eds.). *Turkish-Russian Relations in the Context of Social Economic and Political Progress in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 39-57). Lyon: Livre De Lyon.

⁷ Detailed information about these decisions is provided in the following chapters.

⁸ Ergün Oğuzhan & Kurban Vefa (2021). Questions Regarding the Impact of Russian Strategic Culture on New Period Foreign Policies. In Vefa Kurban, & Çağdaş Duman (Eds.). *Turkish-Russian Relations in the Context of Social Economic and Political Progress in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 57-69). Lyon: Livre De Lyon.

geostrategic orientations of the Russian States. The economic, political and strategic development and future of the state depend on these regions. That Russia has directed its power politics, attention and energy towards the Turkish lands and the Eastern front is a tendency that relieves European countries.⁹

On the other hand, while the United States considers the South Caucasus as an element of its containment policy towards Russia, this territory, which Europe considers vital for its energy security and which China defines as a transition zone within the security strategy, constitutes an area of competition for great powers.¹⁰

Russian scientist Elena Prokopenko argues that the South Caucasus is of significance for the Russian Federation not only to preserve its territorial integrity, but also to maintain its presence in this strategically important region. She also argues that Russia does not want to lose its influence on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and that having control and influence in the South Caucasus leads to the stability of its southern borders.¹¹ In addition, another point to be emphasized is that after the collapse of the USSR and the dissolution of the communist bloc, Russia became the battleground of various movements of thought such as neo-liberalism, Slavophilism, Eurasianism and neo-liberalism.¹²

Despite all, Azerbaijan largely solved the problem that diplomacy had not been able to for nearly 30 years by using military power in 2020 and liberated its occupied lands after the 44-day Karabakh War.

One of the Azerbaijani cities liberated from the occupation is the city of Shusha, which is located in the center of Karabakh. This study discusses the history of the region, Shusha in particular, and the destruction that the

⁹ Ergün Oğuzhan & Kurban Vefa (2021). Questions Regarding the Impact of Russian Strategic Culture on New Period Foreign Policies. In Vefa Kurban, & Çağdaş Duman (Eds.). *Turkish-Russian Relations in the Context of Social Economic and Political Progress in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 57-69). Lyon: Livre De Lyon.

¹⁰ Asker Ali & Koyuncu Mustafa Cem (2021). Uluslararası Politik Ekonomi Ekseninde Çin'in Güney Kafkasya Bölgesine Yönelik Stratejik Hamleleri. In V. Kurban, S. Ö. Beşikçi, & R. E. Çoban (Eds.). *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Siyasal Gelişmeler Bağlamında Güney Kafkasya* (pp. 21-39). İzmir: İksad Yayinevi.

¹¹ Прокопенко, Е. (2010). Кавказ в современном геополитическом измерении. *Кавказ и глобализация*, 4(3-4), 28-33.; Шабанов, М. (2016). Южный Кавказ во внешней политике России. Коммуникативный анализ. *Коммуникология*, 4(2), 80-86.

¹² Ancak Okan (2020). Yeni Avrasyacılık Bağlamında Güney Kafkasya'da Türkiye ve Rusya. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 75(3), 1113-1144.

historical and cultural structures in Shusha suffered during the 30-year occupation period.

CHAPTER I

Historical Background of the Events

First of all, let's try to find the answer to the question "Who are the Armenians?"

There are two main schools of thought among Armenian historians when it comes to Armenian history. Some Armenian historians posit that Armenians are a branch of the Phrygians and that their history dates back to the 7th and 6th centuries BC, when they are said to have arrived at the same locations as the Phrygians. The other group of Armenian historians trace the origins of Armenians back to Yasef, also known as Hayq, who they believe to be descended from Sincar, and consider Armenians to be the indigenous people of the region known as Armenia.¹³ As can be seen, even Armenians themselves do not have a clear understanding of their origins and, in addition, they have differences of opinion on the matter. Even Auguste Carriere emphasizes this point, saying that "it would be a great mistake to trust the information provided by old Armenian historians, because most of their information is a product of imagination."¹⁴

The Armenians (Hay)¹⁵ who are not native to the Caucasus lived within the borders of the Roman Empire in the late 60s BC.

Before the spread of Christianity, fire worship was a common religion between Iran and Armenians. In the 1st century AD, Christianity began to spread in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, and Armenians officially adopted Christianity in the 4th century, and the church was named the Armenian Gregorian Church in honor of Gregory. In 387 AD, the region known as Armenia was divided between the Roman Empire and the

¹³ Uras Esat (1974). *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Istanbul, Belge Yayinlari, p.22.

¹⁴ Carriere Auguste (1899), *Les huit sanctuaires de l'Arménie païenne d'après Agathange et Moïse de Khoren, étude critique*, Editeur Hachette BNF.

¹⁵ Armenians call themselves 'Hay'. Паповян А. А., (1939). "Народные Восстания в Армении Против Арабского Владычества, Ереванский Государственный Университет, Академик -Я.А. Манандян, Издание Государственного Университета, Ереван, p.27.

Sassanids. Following this process, a transformation was observed among the Armenians:

1. The church which had been a religious institution, became politicized.
2. These political activities were not aimed towards the future, but rather directed towards the past. Instead of understanding the real history, a fabricated past was created, turning history into a toy of politics.¹⁶

The introduction of Christianity among the Armenians brought them closer to Byzantium at first. However, the Byzantines did not like the Armenians due to sectarian hostility, especially because of their alleged betrayals. The sectarian pressures on the Armenians continued until the invasion of the Seljuks, who were very tolerant towards religion. The Armenians were able to preserve their language and religious freedoms only after coming under Turkish rule.¹⁷

The region known as Armenia had been under the rule of various states for centuries and had always been an area where major powers clashed. Therefore, it is not possible to recognize a permanent government or a unified, continuous, and strong Armenian presence in the region, especially on a national level. Evald Banse states, "*The history of Armenia consists very largely of the attempts made by Asian states to force their way through this country on their way towards the West, and of the wars waged by the Turks against the Iranians and Russians.*"¹⁸

An important point to note is the meaning behind the word "Armenia." In his book "The Time and Celebration of Hayk" published in Paris in 1840, Priest Alishan says, "*The name of our nation is "Hay". Our people are definitely not named Armen like the foreigners do.*"¹⁹

Rasim Sadiq writes:

¹⁶ *Qafqaz'da Ermeni Meselesi, Rusiya Arxiv Senedleri ve Neşrleri Üzre* (2010). Baku, Volume I, pp. X-XI.

¹⁷ Uras Esat (1974). *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Istanbul, Belge Yayınları, p. 627.

¹⁸ Ewald Banse (1919). *Die Türkei Eine Moderne Geographie*, Berlin, 1919. Aktaran: Uras Esat (1974). *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Istanbul, Belge Yayınları, p. 89.

¹⁹ Uras Esat (1974). *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Istanbul, Belge Yayınları, p. 102.

“The Hay people first migrated from India to Babylon in the VI. century BC. Having stayed in Babylon for about 13 years, the Hays were then forced to leave the country by the Babylonian state.

The Hay people left Babylon in 543 BC and went back the way they had come under the command of Hayk. They first advanced as far as Ethiopia by sea, and then dispersed to the lands of other states belonging to the land mass of Aethiopia, which included Ethiopia.

*The predecessors of the migration of Hayk moved from Africa to the Balkans about 1000 years later and migrated from there to Eastern Anatolia and the Southern Caucasus within the next 200 years. As a result, the process that started with the migration of Hays in 543 BC was completed with the final migration of Hays into Anatolia and the South Caucasus after about 1200 years”.*²⁰

Jean Saint-Martin, in his book “Mémoires historiques et géographiques sur l’Arménie,” says,

“The name Armenia has been used for a very long time by almost all the various Eastern nations to refer to the place that Armenians call Hayastan. The Syrians call it Armenia and the Arabs call it Ermeniyye.”

As these explanations make clear, Armenia is a geographical name, and Armenians are the people who live there. There is no connection between Armenians and the Hay.²¹

Now let's take a look at historical background of the events.

As is known, the Caucasus is a mountainous region stretching from the Taman peninsula, which is located in the east of the Black Sea, to the Absheron peninsula.²² The Caucasus was the scene of conflicts between the Ottomans and the Iranians, the Ottomans and the Russians, and the Russians and the Iranians throughout the 16th-19th centuries.

²⁰ Sadiq, R. (2022). *Hay Soyuu Ermen Cildinde: Yalanlar Tarihinin Gerçek Üzü* (see pp.320-321). Baku: Elm ve Tehsil.

²¹ Uras Esat (1974). *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, Istanbul, Belge Yayınları, p. 102.

²² Ekici Yunus (2017). *Azərbaycan və Ermənistan Arasında Bitməyən Dağlıq Karabağ Sorunu. VAKANÜVİS-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2(1), 62-77.

Starting from Ivan IV, almost all Russian tsars forced the Central Asian gates and attempted to dominate the Caucasus. Moreover, the idea of dominating the Caucasus became hereditary in the Russian history.^{23, 24}

The policy of seizing trade routes and invading Eurasia, which was started by the Tsarist Russia by invading Astrakhan in 1554²⁵, evolved into the occupation of the entire Caucasus as of Peter I.²⁶ In Kissinger's words, Russia, starting from the Tsarist period, incubates when it is weak, and follows tyrannical and expansionist policies when it is strong. It is observed that the Russian foreign policy strategy was shaped to “expand the state in all directions” as of the Tsarist period. Thus, it expanded by an average of 100.000 km² per year between 1552 and 1917, in other words more than the sum of the lands of many European states.²⁷

As is known, the North Pole located on the northern borders of the Russian Federation and the Pacific Ocean located on the eastern borders provide natural border security to the country. There are countries posing relatively less danger on its western borders. However, when the Russian Federation leaves its southern border, that is, the South Caucasus region, unattended, it will have many problems there. Because regional powers such as Iran and Turkey, with which it has been in competition from past to present, pose a potential threat to itself here. The South Caucasus region is too important to be left unattended for the security of the Russian Federation. A large portion of the population of the Russian Federation lives on the border of the South Caucasus and vital industrial facilities are located there, which makes the region even more important in terms of security.²⁸

²³ Bitarov Vyacheslav Zelimkhanovich, (n.d.). *North Osetia*. Date accessed: January 7, 2023, from <https://www.turkbirkon.com/en/kuzeyosetya>

²⁴ Ergün Oğuzhan & Kurban Vefa (2021). Questions Regarding the Impact of Russian Strategic Culture on New Period Foreign Policies. In Vefa Kurban, & Çağdaş Duman (Eds.). *Turkish-Russian Relations in the Context of Social Economic and Political Progress in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 57-69). Lyon: Livre De Lyon.

²⁵ Ермаков, Николай Андреевич (1977). “Астрахань и Астраханская губерния : описание края и общественной и частной жизни его, состоящее из записок, веденных во время 11-ти месячного пребывания в нем” / издано Н-м Ерм-м. - Москва : Тип. В. Готье, 1852. - 176, [4] с. ; 20 см. - Авт. в кн. не указан; установлен по изд.: Рус. аноним. и подпис. псевд. произведения печати, 1801-1926.

²⁶ Бентковский, Иосиф Викентьевич (1886). *Петр I на Кавказе*. Ставрополь.

²⁷ Kissinger Henry (2015). *World order*. Penguin Books.

²⁸ İsmayıl Toğrul & Toprak Murat Kağan (2021). The Difference between Turkey and Russia: Strategic Partnership? Tactical Cooperation? In Vefa Kurban, & Çağdaş Duman (Eds.). *Turkish-Russian Relations in the Context of Social Economic and Political Progress in the Post-Cold War Era* (pp. 39-57). Lyon: Livre De Lyon.

One of the geopolitical factors that significantly affected the history of Russia is that the country is located in the center of the Eurasian mainland, which encompasses Europe and Asia. This geopolitical position of Russia causes the Asians to consider it as a European state and the Europeans as an Asian state, thus enables it to be considered a unique civilization.²⁹

Russia, which is debated to be a European or an Asian state, caused military conflicts in the Caucasus, which it has been trying to keep under its dominance for 200 years, and tried to legitimize its occupation with the discourse of “civilizing” the Caucasian peoples, and faced serious resistance in this process.³⁰

As Vasily Klyuchevsky stated regarding the scope of Russia's Caucasus policy, “the history of Russia is a history of a country that colonizes, and the territory of colonization expanded along with its state borders”.³¹

One of the regions occupied as part of the colonization policy of Russia is the Karabakh region. The Karabakh region, whose surface area covers approximately 14-15 thousand square kilometers, is a Turkish-Islamic region where mostly Oghuz-Turkish tribes lived as of the Great Seljuks. Being under the domination of Turkish-Islamic states such as Eldiguzids, Ilkhanids, Timurids, Aq Qoyunlu and Safavids³², the Karabakh Region was annexed to the Ottomans with the 1555 Peace of Amasya³³, to Iran with the 1735 Treaty of Ganja³⁴, and to Tsarist Russia with the 1828 Treaty of Turkmenchay^{35, 36}.

²⁹ Cafersoy Nazim (2002). Rus Jeopolitik Düşüncesinde Misyon Arayışları. *Avrasya Dosyası*, 8(4), 51-101.

³⁰ Kurban Vefa & Ergün Oğuzhan (2020). Millennial Pain in the Trans-Caucasus and Azerbaijan. In M. Sarıoğlu, & S. H. Bağlama (Eds.). *Critical Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities* (pp. 149-173). Lyon: Livre de Lyon.

³¹ Cafersoy Nazim (2002). Rus Jeopolitik Düşüncesinde Misyon Arayışları. *Avrasya Dosyası*, 8(4), 51-101.

³² Victory in Nagorno-Karabakh after 44 Days: The Token of the Turkey-Azerbaijan Brotherhood. (2022). p.13. İstanbul: Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı Yayınları.

³³ Allouche, A. (1980). *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict (906-962/1500-1555)*. The University of Utah.

³⁴ Юзефович, Т. (1869). *Договоры России с Востоком: Политические и торговые*. Тип. О.И. Бакста.

³⁵ Фадеев А. В. (1960). *Россия и Кавказ первой трети XIX в.* Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР.

³⁶ Söker Çağlar (2017). Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu'nun Çatışmayı Çözme Perspektifinden İncelenmesi. *Kafkas Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 8(16), 555-574.

Peter I (1672-1725) was also closely interested in the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea within the scope of the policy of gaining access to the warm waters.³⁷ According to him, capturing these regions would provide a great military-strategic advantage, since the conquest of these regions would guarantee the capture of new lands. Within the scope of this policy, the Russian armies started the Caucasus campaign³⁸ and General M.A. Matyushkin informed Peter I that the Russian armies had captured Baku in 1723.³⁹ However, Russia could not hold Baku for long and the city fell under Iranian rule again during the reign of Nader Shah.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan was one of the areas where the Ottomans and Safavids struggled for power for a long time. In the 18th century, the Safavid dynasty, which descended from the Oghuz tribe, was overthrown by another Oghuz tribe called the Afshars in Iran, and important events took place in the history of Azerbaijan and Karabakh, too.⁴¹

Nader Shah Afshar declared himself the shah at the Mughan Congress in 1736 and officially ended the rule of the Safavid dynasty. He appointed Pir Mahmud Khan as the khan of Erivan and abolished the khanates by reforming the administrative system inherited from the Safavids. A single administrative division named Azerbaijan was established instead.⁴²

There were numerous rebellions due to heavy taxes during the Nader Shah rule, which shook the foundation of the state. In the end, the Shah was assassinated in his palace.

Following the death of Nader Shah, i.e. the founder of the Afshar dynasty, in 1747, Iran was divided and came to the fore again with the issue of existence as a state. While several strong rivals clashed to establish centralized rule, the regional powers took advantage of the landscape and tried to strengthen their own authority. The struggle for power in the region lasted about 50 years.

³⁷ Смирнов, Н. А. (1958). *Политика России на Кавказе в XVI-XIX веках*. Москва: Изд-во социально-экон. литры.

³⁸ Соловьев, С. М. (2017). *История России с древнейших времен*. ДиректМедиа.

³⁹ Бутурлин Дмитрий Петрович (1823). *Военная История Походов Россиян В XVIII Столетию*. Часть Вторая. Том IV. 1-Я Половина. — Спб., С. 45., <https://runivers.ru/today4.php?id=578169> (Erişim Tarihi: 05.12.2022).

⁴⁰ Sariahmetoğlu Nesrin (2006). *Azeri-Ermeni ilişkileri (1905-1920)* (pp.1-6). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.

⁴¹ Victory in Nagorno-Karabakh after 44 Days: The Token of the Turkey-Azerbaijan Brotherhood. (2022). p.13. İstanbul: Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı Yayınları.

⁴² Yeşilot Okan (Ed.) (2016). *Revan Türkleri: Erivan Türk Yurdudur* (p.15). İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi.

In the following period, khanates emerged in Azerbaijan, and the Karabakh Khanate was established together with Erivan, Ganja, Baku, Tabriz, Sheki, Guba, Nakhchivan, Lankaran, Shamakhi and other khanates. The Erivan Khanate was a Turkish khanate established in the region where Yerevan, the capital of today's Armenia, is located.⁴³

In the same years, Armenian clergy and Armenian meliks tried to realize projects to establish an “independent” Armenian state under the auspices of Russia. Russia gained both political and military power in the South Caucasus region, which strengthened the Armenians' hopes to achieve their goals. The administration of Tsarist Russia, on the other hand, carried out a policy that would help the Armenians gain political power, but could not help them achieve their goal of founding an independent Armenia.⁴⁴

On September 2, 1781, Armenian clergy and meliks made contact with Russian state officials to obtain the patronage of the Tsarist regime. The Armenian meliks wrote a letter to the Tsarina and demanded protection.⁴⁵

About a year after General A. Suvorov submitted the report on the letter from the Armenian meliks of Karabakh to Potemkin, the letter was replied in 1782.⁴⁶

S. Melikov conveyed to Prince G. Potemkin the request of the Armenian meliks of Karabakh to appoint Russian General A. Suvorov as the commander-in-chief of the Russian-Armenian military unit. They also underlined in the letter that A. Suvorov knew both the language and customs of the Armenians. They sent another letter in which they emphasized that they were ready to gather a unit of two thousand volunteers to this end.⁴⁷

⁴³ Mustafayev Şöhret (2015). XVIII.-XX. Yüzyıllarda Tarihi Azerbaycan Topraqı-İrevan Hanlıđı'nın Arazisine Ermenilerin Göç Ettirilme Politikası. *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 31(91), 69-92.

⁴⁴ Yeşilot Okan (Ed.) (2016). Sarıahmetođlu Nesrin, Yeşilot Okan, Çapraz Hayri, Cabbarlı Hatem, *Revan Türkleri: Erivan Türk Yurdudur* (p.65). İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi.

⁴⁵ ЦГВИА, ф. 52, оп. 1/194, д. 270, лл. 50 -51. Оpubл. в сб.: Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке. 1760-1800 гг. Том IV. Ереван, 1990, док. No 113a. Нагорный Карабах в Международном Праве и Мировой Политике Документы и Комментарий Том I, Москва КРУГЪ 2008, Compiler, Editor, Author of Forward and Commentary Yuri Barsegov, Dr. of Law.

⁴⁶ ЦГАДА, ф. 10, оп. 1, д. 252, л. 2. Копия. Оpubл. в сб.: Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке. Том IV. 1760-1800 гг. Ереван, 1990, док. No 118. Нагорный Карабах в Международном Праве и Мировой Политике Документы и Комментарий Том I, Москва КРУГЪ 2008, Compiler, Editor, Author of Forward and Commentary Yuri Barsegov, Dr. of Law.

⁴⁷ ЦГВИА, ф. 52, оп. 1/194, д. 408, ч. 2, л. 20, с. об. Подлинник. Оpubл. в сб.: Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке. 1760-1800 гг. Том IV. Ереван, 1990,

Then, the Russian military commander, General Potemkin, wrote to Prince Argutinsky I asking him to answer some questions. Among these questions, the following are of great interest:

*How are the walls of the Khan of Shusha protected? What's near the walls? How can one reach him? I humbly ask you to inform me about that glorious castle guarding him impregnably, how does the road lead to him? Please provide information about the lakes, forests, mountains and marshes in the region.*⁴⁸

In the following years, after Georgia came under the patronage of Tsarist Russia, the Karabakh Armenians continued their demands for patronage.⁴⁹ The Armenians also wrote a letter promising to meet every need of 30.000 Russian soldiers for five years. The Armenian clergy, meliks and other notables signed this letter. Knez Potemkin, with Catherine II's permission, gave them hope that their requests for patronage would be fulfilled. Moreover, promises were made that the Khan of Karabakh, Ibrahim Khalil Khan, would be dethroned and an Armenian Christian state would be established.

Hearing of this situation, Ibrahim Khalil Khan had Katalikos Ioan executed. Daniel Melikbekov and Sarkis Handzasar, who were Ioan's brothers, were also banned from holding religious leadership.⁵⁰

Following Anna Ivanovna's accession to the throne in Tsarist Russia, things changed for the Russian soldiers in the South Caucasus. The number of soldiers decreased because of epidemics, and some of the Russian armies in the Caspian region were withdrawn. During the reign of Catherine II, plans were made to re-conquest the Caucasus, and Tsarist Russia, taking Peter I's will into account, strengthened its navy in the Caspian Sea and built

док. No 119. Нагорный Карабах в Международном Праве и Мировой Политике Документы и Комментарий Том I, Москва КРУГЪ 2008, Compiler, Editor, Author of Forward and Commentary Yuri Barsegov, Dr. of Law.

⁴⁸Письмо командующего российскими войсками на Кавказе Генерала П.Потемкина Князю И. Аргутинскому с просьбой ответить на вопросы, относящиеся к освобождению армении, ЦГАДА, ф. 23, 162-164. Отпуск. Опул. в сб.: Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке. 1760-1800 гг. Том IV. Ереван, 1990, док. No 123. Нагорный Карабах в Международном Праве и Мировой Политике Документы и Комментарий Том I, Москва КРУГЪ 2008, Compiler, Editor, Author of Forward and Commentary Yuri Barsegov, Dr. of Law.

⁴⁹ Бутков П. Г. (1869). Материалы для новой истории Кавказа, с 1722 по 1803 г. Ч. II. Санкт- Петербург.

⁵⁰ Yeşilot Okan (Ed.) (2016). *Revan Türkleri: Erivan Türk Yurdudur*, İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi.

a shipyard in Astrakhan on August 13, 1785.⁵¹ General Gudovich was appointed as the Viceroy of Caucasus⁵² and the Azerbaijani khanates were ordered twice, in 1792 and 1793, to accept the Russian domination. The Armenians who were made to immigrate to the region played a major role in shaping these plans of Catherine II. By order of Catherine II, Russian armies began to advance into the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan again in 1796, when the commander of the Russian armies was General Valerian Zubov.⁵³ The Armenians of the region called the Russian General “the savior of Christianity” and started cooperating with the Russian armies. Thinking of unleashing the Russian army on the Erivan Khanate, the Armenians wanted to take advantage of the military power of the Russians to establish the “Greater Armenia” state of their dreams. However, after the sudden death of Catherine II, Zubov was recalled from his duty in the Caucasus.⁵⁴

In summary, from the end of the 18th century, a new geopolitical environment began to take shape, threatening the future of the khanates in North Azerbaijan. Tsarist Russia had Georgia join itself and was preparing for an operation on the khanates. Some khanates that pinned their hope upon the Ottoman Empire during this period were disappointed because it was dealing with its own problems.⁵⁵

Having completed the industrial revolution in the 19th century, European states were in competition with each other firstly in terms of raw materials and then in search for wide markets. In this process, the Ottoman Empire and Iran were in the center of attention due to their large lands, natural ports, trade routes, and both underground and aboveground resources. The Russian Empire, in particular, posed a great threat to these countries. The Ottoman Empire and Iran, on the other hand, had been at enmity for centuries because they adopted different sects of Islam. However, now that they were faced with a common threat, they had to

⁵¹Петров, А. (2018, May 13). *Начало славной истории: создание русского Черноморского флота*. Regnum. Date accessed: January 7, 2023, from <https://regnum.ru/news/2414112.html>

⁵² Урушадзе, А. Т. (2012). История военно-народного управления на Кавказе: в поисках автора и истоков. *Восток. Афро-Азиатские общества: история и современность*, (6), 137-142.

⁵³ Дубровин Н. Ф. (1871). *История Войны И Владычества Русских На Кавказе*, Т. 1-6. - Спб., 1871-1888.

⁵⁴ Sariahmetoğlu Nesrin (2006). *Azeri-Ermeni ilişkileri (1905-1920)* (pp.1-6). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.

⁵⁵ Nesibli L. Nesib (2021). Karabağ'ın Azerbaycan İçin Önemi. In M. Ataman, & F. Pirinççi (Eds.). *Çıkmazdan Çözüme Karabağ Sorunu* (p.44). İstanbul: SETA.

pursue more pragmatic policies⁵⁶, but the Ottoman Empire was struggling with its own internal issues at the time, and Iran could not stop the advance of the Russian Empire alone.

Meanwhile, in Iran in 1795, Agha Mohammad Shah, girding on the sword belonging to the Safavid ruler Shah Ismail, held a congress in Tehran and declared himself the Shah, the eternal heir to the Safavids.

As mentioned above, after the death of Catherine II and her son Pavel I retreated his army because he did not support his mother's policy in this region, the Khan prepared for a great expedition in 1797 to capture Azerbaijan and Karabakh first, and then Erivan and Georgia.⁵⁷

In fact, the Shah of Iran, Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, was planning to attack the Karabakh Khanate, which had gained its independence. The Khan of Karabakh, on the other hand, asked for help from the Ottoman Grand Vizier. The response to this call for help did not go beyond moral support and promises of help. In other words, it seems that the Azerbaijani khanates could not protect themselves against the attack of Agha Mohammad Khan or the threat of Russia.

Agha Mohammad Khan met with serious resistance when he attacked Northern Azerbaijan. Shusha, the center of the Karabakh Khanate, was besieged for 33 days, but the attack in 1795 ultimately failed. This did not stop Agha Mohammad Khan and he carried out a second and a larger attack and the Khan of Karabakh left Shusha during this attack. Agha Mohammad Khan seized Shusha. However, he could not stay here long and was assassinated. When the khan was killed, the political landscape in the region underwent drastic changes, and Russian Commander Pavel Dmitriyevich Tsitsianov⁵⁸ took action to take advantage of this landscape in the Karabakh Khanate. After General Tsitsianov, who is of Georgian origin, became the head of Caucasian armies of Russia, he took part in the military operation

⁵⁶ Soofizadeh Abdolvahid & Türker Özgür (2018). Rusya-İran (Kaçar) İlişkileri Adına Dehşet Verici Bir Hadise: Rusya'nın Tahran Başkonsolosluğu Baskını ve Büyükelçi Aleksandr Griboyedov Ve Maiyetinin Katledilmesi (11 Şubat 1829). *Bellefen*, 82(294), 569-586.

⁵⁷ Abdolvahid Soof Zadeh (2014). *Kaçar Döneminde İran-Osmanlı Siyasi İlişkileri* (pp.50-51). Ankara Üniversitesi.

⁵⁸ One of the most controversial figures in the Caucasus policy of the Russian Empire in the 18th-19th centuries was Prince Pavel Dmitriyevich Tsitsianov. (1754 - 1806). "Покоритель Закавказья - князь Павел Дмитриевич Цицианов", <https://topwar.ru/26609-pokoritel-zakavkazya-knyaz-pavel-dmitriyevich-cicianov.html>, Date accessed: December 13, 2022).

to be carried out against the khanates in the South Caucasus region together with his deputy, Ovannes, who is of Armenian origin.⁵⁹



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Pavel Dmitriyevich Tsitsianov was appointed by Tsar Alexander I himself in 1802 as the most severe enforcer of Russia's imperialist “Eastern Politics” in the South Caucasus. His main goal was to accelerate the invasion plan of the tsardom and to expand the lands Russia conquered in the North Caucasus towards the south as soon as possible. Thus, Russia would expand its borders to both the Kura and Aras rivers, and populate

⁵⁹ Yeşilot Okan (Ed.) (2016). *Revan Türkleri: Erivan Türk Yurdu* (p.70), İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi.

⁶⁰ General Pavel Dmitriyevich Sisianov, “Покоритель Закавказья - князь Павел Дмитриевич Цицианов”, <https://topwar.ru/26609-pokoritel-zakavkazy-a-knyaz-pavel-dmitriyevich-cicianov.html>, Date accessed: December 13, 2022).

these regions with Christian nations such as Armenians, Georgians, etc., who were scattered around Iran and Turkey.⁶¹

On the other hand, the Khan of Karabakh, Ibrahim Khan, tried to protect his own reign through Russian support.⁶² The process kept on this way during the reign of Russian Tsar Alexander I, too, and after he ordered Pavel Dmitriyevich Tsitsianov in December 1802 that only the Russian flag had to fly over the Caspian Sea, Tsitsianov signed the Treaty of Kurakchay on May 14, 1805 with the support of the Armenians who were made to immigrate to the region⁶³, and the Karabakh Khanate was integrated into Russia.⁶⁴

According to the terms of the Treaty of Kurakchay:

- The Khan of Karabakh would come under the rule of the Russian Empire “with all family, posterity and possessions of his”.
- He would forever reject any sovereignty of Persia or any other state or any allegiance under any title.
- The khan would send his eldest son to Tbilisi as a hostage, and “promise not to have any relations with neighboring possessors without preliminary consent of Governor of Georgia”, i.e. Tsitsianov.
- In addition, 500 Russian soldiers would be stationed in the Shusha Fortress and 8000 chervonets would be paid annually to the treasury of the Russian Tsardom.
- In return, it was promised “to preserve continuously the honour of Ibrahim Khan, his spouse, heirs and posterity in the area of Shusha

⁶¹ Hajiyev Javid (2022). Azərbaycan Gence Hanlığı: Cevad Han'ın General Sisyanov'la Mektuplaşması (Gence Uğrunda Mücadele). *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 131(258), 135-158.

⁶² Nesibli L. Nesib (2021). Karabağ'ın Azərbaycan İçin Önemi. In M. Ataman, & F. Piriñçi (Eds.). *Çıkmazdan Çözümə Karabağ Sorunu* (p.44). İstanbul: SETA.

⁶³ Nesibli L. Nesib (2021). Karabağ'ın Azərbaycan İçin Önemi. In M. Ataman, & F. Piriñçi (Eds.). *Çıkmazdan Çözümə Karabağ Sorunu* (p.45). İstanbul: SETA.

⁶⁴ “Трактат Между Российской Империей и Шушинским и Карабахским Ханом о Переходе Ханства Под Власть России”, Нагорный Карабах в Международном Праве и Мировой Политике Документы и Комментарии Том I, Москва КРУГЪ 2008, Compiler, Editor, Author of Forward and Commentary Yuri Barsegov, Dr. of Law, s.143-146.

khanate”, and “to give all the power of internal governing, court and persecution, income and its possession to Ibrahim Khan”.^{65,66}

However, Russia did not fulfill the terms of the treaty in the ongoing process. General Tsitsianov was assassinated on February 8, 1806.⁶⁷ In response to his assassination, Ibrahim Khan and his family were murdered in February 1806.

The Treaty of Kurakchay, which was signed in 1805 between the Khan of Karabakh Ibrahim Khan and the commander of the Russian military unit Pavel Dmitriyevich Tsitsianov and is the main document regarding the annexation of the Karabakh Khanate by Russia as a Turkish region, and the appointment of Mehdigulu Agha as the new khan of Karabakh with the Imperial Decree of 1806 after the murder of Ibrahim Khan by the Russians shed light on the ethnic structure and identity of the region.⁶⁸

The Azerbaijani Khanates took advantage of the internal disturbance in Russia and began to seek ways to gain their independence from Russia again, but in 1812, the Northern Azerbaijani Khanates, including the Karabakh Khanate, were occupied by Russia.⁶⁹

Therefore, when Tsarist Russia attempted to invade Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 19th century, it did not find a united Azerbaijan that understood national unity in the true sense of the word, but a weak country consisting of khanates that were indifferent to each other's destiny.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Nesibli L.Nesib (2021). Karabağ'ın Azərbaycan İçin Önemi. In M. Ataman, & F. Pirinççi (Eds.). *Çıkmazdan Çözüme Karabağ Sorunu* (p.45). İstanbul: SETA.

⁶⁶ “Трактат Между Российской Империей и Шушинским и Карабахским Ханом о Переходе Ханства Под Власть России”, Нагорный Карабах в Международном Праве и Мировой Политике Документы и Комментарий Том I, Москва КРУГЪ 2008, Compiler, Editor, Author of Forward and Commentary Yuri Barsegov, Dr. of Law, s.143-146.

⁶⁷ Л. С. Гагагова Цицианов / Владимир Лапин. – В. Цицианов. М.: Молодая Гвардия, 2011. - 542[2] С.: Ил. - (Жизнь Замечательных Людей: Сер. Биограф.; Вып. 1338). ISBN 978-5-235-- 03484-6. Усл. Печ. Л. 28,56+1,68 Вкл. Тираж 3000 Экземпляров, Вестник ТвГУ. Серия «История». 2014. No 3. С. 169–175.

⁶⁸ Kurban Vefa, İbrahim Hazar, Derman G.Saynur, Ünalmiş A.Nafiz, Aslanlı Araz, Gül Burcu, Çümen Nur (2020). *Güney Kafkasya'nın Parlayan Yıldızı Azerbaycan: Tarihi, Siyasi Yapısı, Enerji Boyutu ve Jeopolitik Konumu ile* (p.184). Ankara: Nobel Yayınları.

⁶⁹ Sarıahmetoğlu Nesrin (2006). *Azeri-Ermeni ilişkileri (1905-1920)* (pp.1-6). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.

⁷⁰ Mehmetzade, M. B. (1991). *Milli Azərbaycan Hareketi*. Ankara: Azərbaycan Kültür Derneği Yayınları.; Asker, A., & Şeyban, S. (2021). Historical Background,

The claims about the “Armenian melikdoms”, which were frequently mentioned to exist in Karabakh, are an example of the fact that Armenian “researchers” misrepresent the historical facts. The five Christian melikdoms of the Karabakh Khanate, the majority of which Turks constituted, were authorized only for the Armenian community of the region they were in, and the issue of independence was not on the agenda in these structures. Therefore, the name of this administration was not mentioned in the Treaty of Kurakchay signed between Tsitsianov and Ibrahim Khan. After the murder of Khan of Karabakh, Ibrahim Khalil Khan, Tsar Alexander I gave a royal decree on September 10, 1806 regarding the appointment of his son Mehdigulu Agha to the position of khan. There was no provision or article regarding the Armenian melikdoms in this decree. Moreover, the historical records indicate that only one of the five melikdoms contained indigenous people of Karabakh, and the other four migrated to Karabakh from different regions. Therefore, it can be confidently stated that the claim that Karabakh is an “Armenian state”, which Armenian writers strongly emphasize, is a sham.⁷¹

In this period, Russia attached importance to the creation of a structure in which Armenians were to hold the majority in the Caucasus in order to maintain its upper hand in the wars with the Ottoman and Qajar states and to have a strong control point in line with the goal of gaining access to the warm waters. In this regard, what is written in the book titled “Armenian-Russian Relations in the 18th Century”, which was published in the capital of Armenia, i.e. Yerevan, in 1967, draws attention:⁷²

*“In his letter to Catherine II on May 19, 1783, Knez G. A. Potemkin wrote that they would do whatever necessary to put Karabakh under the control of the Armenians as soon as they had the chance, and thus to establish a Christian state in Asia”.*⁷³

Legal Qualification and Political Consequences of Kurekçay Agreement. *Giresun University Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 7(1), 34-50.

⁷¹ Asker Ali & Şeyban Sedanur (2021). Historical Background, Legal Qualification and Political Consequences of Kurekçay Agreement. *Giresun University Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 7(1), 34-50.

⁷² Aslanlı Araz (2021). Birinci Karabağ Savaşı'nın Nedenleri ve Sonuçları. In M. Ataman, & F. Piriñçi (Eds.). *Çıkmazdan Çözüme Karabağ* (p.119). İstanbul: SETA.

⁷³ Армяно-Русские Отношения В Первой Трети XVIII Века, Т. II, Ч. II, Сост.: П.Т. Арутюнян, С.А. Тер-Авакимова, В.А. Акопян; Под Ред. А. Иоаннисяна.Сб. Документов /АН Армср, Ин-Т Истории; - Ереван : Изд-Во АН Армср, 1967: Екатерина II А. В., Потемкин-Таврический Г. А. Личная Переписка (1769-1791) Directmedia, 7 Апр. 2015 Г.

During the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812 and the Russo-Persian War of 1804-1813, Armenian families in Anatolia and Iran were made to immigrate to the Karabakh region. The Russian Empire was confirmed in possession of the Karabakh region with the Treaty of Gulistan signed with Iran in 1813. The Khan of Karabakh Mehdigulu Khan, the successor of Ibrahim Khan, had to flee to Iran. Jafarqulu Khan, on the other hand, was exiled to Russia. All assets of the Khans of Karabakh were confiscated.⁷⁴

As a result, Iran was defeated in the Russo-Persian war. Russia seized power in all Northern Azerbaijani Khanates, with the exception of Erivan and Nakhchivan, with the Treaty of Gulistan.

Neither Iran, nor Russia nor the Armenians were satisfied with the Treaty of Gulistan. The Russians had been planning further expansion, the Iranians had desired to reclaim the places they had lost, the Armenians had been dreaming of an independent Armenia by reviving the old hostilities between Russia and Iran under the leadership of archbishop Nerses Ashtaraketsi, who had gone to Tbilisi from Etchmiadzin in 1814.⁷⁵

After the Treaty of Gulistan was signed, rebellions broke out one after another in almost all regions of Northern Azerbaijan. In 1813, the people of Derbent protested the arbitrary rule. In 1814, the people of Sheki revolted. Later, riots broke out in Gazakh, Shamshadil and Borchaly. The rebellion in the Derbent-Quba region continued for almost twenty years. Almost none of the local rulers cooperated with the Russians, most of them took refuge in Iran, asking the Iranian shah for help to regain their wealth and dominance.⁷⁶ However, these attempts did not produce any results.

Russia abolished the Karabakh Khanate and other khanates in 1822.

The new administrative structure of the Russian Tsardom in the South Caucasus did not fit the ethnic structure of the local population there. Demographic changes made during and after the occupation destroyed the traditional demographic structure there, creating a completely new landscape. The demographic policy Russia pursued in this region in the 19th century was clearly more discriminatory in Azerbaijan compared to its neighbors. The Armenians were at the center of the demographic policy of

⁷⁴ Nesibli L. Nesib (2021). Karabağ'ın Azerbaycan İçin Önemi. In M. Ataman, & F. Pirinççi (Eds.). *Çıkmazdan Çözüm Karabağ Sorunu* (p.45). İstanbul: SETA.

⁷⁵ Özşavli Halil (2012). Ermeni Milliyetçilik Hareketlerinin Doğuşu Taşnak-İttihat Ve Terakki İttifaki. *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, (41), 141-190.

⁷⁶ Nesibli L. Nesib (2019). *Azerbaycan Tarihi Millet-Devlet-Siyaset* (pp.206-207). Ankara: Altınordu yayınları.