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In the late 1980s, ethnopolitical problems came to the fore all over the world, capturing the minds of the academic and journalist communities and the imagination of ordinary people who authored books, articles, and essays on the urgent issues of the world’s contemporary developments. Indeed, mankind watched how states (the Soviet giant empire among them) fell apart; and how ethnic wars and ethnocide produced millions of ethnic refugees and forced migrants. And the list goes on.
The globalization-related problems are much harder to grasp for the man-in-the-street and much harder to analyze for the academics: Is the process a natural outcome of the world’s previous development, and what are its consequences? These and similar questions raise a flurry of confusion and no unequivocal answers.

In fact, the two problem groups outlined above are closely interconnected, not only because they belong to the same “field of diffusion,” but also because their dispassionate scholarly investigation is hindered by several common factors: the strong emotional background, heterogeneous aspects lumped together, substitution of abstract constructions for very specific concepts, etc. These difficulties must be overcome when analyzing the “globalization-ethnicization” tandem; this is especially important in the case of the Caucasus, a region of numerous conflicts. Here we have to seek and find answers to many challenging issues:

- How can two diametrically opposite processes—globalization and ethnicization of life—unfold in the same spatial-temporal expanse?
- Can the Caucasian peoples, in principle, switch from the dominant ethnopolitical imperatives to universal global values?
- What will globalization bring to the Caucasus: peace, democracy, prosperity or another bout of bloody repartition of borders, division of territories and resources that will produce dwarf or mutant states?

Globalization and Ethnicization: Two Sides of the Same Coin?

When looking at the ethnopolitical situation across the post-Soviet expanse (especially in the Caucasus), researchers are usually in the habit of merely registering the facts—the method being of little academic value. Indeed, how do we profit from a simple statement of the fact that in the Caucasus the Soviet Union’s disintegration revived national-ethnic problems that had lain dormant for many decades,1 or from accepting the subjective idea that the Russian radicals led by Boris Yeltsin played a decisive role in the process by supporting the national separatists in other republics?2

Indeed, the post-Soviet Baltic republics with “tension zones” of their own (Ignalina with its predominantly Russian population and Šalčininkai populated by Poles in Lithuania and the Russian-populated Narva District in Estonia) have never known vehement ethnopolitical conflicts. In Latvia, the Russian population, which comprises nearly 50 percent of the republic’s total population, is a factor of ethnopolitical tension.

When trying to explain this and similar paradoxes, academics tend toward oversimplification by saying that the post-Soviet nations’ cultural level and mentality3 varied from state to state, or that the current ethnic problems are rooted in the past histories of ethnic relations,4 or are caused by the struggle for property and economic resources,5 or that the great powers are

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playing their “big games,” etc. Fiona Hill of the United States has pointed out that comparing the Caucasus with the Baltic states, which were and still are concerned with the same issues—integration into Europe, cooperation with NATO, etc.—produces highly interesting results. The Baltic countries, which acted together, succeeded, even though it was not easy, to formulate common aims. They are all different and their histories are unique, even though sometimes very similar. Nothing of the sort can be seen in the Caucasus: there is no common agenda to promote joint development of the Transcaucasian republics. There is no cooperation among them, and this is the main stumbling block.7

There are also academic works that explain the current ethnopolitical situation by the region’s civilizational specifics inherent in all the nations and uniting them into a civilization8 determined, among other things, by archaic ethnosocial features: the clan, teip, patriarchal way of life, parochialism, etc.

Western political thought, which serves as the intellectual denominator of European and international integration, regards the deepening ethnopolitical contradictions in the Caucasus and the trend toward smaller states as an archaic feature inherited from the pre-capitalist or totalitarian past. Francis Fukuyama has written that it was economic forces that boosted nationalism when they replaced class with national barriers, thus creating centralized and linguistically homogeneous entities. Today, the same economic forces are working toward liquidating the national barriers by setting up a single world market. The very fact that our generation or the one after us might not live long enough to see the final political neutralization of nationalism does not mean that this will never happen.9 This is a politically correct position that can be described as rational if taken as a forecast, but, as a scholarly effort, it fails to provide an adequate analysis of the Caucasian developments.

It is safe to say that the nature and course of the ethnopolitical processes cannot be explained by their own inherent features as the cause of their own existence. To create an effective scholarly model of the genesis of the ethnopolitical processes we should seek external impulses, determinants of a higher order that initiate these phenomena in a latent way and correlate with the intermediate and final results.

Globalization interpreted as a historical process through which mankind looks into its genetic substance, a very complicated process, which Teilhard de Chardin called “curling,” may play the role of a universal impulse. According to the French philosopher, nations have already reached the threshold of mutual dependence beyond which there is no place for the settlement of international conflicts by reshaping borders. One of the founders of global evolutionism predicted that the “phenomenon of man” would develop into the “phenomenon of mankind,” which, in the final analysis, opens the road to removing everything that divides people.10

We can even say tentatively (the issue calls for further theoretical and empirical reconsideration) that certain aspects and forms of proto-globalization have been present throughout the history of mankind. I have in mind the great empires of antiquity and the Middle Ages, as well as the global colonial empires of the New Age. Most American researchers date the early globalization stages to 1492 and the era of Geographic Discoveries. After analyzing the data for 1601-1833, Emily Erikson and Peter Bearman concluded that it was the dishonest merchants and sailors of the East India Trading Company who were responsible for globalization.11

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The 20th and the early 21st centuries can be described as an era of competing globalist development projects: the libertarian and the communist, the colonial and the civilizational, the multipolar and the unipolar. Even if one element of the pair proved unviable (the communist one, for example), this does not mean that its alternative—the libertarian variant—has scored a “complete and final victory” and emerged as the only possible variant. Charles Handy is quite right when he writes that “capitalism has proved itself superior to communism, but has failed, thus far, to show that it has the complete answer to our desire for progress.”

A. Utkin, in turn, also points out globalization’s conceptual specifics: “The term ‘globalization’ is a metaphor invented to clarify the meaning and nature of contemporary capitalism.” Indeed, Latin America, which is “going red” before our eyes, casts doubts on the generally accepted opinion that the liberal market model of social relations has scored a final victory.

Globalization, understood as movement toward worldwide interconnections based on communications, the merging of national economies, and the emergence of new international forms of infrastructure, is bound to lead to mutually exclusive trends. The 18th IPSA World Congress discussed globalization and its contradictions: the globalization/Westernization/modernization correlation; the contradictory correlation between the globalization processes and national sovereignty and national interests; the contradictions between identity and globalization, between the growing national self-awareness of numerically small ethnic groups and their development in the absence of adequate representative (national-state) structures in the countries where they live and in the world; the contradictions between the national-ethnic relations and consciousness in the epoch of globalization; the globalization/migration contradictions; and the growing threats of nationalism and separatism against the background of unfolding globalization.

More elements can be added, but the currently obvious contradictions of globalization fit into one of the following problem ranges:

1. The threats and challenges born by globalization (international terrorism and crime, drug trafficking, slave trade, etc.), the scope and consequences of which have outmatched its unique advantages.

2. The vague relations between nation-states and quasi-state formations, between ethnic groups and supra-national structures.

3. The unipolar world and the gradually emerging opposing factors. The pillars of the Anglo-Saxon planetary hegemony are gradually being undermined by other global trends, such as the shrinking number of those who use English as their native language (currently 7 percent), while Chinese is the native language of over 20 percent of the global population; the steadily decreasing share of Christians, as opposed to the steadily growing share of the Muslims, etc.

4. The elite nature of globalization which has deepened the abyss between the world’s regions: the rich are growing richer, while the poor are becoming even poorer.

An analysis of the above shows that globalization is exacerbating the following:

- Development problems—the rich North and the poor South;
- Global problems—the democratic West and the authoritarian-totalitarian East.

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No wonder there is the opinion that the “new world order” might turn out to be a “new world disorder.”\textsuperscript{15}

In view of the above, globalization can be described as a geo-historical process that has already involved, on different scales, all sides of public life and various regions, which thus received different impulses and development vectors depending on their parameters and development quality. The ethnopolitical processes of today can be discussed in this context from two points of view: first, the way globalization affects the ethnic processes proper, and second, its impact on the forms of their political institutionalization.

There is every reason to believe that in the 21st century these two directly opposing global trends will become even more pronounced: on the one hand, the widespread processes of ethnic consolidation and ethnopolitical mobilization betray a disuniting trend; on the other, ethnic integration and the emerging new forms of global community play a unifying role.

These trends are obviously two sides of the same globalization process, but in different regions (states) one of them might prevail. In a large number of nations of Eurasia and Africa, the socio-economic development level of which remains below the threshold of the industrial epoch, globalization is (and will remain for the next several decades) a catalyst for classical capitalist processes that will call to life the “national spirit” and create ethno-nations and national states.

This explains the Soviet Union’s disintegration as the rejection of a historically unviable globalist model that opened the road toward a different regional development model. The Baltic republics, whose peoples had already developed historically by this time,\textsuperscript{16} merely became national states with constitutional traditions. In fact, the Soviet Union’s demise helped to restore their lost sovereignty. No wonder that constitutional political, civil nationalism with social and even democratic features is typical of them.

In those regions and countries in which ethnonational unity was half-baked and where the national-state order (ethnopolitical consolidation) was not completely formed, ethnic activation emerged as the main trend obvious elsewhere in the world. This defrosted another mechanism of protection and adaptation—ethnonationalism—based on the policy of ethnic domination and zealous defense against the real or invented domination of “alien” nations. Driven to its extreme, the adaptation mechanism yields what looks like absolutely opposite results: the process of national-state development proceeds as ethnocratic and national imperialist, two phenomena that reject supra-national trends and alien features. I have already written that contradictions are inherent in globalization, which, as a geo-historical process, manifests itself not as a unilinear advance, but rather as a sinusoid with nations and regions scattered along it.

Globalization and ethnicization, two poles of a single historical process through which the planet is developing into a “global village,”\textsuperscript{17} coexist in an internally complex dialectics of mutual transitions. In the “global village,” in which nothing can remain secret and in which everyone is responsible for everything, classical multinational states complete with the attributes of ethnic policy (economically justified borders, ethnicity as a status, etc.) call to life another objective sociohistorical requirement: planetary uniformity designed to overcome these attributes. On the other hand, globalization

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\textsuperscript{16} In the Middle Ages, the Eastern Baltic tribes (the Lits, Zemaite, Zmuad, Livs, Ests, and others) were drawn into ethnic transformations that produced the Lithuanians, Letts, and Estonians within the Holy Roman Empire, a European quasi-state at the time. The well-known dictum that it was not the nation that created the state, but the state that created the nation has been confirmed by the Baltic nations’ development (see: E. Hobsbaum, Natsii i natsionalizm posle 1980 g., St. Petersburg, 1998, p. 68).

\textsuperscript{17} M. McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1962.
has great potential for self-destruction—it accelerates powerful migration flows that add to the world’s ethnic patchiness; this is happening everywhere, including in the previously more or less homogenous countries, and is creating numerous ethnopolitical problems:

— Sharpened contradictions between the titular and non-titular nations, as well as between the so-called center and ethnic fringes (enclaves);
— Pronounced ethnic reductionism, which looks at the political, social, economic, and cultural processes through the prism of ethnic self-identity;
— Deepened ethnonationalism and ethnoregionalism;
— More emphasis on the rights and status of ethnic minorities;
— Accents shifted from political-civil to ethnic identification, etc.

Ethnic migration may even lead to *sucession*.18 This can be observed in some of the European countries and Russia (according to certain sources today, the Chinese comprise 50 percent of the local population in the Russian Far East).19 The relatively fast changes in the ethnic structures of states and regions (which may cause more ethnopolitical threats) are mainly brought about by the increasingly globalized demographic processes among the host ethnic groups.

If the ethnopolitical component continues to gain weight in social life, it may, in the near future, cause unacceptably deep fragmentation of practically all multiethnic states. The present system of international relations will tumble down; ethnopolitical conflicts will be triggered in all corners of the world, some of them developing into interstate or even regional wars. There is any number of warnings about “disintegration of the world’s homogeneity” and “disrupted ethnicity;” some authors say: “In the age of globalization, ethnonational minorities will grow more aggressive because of threatened ethnic specifics and vague prospects.”20

There is another, no less important, aspect of the same problem: the national states will play less important roles in the world under the pressure of globalization. Their foundations will be undermined in many respects: the transnational economy will deprive national borders of their economic meaning; state sovereignty will shrink because at least some of the states will transfer part of their sovereign rights to supranational institutions; information and communication technologies will easily cross state borders, thus leading to “a world without information borders;” while much more active transnational migration and deepening pluralism among cultures and ethnicities will undermine the states still further.

According to certain Western scholars (Yale H. Ferguson and Richard W. Mansbach among others), the present motion toward globalization undermines the states and the system of states.21 In other words, even though it still exists, the nation is becoming irrelevant. The closer we move toward the global integral whole, the closer we come to the end of geography (the state-national division of the world).22

At the same time, the historical prospects for national states look pretty optimistic. “It is too early to dismiss national states as the main subjects of international relations. They form a mega-community with respect to their aims and interests.”23 There is a multitude of diverse factors responsible

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18 A term introduced by Lev Gumilev in his theory of anthropogenesis to describe the process of abnormally fast change in a territory’s ethnic composition.
for the degree to which any country negatively responds to globalization. It seems that those who say, “The less competent a state, the more likely it is to dissolve into component parts or be unable to adapt to transnational developments. Challenges at home and abroad test the mettle of states,” are absolutely right.

**The Caucasus: from the “Realm of Ethnic Policy” to the “Realm of Globalization?”**

This question is of strategic importance for the region. When dealing with the region’s specific problems, local politicians face a daily dilemma: they must either rely on the universal values declared at the international level, or offer the “local audience” ethnopolitical slogans.

On the whole, the fact that ethnopolitical formulas dominate in the Caucasus can be amply explained by the natural-geographical determination of the local multiethnic structures, the weak economic component of the region’s sociopolitical development, the absence, until the 19th-20th centuries, of historically deep-rooted centralized states or strong supra-national territorial-state units, etc.

The above suggests that the ethnopolitical processes in the Caucasus, and in the majority of Central Eurasian states for that matter, should have passed, and are passing, through certain stages to ultimately reach a level of socioeconomic and political development approved by the world community. This stage-by-stage ethnopolitical development fits perfectly into the “socially compressed time” globalization has offered them. For this reason, we can describe the evolution of ethnonationalism (so far dominant) into plebiscitary nationalism as objectively necessary, which offers democratic tools to be used to achieve ethnic compromises and ethnic cooperation.

We should not confuse two absolutely different processes: the formation and consolidation of contemporary nations and ethnic groups in the Caucasus and the related political phenomena, on the one hand, and ethnic domination achieved through coercion, ethnic cleansing, deportations, and annexations, on the other.

Ethnopolitical self-determination and its forms are where the two trends meet. It should be said that absolutization of the national state as the only possible form of statehood is not merely erroneous from the scholarly point of view—it is a dangerous political position fraught with crimes against humanity. To justify this approach, both the academic and the political community say that today the earth is home for up to 5,000 nationalities scattered over about 200 countries. This means that there are potentially 5,000 different ethnic cultures, mentalities, ways of life, and behavioral patterns. Obviously, not all these peoples live in their own states: such fragmentation would have undermined the world order. The desire of some peoples to have more than one country is equally dangerous.

We can safely say that this issue (a fairly painful one for the nationalities that “came too late” to create a state) is of critical importance for those who want to understand the ethnopolitical and interstate relations in the Caucasus.

Irrespective of personal political and ethnic loyalties and emotions, we should admit that as long as nations, national development, and national issues remain on the agenda, the self-determination issue in one form or another will survive. Donald Horowitz of the United States pointed out that national self-determination “is a problem rather than an answer. Any number of arguments can be found

against emphasizing national self-determination in favor of mutual compromises.”25 And while developing these arguments, several more reasons “against” can be found.

- **First**, the thesis of self-determination of a nation or a small ethnic group in a multiethnic state26 should not necessarily be supported by ethnic extremism, separatism, or secession. There are many different civilized forms: recognition of the right to internal self-determination, cultural autonomy, free development of the national spiritual values and language, following ethnic rites, historico-religious traditions, etc.

  Stability and prosperity suffer if national self-determination is promoted by uncivilized methods. Gidon Gottlieb of the United States has pointed out that efforts to resolve the problem of separatism by dividing states lead to nothing but growing instability.27 We all know that, unfortunately, the slogans of moving away from separatism to more civilized forms of ethnic politics (regional autonomies of various types, political and administrative decentralization, etc.) obviously have not yet been recognized in the Caucasus. When looking for the roots, the researcher (who will discover the political, economic, and ethnosophic factors) will inevitably intrude into the very complicated sphere of political and ethnic psychology, in which hostile ethnic attitudes, prejudices, and fears are born.28

- **Second**, there is a considerable number of fairly large ethnic minorities in the Caucasian countries with a so-called “external status,” which means that they form titular nations in the neighboring states. This applies to the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) and Samtske-Javakhetia (Georgia), the Azeri of Kvemo-Kartli (Georgia) and, very provisionally, the Ossets of South Ossetia (Georgia). The central authorities of these states may fear (with or without good reason) that international actors, geopolitical centers of power, or patron-states in which these nationalities are titular might try to defend the ethnic minorities, to use them in their aggressive policies, or even go as far as annexing the territory populated by an ethnic minority.

  In this situation any state with such “ethnic potential” should forestall unwelcome developments by acting in the interests of its national security and in full conformity with regional relations. If the measures do not produce the desired effect, or if foreign actors disregard the international regulations (the notorious double standards), small ethnic groups may call for outside assistance. In this case, the initial apprehensions prove correct: it turns out that ethnic groups are disloyal to the state. The mechanism of “realized prophesies” comes into play, while rival states seek and acquire support in “gateway states”29 among the separatist-minded ethnic minorities.

- **Third**, the practical experience of the numerous conflict zones in the Caucasus (Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, Ossetia, Chechnia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia) has proven beyond a doubt that the ethnic issue is being actively used, together with “national liberation” slogans, the aggressive defense of rights, etc., to pro-

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26 About 90 percent of the countries can be described as multiethnic; those countries in which ethnonational minorities comprise less than 5 percent are considered monoethnic. There are no more than 20 such states in the world.


29 “Gateway states” means small advantageously located states with transition economies; the term belongs to Saul B. Cohen of the United States.
mote the status-related interests of the elites, frequently intertwined with the interests of the local mafia groups and clans. Thomas de Waal has pointed out to two important factors that interfere with the restoration of the Caucasus. The first is the local system in which power belongs to the local cartels or feudal lords pursuing their own short-term goals, such as continued domination at the local level. They are probably aware, writes de Waal, that in the long term they could profit more from regional cooperation, but they are too engrossed in current developments to stop and look around. The second factor is the Karabakh conflict.

In this context, any minimum concessions in the sphere of language and culture and opening of national universities trigger further escalation. The ethnic elites, deliberately or otherwise, are leading the process into an impossible situation that will require radical measures to extricate itself.

Here is another important issue. Political writings and the mass consciousness are showing that they fail to grasp the fundamental difference between the formation of nation-ethnic groups and the formation of national states. They are close, interdependent, and mutually complementary phenomena under present conditions; however, a line can and should be drawn between them. Globalization is rapidly changing the historical types of sociocultural (nation, ethnos) and political (nation-state) communities. R. Abdullatipov of Russia has written: “In the 19th and even 20th centuries, the nation-state more likely than not meant the domination of one nation and the dissolution of all others for the sake of statehood. …The nation-state of the 21st century is a closely knit and equal entity of equally dignified ethnic nations united into a single political community with a common sociopolitical destiny.”

Can this be realized in the Caucasus?

Political science and practical politics have long been of the pessimistic opinion that ethnically pluralistic communities do not create fertile soil for democracy. Since it is commonly accepted that only contemporary democracies are immune to wars, there is no shortage of pessimistic forecasts for the Caucasus. We have to admit that globalization might revive the old ethnopolitical problems and even create new ones. In this context, we can expect three possible threats to come to the fore.

1. The Domino Effect. We all know that during so-called peaceful periods, frozen and latent ethnic contradictions do not die out—they continue accumulating their destructive potential. The very fragile “neither war nor peace” state that we can observe in the Caucasus...
sus may be upturned by several methods, the most probable of them being another attempt by the national minorities to set up independent states. The ethnopolitical processes in the Caucasus are interdependent to a very high degree. An escalated conflict in one country may start a domino effect in its neighbors, where such developments look impossible: in monoethnic Armenia, or in Azerbaijan where the ethnopolitical situation is strictly controlled.

There are no limits to the possible involvement of neighbors in the seats of ethnic tension in other countries; the reasons vary from geopolitical to economic, or may be due to the division of resources. B. Coppieters believes that in the post-Soviet era ethnic relations became politicized and involved in the security sphere for one of these reasons; ethnic issues that used to belong to domestic and interstate relations were elevated to the level of national security issues, thus making their compromise settlement next to impossible.35

2. The Nesting Doll. This threat will arrive on the heels of the domino effect to add to the tension and create a new level of ethnopolitical activity. In fact the nesting doll threat might prove lethal for Georgia as the most vulnerable South Caucasian state. If independent states do appear in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, so far the two most serious seats of separatism, the Armenians in the southern part of Central Georgia (7.5 percent of the country’s total population) and the Azeri from Central Georgia’s southern and southeastern areas (6.5 percent), as well as the Avars in the Kvareli District and the Kistin Chechens of the Akhmeti District, may start pressing for independence.36 This will weaken central power and aggravate the situation in Ajaria and Mingrelia, causing the republic’s further fragmentation. At the same time, it can be surmised that the parade of sovereignties will not stop at that. Each of the new states will be pestered by ethnopolitical collisions caused by the administrative and ethnic borders, which rarely (or never) coincide: the state ethnus will be forced to keep new domestic and external opponents in check. The principle of self-determination, if consistently realized in Abkhazia, will be fraught with a split into at least two sub-regions: the Muslim in Gudauta and Christian in Ochamchira. Reality might prove to be even more complicated: the Gagra and Gul’rypsh districts are the homes of compact Armenian communities; Mingrels and Georgians live in the Gali District, and Svans live in the Kodori Gorge; there is also the Georgian refugee problem.

3. “Big Bang” or a “Big Caucasian War.” If the above threats became real, this threat might become an even less welcome reality. The expert community has already warned us about possible “five Karabahks,” the Lebanonization and Balkanization of the Caucasus, a total war of “all against all.” Some of the warnings (such as the Caucasus developing into the seat of another world war) can be ignored, while most of the rest proceed from the very real processes shaking the region. Indeed, the fact (no matter how hypothetical) of Chechnia’s independence or reunification of Ossetia is a powerful factor that might set the military-political division of the Caucasian ethnopolitical expanse into motion, including not only the seven North Caucasian autonomies of the Russian Federation, but also the Central Caucasian states, as well as Turkey, Iran, and probably other actors.

Will the Caucasian nations manage to climb out of the quagmire of internal strife and mutual suspicion? There is no straightforward answer to this question, but the road to positive results lies


through joint involvement in global economic, cultural, communication, energy, and other similar projects. They might stem fragmentation and reintegrate the Caucasus in a relatively painless and effective way. On the other hand, there is the rich experience of the Western multiethinic and multicultural democracies. For example, the slogan “the Cabinet should look like America” realized in the United States since the 1990s presupposes a power structure dedicated to common national interests, which should, at the same time, reflect the nation’s diverse nature while remaining absolutely competent.

In the Caucasus, the power-ethnicity balance and the distribution of peremptory powers according to the principles of multiethnic democracy cannot be achieved today. At the same time, no analysis of the ethnopolitical processes in the context of globalization should be limited to conflict-generating factors and processes (the right to self-determination included). From the theoretical and especially practical points of view, it is much more productive to concentrate on the means and methods for preventing such processes and creating new transnational multiethinic units. This approach is much more understandable: globalization is weaving a communication web of mutual dependencies and mutual penetrations not only, and not so much, among national states as beyond their borders and barriers. It unites all ethnic identities into a global entity at a new civilizational level. Indeed, many scenarios of the future of ethnic groups obviously indicate that the factors and determinants forming nations and their specific features will weaken together with the principle of ethnic self-determination, especially its extreme manifestations.

Today, the globalization challenges and requirements have formulated a dilemma for practically all nations with or without states: either preservation of ethnic identity in its historical form or a quest for a new formula of harmonious ethnosocial content. In the near future the choice will become even more urgent: the current world development trends clearly indicate that this choice will determine people’s historical destinies and their organic incorporation into the global civilization.

When analyzing the interdependence between the ethnopolitical processes in the Caucasus and globalization, we should keep in mind that the region has not yet been completely affected with globalization. The globalization ranking compiled by A.T. Kearney, together with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, mentions none of the Caucasian states, even among the outsiders.37 Frederick Starr of the U.S. offered a pertinent comment: it is important, said he, for the states with conflicts on their territories not to lose themselves in the globalization process. The first elements of genuine globalization will come when conflicts become a thing of the past.38

Obviously, in this respect, too, globalization, on the one hand, offers unique possibilities for real self-organization of national life according to the principles of civil solidarity and social partnership. On the other, it helps to remove political and ethnic mythologemes in the course of realizing real (not imaginary) ethnopolitical and ethnocultural requirements.

**Conclusion**

So far, certain trends typical of the contemporary world have nothing in common with the ethnopolitical situation in the Caucasus, or with the strategic aims of the key actors on this “playing field” (Z. Brzezinski). To some extent the situation contradicts such trends. This can be said about

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37 The project took account of data for 62 countries with 88 percent of the global population and over 91 percent of world economy (see: A.T. Kearney, *Foreign Policy Globalization Index 2006*, available at [www.atkearney.com/main]).
some of my own conclusions as well. This is because there is an objective contradiction between the
mounting ethnic regionalization and very much needed political and economic integration in the con-
text of globalization.

Regrettably, a compromise between the opposing sides on the right to self-determination and on
other no less burning ethnopolitical issues is hardly possible. Hypertrophied forms of political ethni-
cization resulted in a situation where the minimum demands of one side far exceed the maximum
concessions of the other side. Irresponsible politicians shifted the issues to the sphere of armed strug-
gle, in which criticism with “weapons in hand” replaced “the weapon of criticism.”

If the region fails to develop large-scale integration projects and fails to switch to a multicultural
model of ethnic policy according to the demands of globalization across the board, these contradic-
tions will sooner or later rekindle open ethnic confrontations. The ethnocratic features of statehood
(that is, actual and theoretical privileges of the titular nations) might be downplayed to a great extent,
if the local countries are resolved to apply the principles of concession democracy to ethnopolitical
problems. This type of democracy will help to maintain economic and political stability and order; it
should be based, among other things, on readjusted national relations in the context of democracy and
on Caucasian realities.

We have seen that the vague future of the old forms of statehood and national development
gaining momentum in the 21st century will inevitably create a new format of ethnopolitical proc-
esses and will intensify the quest for alternative ethnopolitical formulae which, it seems, will re-
peatedly return the world, and the Caucasus as its part, to the very painful reality of establishing a
new global order.

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ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI
NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT
IN THE CONTEXT OF
INTERNATIONAL LAW

A b s t r a c t

This article deals with the interna-
tional legal aspects of the Armeni-
an-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh
conflict. In reference to this conflict, the
author examines such burning questions
of modern international law as the princi-
ple of territorial integrity of states and the
right of peoples to self-determination,
makes assessment of this conflict from
the angle of international law, and con-
siders various state-legal aspects of its
settlement.
Background to the Conflict

The conflict known throughout the world as the “Nagorno-Karabakh” conflict arose parallel to the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. Favorable conditions for its development were created by processes that were at work in the Soviet Union from the mid-1980s. At the same time, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, encouraged by the U.S.S.R. authorities led by Mikhail Gorbachev, served as a catalyst of centrifugal processes, triggering off numerous ethnic and territorial conflicts in the post-Soviet space and transforming the evolutionary process of the U.S.S.R.’s disintegration into a revolutionary breakup.

From the very beginning of the events in Nagorno-Karabakh, the term “conflict” was used as a cover for the aggressive policy pursued by the Republic of Armenia toward its neighboring country. This concept continues to be used today in the peaceful settlement process despite the existence of international documents in which the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Republic of Armenia has already been given an objective political and legal assessment. Let us note that the term “conflict” contains a certain degree of “neutrality” in determining the party guilty of the fact in question. Nevertheless, we use this term in this article so as not to be accused of bias from the very beginning.

The active phase of the conflict started in February 1988, when the separatist forces of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAR) of the Azerbaijan Republic, instigated by the Republic of Armenia, began to stage rallies, strikes and other civil disobedience actions, seeking a secession of the region from the Azerbaijan Republic and its incorporation into the Republic of Armenia. It should be noted that the NKAR’s legal status—according to the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. and the Constitution of the Azerbaijan S.S.R.—was determined by the Law on the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, adopted on 16 June, 1981, by the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan Republic on the motion of the NKAR Soviet of People’s Deputies.1 On 20 February, 1988, a session of the NKAR Soviet of People’s Deputies adopted a decision On the Petition of NKAR Deputies for the Transfer of the NKAR from the Azerbaijan S.S.R. to the Armenian S.S.R. 2 Ethnic cleansing of Azeris began in the Republic of Armenia and in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, with the creation of monoethnic Armenian areas.3


All of that was the result of a deliberate policy pursued by the Republic of Armenia, the Armenian Church and diaspora in order to annex, including by force, the mountainous (Nagorno)

part of Karabakh from the Azerbaijan Republic and to incorporate it into Armenia. The conflict moved into a new phase—the phase of active hostilities—in late 1991 and early 1992, when the U.S.S.R. had ceased to exist as a subject of international law and when the last legal and organizational (except international legal) barriers to the annexation of the desired territories had been removed.

By mid-1994, the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, supported by the illegal Armenian armed formations of Nagorno-Karabakh, occupied areas of the Azerbaijan Republic bordering on the Republic of Armenia, the territory of the former NKAR proper and other areas of the Azerbaijan Republic adjacent to it, totaling about 20% of the entire territory of the Azerbaijan Republic. All Azeris were expelled from these territories, tens of thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands wounded. As regards the scale of destruction, let us merely note that Armenian-occupied territories not inhabited by Armenians are now a desert: everything has been wiped out. Incidentally, this was established in the spring of 2005 by an OSCE fact-finding mission.

In the territory of the former NKAR and other occupied areas of the Azerbaijan Republic, we have seen the establishment of a so-called “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” with its own government bodies and attributes of power. However, not a single state or international organization in the world has recognized such a state as the “NKR.”

International Legal Assessment of the Conflict

In the modern world, the emergence of new states is a process and phenomenon not encouraged by the world community, so that in practice such cases are very rare. This happened, for example, in the first half of the 1990s, when the Soviet Union fell apart into 15 independent states, when new countries emerged in place of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (C.S.S.R.), and when Germany was unified. Despite the dramatic events that accompanied these processes, the emergence of new independent states was based on legal treaties (in various legitimate forms), i.e., agreements on the creation of these states recognized by the world community. This made it possible to go over in a civilized way from state entities created by force of arms, through violence, conquest and subjugation (U.S.S.R., SFRY, C.S.S.R.) to independent states set up on the basis of voluntary treaties and therefore recognized by other democratic states.

In that period, other events took place as well. On the tide of democratic processes in the Southern Caucasus, nationalist forces using democratic and national-liberation slogans as a cover tried to create new states by force, by revising borders, i.e., by violating the principle of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders (Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Transdniestria in Moldova and Chechnia in Russia). However, none of these cases has to do with a legal treaty recognized by the world community. The reason is obvious: the modern world community does not regard violence or coercion as a way or method of creating a new state. The creation of a new state in today’s democratic world is possible only in the presence of a legal treaty, when all the parties concerned come to a voluntary agreement to revise their borders. A treaty can have no legal force if one of the parties is coerced into altering its borders by force of arms; such a treaty is legally null and void and, sooner or later, it will be violated and denounced. In addition, it will constantly be a potential source of instability in the region. The fact of international recognition of a state created through the occupation of another state’s territories could be regarded in the world as a precedent, entailing unpredictable consequences for the global community. It is no accident that none of the above-mentioned entities have been recognized by a single state, including the Republic of Armenia.
An international conflict can be resolved only when the world community makes an objective political and legal assessment of that conflict. An allround, full and exhaustive study of the root causes of the conflict and an assessment of the situation at the time of decision making is absolutely essential for:

1. the adoption of a fair decision by the parties (with the participation of mediators);
2. legally correct and effective use of generally recognized rules of international law;
3. the establishment of a stable and lasting peace guaranteed by the international community.

The world community, as we know, is represented by authoritative international organizations such as the United Nations, OSCE, European Union, Council of Europe, NATO and others, whose immediate duty is to maintain and restore peace and stability both on a global scale and in various parts of the world, and to apply sanctions against the aggressor country.

On 25 January, 2005, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted its Resolution 1416 (2005), The Conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh Region Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference (rapporteur David Atkinson), acknowledging the occupation of a significant part of Azerbaijan’s territory by Armenian troops and emphasizing that “the occupation of foreign territory by a member state constitutes a grave violation of that state’s obligations as a member of the Council of Europe.” The Resolution can be hopefully regarded as only the first, albeit belated, step in this direction. Such documents containing a political and legal assessment of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should also be adopted by other international organizations, primarily the OSCE, which provides the framework for the ongoing Minsk negotiation process.

The lack of an objective political and legal assessment does not encourage, in the first place, the parties to the conflict to show goodwill for the purpose of its resolution. The lack of such an assessment also serves (as is the case today) to prolong the conflict and to create illusions among certain forces that in this way it is possible to overstep the rules of international law, to occupy a sovereign state’s internationally recognized territory and, once these acts have been committed, to achieve the desired results in the negotiation process. Let us recall that the Azerbaijan Republic and the Republic of Armenia signed the Helsinki Final Act, so recognizing, in accordance with their constitutions:

1. the supremacy of the provisions of this Act in both internal and external legal relationships;
2. the principles of inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of states.

Only an objective position of the world community can make it possible to withdraw the armed forces deployed in the conflict zone and to resolve the conflict by peaceful means, without military pressure and on the basis of the principles of international law.

**International Legal Potential for Resolving the Conflict**

In view of the need to resolve the conflict, questions about the form of government (state structure) arise with increasing frequency. The doctrine of constitutional and international law is sufficiently conservative in its definitions. That is why scholars have tried for many decades to fit all the models of actually existing states into the framework of the concepts of “confederation,” “federation”

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6 See: [http://assembly.coe.int].
and “unitary state.” At the same time, a political and legal analysis of empirical reality shows that in pure form these categories are virtually nonexistent: their elements are interlinked to such an extent that one can speak of the emergence of various hybrid forms. For example, there are generally recognized federal states whose constituent entities are nevertheless entitled to conclude international treaties (Austrian lands, territorial entities of Bosnia-Herzegovina).

Inductive methods used to investigate these problems lead to certain definitive generalizations. In our view, an analysis of various existing ways of state organization suggests the conclusion that, depending on the relations between the state and its component parts, today we can identify the following generalized forms of government: confederation, federation, unitary regional state and unitary state with special autonomous status for some of its territories. In this context, a “blind” approach to traditional concepts, definitions and classifications often produces an opposite effect. An attempt to fit current realities into a definitive framework could lead to a simplification or, even worse, to a distortion of the existing constitutional diversity, and in the process of conflict resolution this could become an obstacle blocking the way to a settlement. That is why in settling an ethnoterritorial or ethnopolitical conflict one should bear in mind the doctrinal concepts and definitions of constitutional and international law, consider the constitutional and international legal realities existing in the world, and be prepared to make unorthodox, non-routine decisions in order to resolve the given conflict.

A few words about the right of peoples to self-determination, so mercilessly exploited by Armenian politicians. It should be noted that Azerbaijan, relying on the norms of international law, from the very beginning categorically rules out the possibility of applying the “self-determination of peoples” principle to the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh based on a whole range of fairly well-known arguments.

- **First**, Nagorno-Karabakh is a territorial region of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijan Republic as a sovereign state is the result of an expression of the will and self-determination of the entire Azerbaijani people (including ethnic Armenians) living throughout the whole territory of the Azerbaijan Republic, and certainly not of a part of this people. A part of the people cannot make decisions that are crucial to the future of the whole people. In accordance with U.N. General Assembly Resolution 47/135 of 18 December, 1992, Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the principle of self-determination of peoples is not included among the rights of national minorities: the international community did not consider it possible or necessary to reflect this principle in the Declaration.8

- **Second**, having signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the countries of Europe, the U.S. and Canada tied in the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as written into the Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (24 October, 1970), with the principle of territorial integrity of states. The Declaration says that effective application of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples “is of paramount importance for the promotion of friendly relations among states, based on respect for the principle of sovereign equality.” The principle of self-determination can find its application only in the context of the principle of territorial integrity of states. The Declaration proclaims that “any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a state or country or at its political independence is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter.”9 This is precisely why the Helsinki Final Act put this

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9 See: [http://www.terralegis.org/terra/act/b252html].
principle in eighth place (out of ten) and called it “the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.”

- **Third**, Nagorno-Karabakh is a region of Azerbaijan where, prior to the ethnic cleansing carried out by Armenians, there were two communities (Armenian and Azeri). They constitute the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, but by no means a “people.” “People” is a political category, and peoples in this context are “the Armenians” and “the Azerbaijanis,” who have already implemented their right to self-determination within the framework, respectively, of the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic. The term “people” cannot be applied to the population of Nagorno-Karabakh as part of the Azerbaijan Republic.

- **Fourth**, even if we assume the impossible and say that the population of Nagorno-Karabakh consisting of Armenians and Azeris is a people with a right to self-determination, this will not mean that Nagorno-Karabakh should secede from the Azerbaijan Republic. Under section five of the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law, advocacy of the principle of self-determination is not equivalent to encouragement of secession or fragmentation of countries. This Declaration explicitly states that the principle of self-determination can and must find its solution within the framework of the principle of inviolability of borders and the principle of territorial integrity of states; this principle “should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states... Every state shall refrain from any action aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of any other state or country.”

- **And fifth**, neither the theory nor the practice of international or constitutional law has ever had to deal with cases of repeated exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. If we assume the impossible and suppose that such a precedent is actually created in practice, many countries in the world (including Russia, the U.S., France, Turkey, Canada, Australia, Iran, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Spain, Holland, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Syria and others) will be faced with the inevitable need to somehow resolve the issue of Armenian self-determination.

The possibility of recognition of “NKR” independence. Some political forces seek to provide a number of reasons allegedly sufficient to recognize the independence of the “NKR” and to split it off from the Azerbaijan Republic. The main argument in this matter is that the “NKR,” in the opinion of its founders, is a “more democratic entity” than the Azerbaijan Republic and that these “democrats” need greater “freedom and independence.”

Without comparing the democratic situation in the Azerbaijan Republic and in the Nagorno-Karabakh region that is no longer under its control, let us merely take a look at how “democratic” is the self-proclaimed “NKR.”

Lawyers, diplomats, political scientists, historians and many other specialists are well aware that the concept of “state” includes three main components: sovereign power, population and territory. Consequently, in order to recognize the so-called “NKR” as capable and worthy of existence as an independent democratic state, the world community will have to ascertain that all these three components are in evidence. Leaving aside the will of the Azerbaijan Republic and its people on this issue, let us examine each of these components.

- **First, sovereign power.** But undoubtedly, its source should be the people. We have already shown that the population of Nagorno-Karabakh is not a people. Sovereign power should
be independent. But there is reason to believe that no self-respecting politician, lawyer, diplomat, political scientist or historian will try to prove the independence or sovereignty of power in the so-called “NKR,” if only because of the presence in its life of the Republic of Armenia.

- **Second, population.** Who inhabits the “NKR” today? From the beginning of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Republic of Armenia, the territory of the former NKAR was abandoned, under threat of force, by all ethnic Azerbaijanis (Azeris), who made up in that period about one-third of the NKAR’s inhabitants (over 60 thousand people). In addition, a part of the ethnic Armenian population (about 25-30 thousand people) also left Nagorno-Karabakh because they did not want to take part in the hostilities or acts of lawlessness in its territory. Considering the facts of illegal settlement in Azerbaijani territories occupied by the Republic of Armenia, the population of the so-called “NKR” is about 100 thousand. Clearly, none of the above fits into the framework of democratic processes. How about the Azeri population of Nagorno-Karabakh? What is to be done about their rights in the process of “recognition of NKR independence”?

- **Third, territory.** What kind of territory should be borne in mind in determining the territory of the “NKR”? The former territory of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of the Azerbaijan S.S.R. or the entire territory occupied by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, which includes, apart from the territory of the former NKAR, seven other administrative districts of Azerbaijan? If we take the territory of the former NKAR alone, then how about the rights of the expelled part of the population? And if we take the territory of the NKAR plus seven administrative districts, then how about the rights of over 700 thousand Azerbaijani citizens expelled from their lands for the sake of the security of 100 thousand Armenians? It is unlikely that any “democrat” will be able to answer these questions.

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**Conclusion**

Sergey Markedonov, head of the International Relations Department at the Moscow Institute of Political and Military Analysis, said in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: “…There is no need to appeal to history in current conflicts. History? Let us leave it to historians, and let them search through the archives. Evidently, the future cannot be built by appealing to the past. Frankly speaking, the historicization of a conflict is not the best way to overcome it.”

But if one has to appeal to history, this should not be done selectively, when certain pages are torn out of the peoples’ common book of fate, but based on a uniform, objective scientific approach to the whole range of historical facts and phenomena.

Unfortunately, this is often forgotten when it comes to the falsified “1915 genocide of Armenians.” Honestly, it is amazing how easily, in case of need, we are distracted from history, from historical experience. How can the future be built without regard for the past? How can lasting peace be established in Nagorno-Karabakh and in the Southern Caucasus without taking into account past historical mistakes? A poor memory is precisely what enables conflicts to flare up again and again. Building peace without regard for history is precisely what made this peace short-lived. Evidently, someone was interested in this. Today we are witnessing an attempt to repeat history. Peace should be built with due regard for history and past historical mistakes. Peace in the Southern Caucasus should be built so as to ensure that no one reaps any dividends (but only draws lessons).

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from what has taken place, because otherwise after a short historical time someone will be tempted to repeat these events and to seize some more land. If anyone thinks that their problems (including territorial problems) can be resolved by force of arms, there will be no peace—lasting peace—in the world or in our region.

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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA AND THE CASPIAN REPUBLICS

Abstract

This article focuses on American energy policy toward Azerbaijan, amidst increasing tensions in U.S.-Russian relations following Russia’s abrupt withdrawal from Shell’s Sakhalin-2 energy project in September of 2006. It recommends a preventive policy for Washington by which it will secure its future energy interests in the region. This policy recommends for Washington to form alliances with Caspian republics such as Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan by promoting the political independence of the Republics of the Caspian Basin and by assisting their governments in establishing infrastructure for regional gas supplies and pipes. The article also discusses the role of the United States in assisting all parties involved in the protection of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline from terrorist threats and social unrest in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey.

Russia’s abrupt withdrawal from Shell’s Sakhalin-2 energy project in September of 2006 has raised many concerns in the international community about the future course of Russia’s energy policies. Downing Street expressed misgivings about the Sakhalin-2 pullout, which it recognizes as a pressure tactic to sell Russia a 25% Shell stake.¹ The United States’ ExxonMobil was also exposed as a target, when authorities claimed they would not permit its Sakhalin-1 project to expand, due to environmental abuses. Many fear a diplomatic row is impending and interpret Russia’s latest actions as an attempt “to wrest back control of its natural resources from Western oil companies.”² So how should the United States respond to Russia’s use (or in some regards, abuse) of energy as a political

² Ibidem.
ool? Most critics of Russian policy oppose the idea of sanctions. Nevertheless, most agree that the United States should be firm in its resistance to Moscow’s increasing pressures, exerted through its control of state-controlled oil and natural gas resources and reserves. Therefore, in order to secure its future energy interests, Washington should adopt a preventive policy and seek to form alliances with Caspian republics such as Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. More particularly, it should promote the political independence of the Republics of the Caspian Basin and assist their governments in establishing infrastructure for regional gas supplies and pipes. The focus of this study will only be on Azerbaijan, as an example of how the United States should deal with Russia by creating counterweights.

Firstly, for the United States to benefit from the oil resources of the states of the Caucasus, it needs to ensure that they operate as stable and politically independent units. President Bush has hailed Azerbaijan as “a modern Muslim country that is able to provide for its citizens and understands … democracy.” Nonetheless, this praise has not prevented Washington from calling for political reforms by President Ilham Aliev, who officially took over his father’s autocratic-style rule, after highly controversial parliamentary elections in 2005. According to Transparency International, Azerbaijan is “one of the most corrupt places in the world.” Despite this state of affairs, Azerbaijan has proven to be a steadfast U.S. ally even amidst increasing tensions between the U.S. and Iran, Azerbaijan’s neighboring Shi’ite Muslim country. However, recent public polls suggest rising anti-Americanism within Azerbaijan. The most efficient way for the United States to counter this is by promoting security, stability and social welfare. This is particularly crucial at a time when Azerbaijan’s increasing oil revenues put the country at risk of the “Dutch disease.” The potential onset of this economic phenomenon, caused by the appreciation of its currency, the manat, could severely impact exports and imports. In turn, this would hurt all economic activity unrelated to oil production.

Another pressing issue is the presence of 800,000 refugees left from the war with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s. The details of this regional conflict are important in terms of the problem’s ability to destabilize the country, but too extensive for the purposes of this essay. It should be noted though, that both Russia and the United States have successfully cooperated during peace talks in the region. This last point underscores the importance of Russia’s political presence in the region and its cooperation in maintaining stability. Consequently, Washington should not undermine Russia’s influence while engaging in its military and humanitarian initiatives.

Concerning humanitarian reform, under the Freedom Support Act of 1992, the U.S. provided around “$48 million in humanitarian, democracy, and reform assistance to Azerbaijan in FY 2006.” It also completed Small Reconstruction Projects (SRP), which were aimed at improving conditions in schools, clinics and orphanages. Furthermore, 2006 marked the end of a national child vaccination program, which was funded by proceeds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) sale of 10,800 metric tons of wheat in Azerbaijan. The United States should continue in these humanitarian initiatives, as well as in maintaining the presence of its Peace Corps in the region.

In addition, for long-term security, the U.S. should also encourage Azerbaijan’s leadership to reform. Azerbaijan’s showed its compliance when it signed up for the Extractive Industries

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3 Ibidem.
4 See: “Too Much of a Good Thing.”
5 Ibidem.
7 Ibidem.
9 Ibidem.
Transparency Initiative (EITI), “an anti-corruption scheme” initiated by Toney Blair. While Azerbaijan is a member country, the institute’s effectiveness is limited by the fact that only the inflow, rather than the spending of oil revenues to government are monitored. Notwithstanding the program’s shortcomings, the United States should commend Azerbaijan’s membership and reconsider the emphasis of its own “democratization programs.” Instead of placing such heavy emphasis on “elections and election monitoring” in the region, Washington should shift its focus to “information exchange” and encourage Azerbaijan to establish a more open society with an independent press and wide Internet access.

Secondly, the United States should assist all parties involved in ensuring the protection of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline from terrorist threats and social unrest in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. The $3 billion BTC Pipeline is “1,000 mile long” and has the capacity to export “1 million barrels a day of crude oil.” Its presence signals a new chapter in the geopolitical struggle for energy resources: it successfully bypasses both Russia and Iran and instead, runs through the Caucasus to the Ceyhan Marine Terminal on the Turkish Mediterranean Coast. While it promises to “facilitate future deliveries to the United States,” the security of the BTC Pipeline is in danger from international terrorist organizations and from instability in rural communities.

While Iran is the actor with the most interest in disrupting the flow of oil, Russia has the ability to indirectly undermine the safety of the BTC pipeline in Georgia. President Putin had strongly opposed the BTC project, which he viewed as another attempt by the U.S. to break its monopoly in the Caspian region. Russo-American competition in the region dates back to the early nineties. Initially, U.S. military presence in areas such as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan had been restricted to counter-terrorism activities and thus tolerated by Moscow. However, once major military operations had come to a close, the U.S. had continued to expand in the region and had worked on forging strong relations with the independent republics. It received permission from the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to remain there indefinitely.

Various terrorist groups also pose a threat to the BTC pipeline. The Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK), the fighting unit of the Kurdish independence movement, has been known to carry out acts of sabotage on pipelines. In addition, there are various Islamic militant groups operating close to the BTC: “the Islamic Party of Eastern Turkestan, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Chechen separatists” and Kazakhstan’s Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami. Since 2002, the U.S. forces have assisted Georgia in protecting its borders, infrastructure and oil pipelines. The same is now true in Azerbaijan. However, U.S. military support alone cannot suffice. The poor rural communities, in which the BTC pipeline operates, play a crucial role. Many members of these communities were employed in the construction process and now expect the BTC to bring about much needed “social and economic improvements.” The nature of their future involvement in the BTC pipeline will depend on whether they can benefit from its presence.

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10 See: “Too Much of a Good Thing.”
12 Ibidem.
16 See: M.T. Klare, op. cit.
17 F. Ismailzade, op. cit.
To conclude, the U.S.’ relations with Azerbaijan and the BTC pipeline seem promising solutions to its dependence on Russia’s state-controlled Gazprom. It is important for Washington to avoid engaging in direct rivalry with Moscow. Rather, it should focus its attention on maintaining stability in Azerbaijan and protecting the BTC. While the path to securing its energy interests will at times converge with that of counter-terrorism endeavors, it must take care not to come across as imperialistic to the people of this rare Muslim ally.
Demographic development in the South Caucasian countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia) is characterized both by common regularities and by specific features. The deterioration in demographic development and emergence of negative trends in reproduction of the population are common traits for these states. Nevertheless, the differences in the countries’ demographic behavior and divergence in the main demographic indices draw attention to themselves. These differences are caused primarily by the fact that the South Caucasian states make their transition from the traditional to the contemporary type of population reproduction at different times, as well as by religious convictions, traditions, customs, socioeconomic conditions, and so on. An active state demographic policy drawn up with regional and country specifics in mind can play a significant role in regulating the demographic processes.

Abstract

Demographic development in the South Caucasian countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia) is characterized both by common regularities and by specific features. The deterioration in demographic development and emergence of negative trends in reproduction of the population are common traits for these states. Nevertheless, the differences in the countries’ demographic behavior and divergence in the main demographic indices draw attention to themselves. These differences are caused primarily by the fact that the South Caucasian states make their transition from the traditional to the contemporary type of population reproduction at different times, as well as by religious convictions, traditions, customs, socioeconomic conditions, and so on. An active state demographic policy drawn up with regional and country specifics in mind can play a significant role in regulating the demographic processes.

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Demography occupies a central place among the urgent global problems arousing the concern of mankind today. In the most general terms, the demographic problem implies difficulties related to population overproduction in the relatively underdeveloped regions of the world and to depopulation in the developed states.

In this respect, the Southern Caucasus is no exception. Population reproduction in the region’s countries is characterized both by common regularities and by specific features. One common regularity is the deterioration in the demographic situation and the onset of negative trends in population reproduction. The specific features include demographic behavior, which differs slightly in each state, and the variance in main demographic indices. This conclusion is based to a significant extent on a scientific analysis of the phenomena and processes that have occurred since the 1990s and are still occurring in the South Caucasian countries, as well as on a summary of the obtained results.

Birth Rate

As we know, one of the main components in population reproduction is the birth rate. Calculated per thousand residents, in 1990, it was 26.3 in Azerbaijan, 22.5 in Armenia, and 17 in Georgia,¹ and in 2006, 17, 13, and 12, respectively.²

There is a clear trend not only toward a drop in the birth rate, but also toward its leveling out in each country, although the difference between Azerbaijan, on the one hand, and Armenia and Georgia, on the other, is still significant. How can this circumstance be explained? Primarily by the fact that the South Caucasian countries transferred at different times from the traditional to the contemporary type of population reproduction. This means that under the influence of a whole series of relatively new phenomena (a higher level of women’s education and employment, greater requirements relating to children’s intellectual upbringing, etc.), there is a decrease in demand for children in the family, while use of the latest methods of contraception makes it relatively easy to achieve family planning. The demographic transition, or establishment of the contemporary type of population reproduction, began in Georgia almost an entire century earlier than in Azerbaijan. This is also evidenced by the reproductive behavior of the Azeris living in Georgia, which differs from that of the native Georgians. According to the Statistics Board of the Georgian Ministry of Economic Development, in 2004, the overall birth rate in the country was 11.5 per mille for Georgians and 16.1 for Azeris.³

The religious factor also plays a significant role in this variance of birth rate indices in terms of ethnic groups. In contrast to Russian Orthodoxy, Islam more convincingly impresses on women that abortion is a great sin and so should be avoided.

An extremely important demographic index is the cumulative birth rate (number of children per woman throughout the fertile period). The trend toward its decrease is a governing law accompanying the development of human civilization. In this respect, the Southern Caucasus is no exception. Nevertheless, these indices are just as differentiated in terms of country. According to the data of the World Population Bureau in Washington, U.S.A. (2006), the cumulative birth rate is 2 in Azerbaijan

² The latest (2006) demographic data used in the article were taken from World Population Data Sheet. 2006 Population Reference Bureau.
(or 200 children per 100 women), 1.7 in Armenia, and 1.4 in Georgia, while this index must be 2.1 (or an average of 210 children per 100 women) in order to ensure even simple population reproduction. In this way, judging by the current rates, not one South Caucasian republic is able to ensure population reproduction at an increasingly progressive rate, although in this respect, the situation in Armenia and in Azerbaijan, in particular, is slightly better than in Georgia.

The drop in the cumulative birth rate is not only a South Caucasian phenomenon. The average cumulative birth rate in the developed regions of the world does not exceed 1.6, and in some countries it is even lower. For example, this index is 1.1 in South Korea and Taiwan, 1.2 in Ukraine, Belarus, and Slovenia, and 1.3 in Japan, Germany, Russia, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece, Moldova, and Slovakia.

Sociological polls have established that in the developing countries quite a large number of women give birth to many more children than they would like. For example, in Kenya, women of reproductive age would like to have an average of 4.2 children, but in actual fact give birth to 6.5. This shows that the contemporary type of population reproduction is not functioning in this country, which means family planning is non-existent and contraceptives are not used.

An entirely opposite picture is seen in Georgia and Armenia in terms of the ratio between the desired and actual number of children born. In Georgia, for example, families usually have one child less than the number they would like, i.e. a family would like to have three children, but in actual fact has no more than one or two. The survey respondents indicate that the difficult social conditions are the main reason for this. The fact that even the desired number of children in a family has drastically dropped is just as alarming; that is, the demand for children has abruptly fallen.

Sociological polls revealed that at the beginning of the 1980s, the number of children wanted in Georgian families was enough for albeit insignificant, but nevertheless extended population reproduction, but the actual number of children anticipated was not enough to ensure even simple reproduction. As of today, not only the anticipated, but also the desired number of children does not ensure it, which requires an in-depth scientific study and efficient measures.

**Death Rate**

Along with the birth rate, the population reproduction rate is also determined by the death rate. As mankind evolves, this index has significantly declined due to the elimination of mass epidemics, the development of state-of-the-art medication, the improvement of medical services, and several other progressive changes. Despite this, however, according to 2006 data, it is still high, both on average throughout the world (9%) and in Armenia (10.6%), as well as in Georgia (11.8%). In this respect, Azerbaijan (5.5%) is the only exception among the South Caucasian states, which is apparently due to the incomplete study carried out.

In contrast to the overall ratio, the infant death rate (the number of children who die before the age of one) is more specific. This is, of course, a very important parameter, which can justifiably be called one of the significant indices of social development as a whole. The degree of development of the social and health care systems in particular countries and regions is basically judged precisely by its level.

What is the situation in this respect in the Southern Caucasus? In 2006, 9 out of every thousand newborns died before they reached the age of one in Azerbaijan, 26 in Armenia, and 25 in Georgia.

Several comparisons can be made for interpreting these indices (that is, to determine whether they are high or, on the contrary, low). In 2006, an average of 52 out of every thousand newborns throughout the world died before reaching the age of one, whereby this index reached an average of 57 in the developing countries, and 6 in the developed states. This index is the highest in Africa.
(84%), followed by Asia (49%) and Latin America (25%), while a relatively low level of infant deaths is noted in Europe and North America (7%). With respect to individual countries, the lowest infant fatality rate was observed in Singapore (2.1%), Sweden (2.4%), Japan (2.8%), Finland (3%), France (3.6%), Germany (3.9%), etc., which shows that there are enormous untapped reserves for improving the situation in the Southern Caucasus.

Natural Population Increment

It is known that the natural population increment depends primarily on the ratio of the birth rate to the death rate. When the first is stable and higher than the second for quite a long time, extended population reproduction is usually guaranteed, and vice versa. If more people die than are born, all other things being equal, depopulation is inevitable, which is the only natural absolute reduction in the size of population. Due to the fact that the birth rate has sharply dropped in the South Caucasian countries since the beginning of the 1990s, and the overall death rate has hardly changed, the natural population increment has significantly dropped. Compared with 1990, in 2006 it dropped from 20.2 to 11 per mille in Azerbaijan, from 16.3 to 4 in Armenia, while in Georgia not only the increment ceased, but depopulation essentially began.

In order to better understand the demographic situation in the Southern Caucasus, let us take a look at the data for different zones and countries of the world. At present (according to the data for 2006), the natural population increment (calculated per thousand people) amounts to 12 people on average for the entire planet, reaching 15 in the developing regions, while it is only 1 in the developed world. Obvious depopulation is occurring in Germany, Bulgaria, Rumania, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova.

Review of the natural movement of the population from the ethnic angle shows quite a sharp contrast in indices. For example, according to the Statistics Board of the Georgian Ministry of Economic Development, in 2004, the natural increase in Azeris living in Georgia was equal to 10.6 per mille, while the Georgian and Armenian ethnic groups experienced depopulation: they decreased to minus 0.3 and minus 0.1 per mille, respectively.4

This in no way means that the population increment among Azeris in Georgia (where their share in 2005 amounted to 5.4%) is higher than in their historical homeland. Their reproductive behavior is almost the same in Georgia and Azerbaijan. What is the reason for such a significant difference in the reproductive behavior of Georgians and Azeris?

Along with the fact that they are at different levels of demographic development (as was mentioned above), we believe the reason for this should be sought in customs, religiousness, and traditions. In contrast to other South Caucasian countries, Georgia is experiencing the acute problem not of the birth of third and subsequent children, but of the birth of the second child. For example, in 2004, the percentage of first and second children amounted to 88.5% among the total number of live-born children, whereas the percentage of third and subsequent children reached 11.5%, which indicates an increase in the number of families with small numbers of children. As the results of a sociological poll conducted in 2003 by the Georgian Institute of Demography and Sociology show, 1% of the respondents believe that one child is the desirable number of children in a family, 20% think two, 52% indicate three, and only 27% believe more than three to be desirable. Even more alarming is the fact that due to the difficult social conditions (primarily among the refugees from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali District), the birth of the first child and even matrimony itself are often postponed for some time, the

4 See: G. Tsuladze, et al., op. cit., p. 177.
negative consequences of which will become even more obvious in the future when today’s children reach maturity.

The sharp drop in the marriage index also shows the negative demographic trends that have developed in the Southern Caucasus. Compared with 1990, in 1996, the number of marriages decreased from 10.5 to 5.1 per mille in Azerbaijan, from 8 to 3.8 per mille in Armenia, and from 6.7 to 3.6 per mille in Georgia. As for the number of divorces, this index is lower than 1 per mille in all the states of the region: this indicates the relative soundness of families.

According to the estimates of the World Population Bureau, the theoretical prospects for population reproduction in the Southern Caucasus are the following: compared with 2006, by 2050 the size of Azerbaijan’s population will increase by 36.5% and reach 11.6 million people, in Armenia it will increase by 13% and amount to 3.4 million, and in Georgia it will decrease by 1.4 million people, giving a total of 3 million people. As a result of this, the correlation of South Caucasian countries in terms of population size will significantly change: Azerbaijan’s share will grow to 64.4%, Armenia’s to 18.9%, and Georgia’s will decrease to 16.7%, while in 1960, this breakdown looked as follows: Azerbaijan—39.2%, Armenia—18.6%, and Georgia—42.2%.

Population reproduction and the increase in population size is not a panacea. This problem is particularly urgent for those nations that are experiencing depopulation (or are on its verge) and which, although in the distant future, are threatened with extinction. Despite this, population overproduction (bringing the size of the population in the Southern Caucasus up to 60 million, for example) is not simply undesirable, it is fraught with no fewer problems than depopulation. An optimal demographic situation should be strived for. This implies a population size that will make it possible for one generation to replace the next, rational use of productive material resources, balancing labor resources with jobs, maximum efficiency of production, complete satisfaction of the reasonable material and cultural requirements of society as a whole and each of its members individually, as well as free and all-round development of the individual. We are stressing this because more importance should be placed on the qualitative, rather than the quantitative side of the demographic processes, with an effort to raise physically and spiritually healthy generations capable of achieving peace and universal prosperity in the region.

Demographic Ageing

A particularly important process is demographic ageing. It is considered one of the major dilemmas of the present day, and rightly so. U.N. experts offer a classification system based on a three-tier scale: if the percentage of people aged 65 and older in the total population is lower than 4%, it is considered young, if it is between 4% and 7%, it is on the verge of old age, and if it is higher than 7%, it is considered elderly.\(^5\)

According to the data of World Population Bureau for 2006, Azerbaijan is presently on the verge of old age (7%), while Armenia (11%) and particularly Georgia (13%) are considered countries with a demographically elderly population. The population is ageing under the effect of two components, the low birth rate (“ageing from below”), on the one hand, and the relatively high life expectancy (“ageing from above”), on the other.

Data have already been presented above that show the low birth rate and its continuing decrease in certain states. As for the average life expectancy in the South Caucasian countries, it is 71-72 years, while in relatively underdeveloped countries of the world it does not exceed an average of 65 years (including in South Africa, where it is 46). Along with the high birth rate, it is this that largely explains the fact that the developing regions of the planet are demographically younger. The share of the population aged 65 and older constitutes only 5% in the states of this group.

The percentage of the young generation (people under 15) varies quite significantly in the South Caucasian countries. As a result of the still high birth rate, this index looks quite impressive in Azerbaijan (24%) and Armenia (22%), and a little more modest in Georgia (19%).

Demographic ageing is a law governing contemporary social development. According to the current forecast data, in the foreseeable future, most of the developed countries of the world will become demographically elderly (for example, by 2050, the percentage of the population aged 65 and older will reach 28% in Germany and Belgium, 30% in Austria and Switzerland, 34% in Greece, and 37% in Spain, etc.), but rich (high pensions, comfortable living conditions, and so on), and most of the developing countries will be demographically young, but poor. As for the South Caucasian republics, Armenia and Georgia drop out of this context, since they are at the stage of demographic ageing and will be relatively poor for quite a long time. For example, according to the data of the World Bank for 2005, the gross national income converted according to the parity purchasing power amounted to $5,080 in Armenia, $4,890 in Azerbaijan, and $3,270 in Georgia. Despite the rather dynamic economic growth observed in recent years, the South Caucasian countries have still not reached the average world level of per capita GDP, which constitutes $10,000 (2006). According to the CIA, in 2006, per capita GDP, converted according to PPP, amounted to $7,300 in Azerbaijan, $5,400 in Armenia, and $3,800 in Georgia.

The following can be noted by way of trends that have developed in the South Caucasian states (primarily in Georgia and Armenia) with respect to population reproduction and are giving rise to negative socioeconomic consequences:

— the sharp increase in the sociodemographic load on employed able-bodied citizens, which creates a generation gap leading to tension and opposition. What is more, a negative trend is observed toward a gradual decrease in the percentage of children under 15 and an increase in the share of pensioners, which intensifies the sociodemographic load on the working population;

— the increase in economic load on the employed. This is caused not only by the fact that the number and share of pensioners are systematically growing in the population as a whole, but also by the fact that their needs (what is more, specific) are increasing inexorably, which is expressed both in qualitative and in quantitative parameters. It should be noted that medical services are approximately ten times more expensive for a 75-year-old citizen than for a 40-year-old patient. Due to this, specialists consider ageing of the population to be a high-cost phenomenon;

— the intensive death rate at the able-bodied age and increase in foreign migration are leading to incomplete use of the countries’ economic potential and an increase in the underproduced gross domestic product.

A scientifically developed active state demographic policy that takes the specifics of the country into account can make a significant contribution to halting and gradually overcoming the above-mentioned and other similar socioeconomic processes.

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6 See: A. Topilin, Demograficheskaiia situatsiia v stranakh SNG (k 10-letiiu obrazovaniia sodruchestva), Naselenie i obschestvo—Information Bulletin of the Center of Demography and Economy of Man, RAS Institute of National Economic Forecasting, No. 61, April 2002.
POST-SOVIET ETHNIC CONFLICTS: THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS REQUIRE AN IN-DEPTH STUDY

Abstract

The author has proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the economic factors provoking and aggravating the post-Soviet ethnic conflicts, and still preventing their settlement, should be studied in-depth. An interdisciplinary approach combining the findings of conflict resolution studies and economic theory can produce highly interesting results and help develop an economic policy that would help avoid future conflicts. Prof. Leiashvili concludes that ethnic conflicts should be regarded not only as social catastrophes, which they obviously are, but also, in a more positive vein, as indicators of the shortcomings of the present world order pushing society toward self-perfection and further development.

Introduction

The interdisciplinary approach to the post-Soviet conflicts based on the conflict resolution studies and economic theory is very promising from the viewpoint of the anticipated results. Theoretical conclusions can be used to draw up practical recommendations on how to apply economic methods to ethnic conflicts. So far, few of those who study the theory and practice of conflicts have paid enough attention to the economic aspects of ethnic conflicts.

Economic Aspects of Ethnic Conflicts

There are enough facts indicating that poor countries and those hit by economic crises become involved in ethnic conflicts much more frequently than prospering states. From this it follows that economic backwardness and limited resources are probably, directly or indirectly, very important factors behind ethnic conflicts.

We can say that conflicts lay bare social shortcomings in a specific form; they help let off the steam of contradictions that accumulated over a long time during previous conflict-free or threshold periods and were never peacefully resolved. For this reason, a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the contradictions between the economic interests and values of conflict-free periods should probe deep into the crisis’ conflict component. This means that such an analysis should re-
veal the genuine (realized and potential) role of economic interests and values in the emergence and resolution of conflicts expected to resolve all contradictions. It should be said that the conflicting sides are not always fully aware of the conflict’s economic aspects, partly because they are too steamed up and partly because any conflict, once started, becomes exacerbated and spreads under its own steam.

Practically all ethnic conflicts stir up memories of wounded national dignity and fan ethnocentrism and religious self-awareness together with the desire to restore “historical justice.” For some time, the resultant emotions distort and revise the axiological systems. At this stage, the ethnic conflict and the real reasons behind it are no longer perceived as cause and effect; not infrequently the public cannot adequately accept the inner logic of the processes unfolding before it.

I do not mean to say that all post-Soviet ethnic conflicts are caused by economic factors alone, in the same way as life cannot be reduced to economics. The causes are intertwined into a knot of economic, political, cultural, social, and historical circumstances that are difficult to distinguish among and disentangle. Any in-depth analysis, however, will reveal that economic factors play a huge role in the emergence of ethnic conflicts, even though this is rarely obvious at first sight and is, therefore, rarely recognized at full value.

There is the opinion among the experts in conflict studies that ethnic conflicts are products not so much of economic backwardness and resource deficit, but of their unfair distribution, wounded national dignity, etc. An awareness of gross injustice and trampled-down ethnic feelings is very important, but they are the result not so much of what the conflicting sides do, rather of how they interpret fairness.

The interpretation of fairness, national dignity, etc., on the other hand, is largely determined by what is economically profitable and what is not. In other words, ethnic ideology frequently and unconsciously adjusts the idea of fairness to economically promising demands. This explains why, while talking about fairness, some ethnic groups insist on historical justice, others proceed from contemporary realities, and still others from the feeling of national superiority or religious motives. In all cases, however, satisfied political and legal demands make economic resources more accessible: in the final analysis, such demands are economically promising in the short- or long-term. The economic element of ethnic conflicts can be likened to the submerged part of an iceberg.¹

For example, while the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict was just unfolding, the Abkhazian side announced that even though the Georgians were in the majority, the land has belonged to the Abkhaz from time immemorial. Therefore, they insisted that, even though they are currently in the minority, the Abkhaz should be in control politically and set up a state of their own in which they would control the vitally important resources to be redistributed in favor of the Abkhaz to the detriment of the Georgians according to the principles of historical justice. The Ossetian side of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict thinks differently. The Ossets are convinced it is unimportant whom the land of Samachablo belonged to long ago. They are living on it now, so the land is theirs. In other words, the Ossets are convinced that they are defending their land and their own vitally important resources from external enemies (the attempt to alter the autonomous status of South Ossetia added fire to this conviction).

Both the Abkhaz and the Ossets demand justice, even though their approaches are different. In both cases, however, the idea of fairness is based on political and economic gains. We may suggest that “just demands” of that sort and the very interpretation of justice show the “social unconscious” of

¹ So-called unconscious motives play a huge role in structuring the requirements of societies and individuals and determine, to a great extent, their behavior. This explains why man is not always aware of what moves him. In such cases, “rationalization” comes into play. Psychoanalysts explain this as man’s attempt to justify his motivations as more or less morally acceptable and find a quasi-rational explanation of his conduct. Not infrequently, the ideology of separatism plays a more or less similar role.
which Erich Fromm wrote at one time.\textsuperscript{2} The patriotic arguments in which some of the separatist leaders sincerely believe are in fact rooted in their provincial political ambitions and falsely interpreted economic interests. In the context of human values, this sort of “historical justice” manifests historical injustice, ingratitude, and imprudence.

The economic contradictions between states (especially in regions that can be described as geopolitically complex) played an important role in igniting the post-Soviet ethnic conflicts. The political forces behind them sought control over local oil, the Black Sea ports, the trans-Caucasian roads, the Eurasian flow of commodities, the local markets, and investments. They succeeded in provoking the conflicts, mainly because they exploited the very real ethnic contradictions (in the economic sphere, among other things) caused by economic crises, the plummeting standard of living, anticipated privatization, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the region’s uneven development, and the desire to control economic resources.

Subjective factors have a prominent role to play—both economic theory and conflict resolution studies recognize this. For example, expectations alone may push the subjects to take actions that will provoke the expected developments. Inflationary expectations, in particular, may cause inflation because they induc people “to get rid of cash” by buying up commodities, which, in turn, provokes a cumulative price surge. Ethnic conflicts develop according to a similar pattern. When people expect hostile steps, this leads them to engage in aggressive self-defense that prompts certain steps on the part of the other side, which suggests even more active conduct on both sides. The conflict develops into a vicious circle until armed clashes begin and force is used to resolve the confrontation.

Such developments can be averted if conflict expectations are replaced with expectations of economic cooperation among ethnic groups at the early stages; the same is true of post-conflict rehabilitation. All we need are adequate replacement methods. The people living in polyethnic regions should be offered fundamentally new economic potential that would call for cooperation and rule out confrontation. This will readjust the system of preferences and values. This could even stem an unfolding conflict or prevent a potential one.

It seems that large joint economic projects (probably supported by international financial organizations) may prove especially effective. Investment projects of this sort look especially promising against the background of huge sums of money engulfed by continued deployment of peacekeeping forces in the conflict zones and post-conflict rehabilitation, to say nothing of the appalling loss of life and the danger of the conflict spreading far and wide.

The mathematical theory of disasters says that any developing system (be it social, economic, or any other) will crumble in the absence of feedback.\textsuperscript{3} For many decades, the totalitarian system and centralized economy accumulated contradictions that could not be resolved in the absence of feedback.

The market economy and democratic society operate within the feedback system, which means that ethnic conflicts can potentially be avoided. In the same way as the centralized economy creates economic preconditions for ethnic conflicts, the market economy possesses the huge potential of alleviating ethnic contradictions. It should be said that the period of transition from a centralized to a market economy is fraught with ethnic upheavals.

Persistent ethnic hatred and intolerance had no direct role to play in the emergence and development of the post-Soviet ethnic conflicts and armed confrontation—the conflicts were triggered by the transition to a market economy. This is a specific feature of the post-Soviet ethnic conflicts.

\textsuperscript{2} Man believes that his thoughts belong to him as products of his thinking. In actual fact, they are determined by objective factors acting behind his back. In Freudianism, these objective forces are presented as psychological and biological needs; in Marxism, they are social and economic historical forces that determine the individual’s existence and, indirectly, his consciousness (see: E. Fromm, Dusha cheloveka, Respublika Publishers, Moscow, 1992, pp. 343-344).

\textsuperscript{3} This theory predicted a disintegration of the Soviet totalitarian system.
Certain studies have demonstrated that in transition economies ethnic minorities suffer more from unemployment than ethnic majorities that produce managers and private owners. Being in the majority, these ethnic groups earn more money, which fact explains why social tension in polyethnic regions develops into ethnic conflicts.

The privatization of public property in the newly independent states is one of the causes of the post-Soviet ethnic conflicts. Different ethnic groups profit to different degrees: privatization results directly on which of the ethnic groups controls the process in the country where laws are habitually disrespected. Separatism and other political demands suggested by the sides’ serious political and economic interests result from a vehement power struggle. This ends in oligopoly—a subject of the study of economic theory—and explains how deeply-rooted economic interests are distorted by political, ideological, and religious motivations to be presented as the conflicting sides’ demands.

In all conflicts, the shadow economy plays a fairly large role—it dominates in hot spots where the central government and its laws are impotent. The local people have to adjust themselves to a protracted crisis, while the shadow economy also restructures itself. Its leaders acquire vast economic and political power in the conflict zones and beyond them; involved in illegal trade in weapons, drugs, contraband, and abductions, they are known to prevent conflict settlement to go on with money grubbing in the troubled waters of conflicts. Millions of dollars change hands in such places; this gives rise to powerful economic interests that exploit high-sounding patriotic slogans to keep the conflicts alive.

In polyethnic regions, discrimination against national minorities reduces rivalry on the labor market, it trims incomes and makes efficient use of capital impossible. This means that the market economy rules out national discrimination and brings harmony to ethnic relations. The market, which follows the logic of preventive policies, can prevent ethnic conflicts: “All the conflicting sides profit from peaceful coexistence.” Preventive logic of market economics should not be reduced to economic advantages alone. Active market relations rule out ethnocentrism—the tendency to assess all vitally important phenomena through the prism of one’s own ethnic traditions and values—as one of the essential factors that leads to conflicts.

The degree of ethnocentrism depends on the intensity and scope of the relations among various ethnic groups: limited relations tend to absolutize the local traditions and values. Active contacts with other ethnic groups create a better understanding of one’s own and other people’s culture. An intensive economic exchange helps overcome the feeling of national superiority and brings ethnic groups closer together.

Investment policies designed to attract capital from abroad may contribute to economic activities, higher living standards, as well as a culture of production and relations in the sphere of production. The main thing is for invested foreign capital to be vitally interested in stability and contribute to it to a great extent.

Pre-History of the Post-Soviet Ethnic Conflicts

In order to be comprehensive and clarify many points, an analysis of the post-Soviet ethnic conflicts should take into account the realities of our common not so distant past and the causes behind these confrontations. Without this the true and deeply rooted causes might be inadequately interpreted.4

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In the Soviet empire, the state had a monopoly on redistribution of the vitally important productive and consumer resources and services (medicine and education included). It also distributed administrative posts, privileges, important information, etc. This created absolute individual dependence on power. In these conditions, the quantity and quality of material goods the individual received from the state had nothing in common with the results of his personal efforts—they were primarily determined by the status group to which he belonged. Society consisted of formal and informal groups with different access to the quality and quantity of state-distributed resources.

An ethnic group is one of such status groups, its status being registered in the dominating stereotypes of public consciousness, in official and informal ideologies, and in the traditions of governing the national autonomies. Under these conditions, ethnic affiliations should be registered in passports and other documents. The state in principle could regulate individual employment, as well as determine the economic and social status of any member of any ethnic group.

In the Soviet empire, the national republics and autonomous territorial units coincided with the territorial distribution of the autochthonous ethnic groups; according to the official doctrine, this was expected to stimulate their progress. For this reason, the government that distributed the resources looked at these entities as status groups which, in principle, could claim all sorts of rights and privileges.

The redistribution of resources inevitably bred competition among the status groups, while a total deficit of vitally important resources developed into bitter rivalry that became fraught with potential conflict. Centralized distribution made status the key to all resources and the cause of conflicts.

As soon as the totalitarian system became decentralized, the status groups launched into action to upgrade their former status as a weapon of struggle for acquiring vitally needed resources. In the system of centralized distribution of resources among ethnic groups with different statuses, an attempt by any of them to upgrade its status was perceived by its competitors as an infringement on their status or, at least, as an attempt to disrupt the balance maintained by the empire’s administrative diktat and restraint. In this way, the actions of the second status group were a reaction to the activation of the first.

Under conditions where group interests were held higher than individual interests and the conflicting sides did not share any fundamental values, it was very hard to avoid conflicts through direct talks. Conflict settlement was driven into a corner, while the conflicts themselves became “preserved.” In this situation, a populist movement appeared, parallel to the already existing genuinely patriotic forces, with totalitarian fascist rhetoric that emphasized historical or social justice, or spoke of the chance of setting up their own sovereign state.

**Ethnic Conflicts in a Transition Economy**

How do economic reforms affect ethnic relations? This is a particularly interesting question. On the one hand, a transition economy negatively affects various ethnic groups to different degrees, which may provoke conflicts; on the other, ethnic conflicts do significantly affect economic processes and the course of the economic reforms. Ruined and paralyzed industries, the results of ethnic conflicts, cause huge direct and indirect economic losses. Conflicts lead to the redistribution of resources and political regrouping and deprive the affected region of an economic future.

An analysis of the cause-and-effect relationship between ethnic conflicts and economic reforms suggests two important conclusions: first, spontaneous economic processes and erroneous economic policies in polyethnic regions are conducive to ethnic conflicts; second, conflict processes can, in principle, be corrected by economic means.
Certain economic processes of the transition period may, directly or indirectly, lead to ethnic conflicts. The following are the most important ones:

- Economic decline, unemployment, and a drop in the standard of living below the poverty level;
- Sharp differentiation of society by income level;
- Unequal economic development of the regions with areas of compact settlement of ethnic minorities;
- A large-scale shadow economy (trade in arms, drug trafficking, smuggling);
- Privatization of state property and redistribution of economic resources;
- Faulty investment policies;
- Different state and economic interests of the countries involved in the region’s political processes as their main actors.

On the other hand, certain processes and factors may help to settle ethnic conflicts:

- Economic progress, a growing number of jobs and higher standard of living;
- Socially oriented economic policies;
- Foreign investments;
- Development of small businesses;
- Limiting the dimensions of the shadow economy;
- An anti-monopoly policy and wider competition;
- Development of interregional economic ties;
- A fiscal federalism policy designed to even out the regions’ economic development level;
- Implementation of wide-scale economic projects that call for the joint involvement of ethnic groups and cooperation;
- Involvement of members of all ethnic groups in democratic administration and economic decision-making;
- Economic international aid to problem areas designed to rehabilitate post-conflict zones.

Conflict settlement cannot and should not be limited to economic methods alone. Mediation, peacekeepers, confiscation of small arms and other weapons from the local civilians, and political pressure can be successfully applied at different stages. At the same time, correctly and timely applied economic methods may help replace conflict expectations with expectations of mutually advantageous cooperation. Disastrous developments can be prevented by channeling the energy of all the ethnic groups living in any given hot spot into the economic sphere. Wider vistas of economic activity and goals calling for concerted efforts may revive economic enthusiasm. Skillfully combined with political tools, economic methods may produce tangible results.

Anti-conflict preventive measures implemented in volatile regions may prove fairly expensive, but if compared with the possible losses incurred by potential ethnic conflicts, the spending on social programs, education, culture, stronger law-enforcement bodies, etc. will prove to be much more effective from the political, humanitarian, and economic points of view. They can be regarded as investments that will not only produce incomes, but also rule out losses.

A conflict can be prevented if even a small part of the spending poured into a conflict at the stage when it has already incurred direct and indirect losses is used to prevent disastrous developments. Prevention measures are cheaper than extinguishing the already burning fire, since much more money
is needed to stem conflict inertia. In the same way, the inertia of peaceful coexistence makes preventive measures cheaper.

Preventive measures are designed to change the conflict-prone context. In fact, the vast financial resources daily spent on arms, mass murders, and destruction, as well as on restoring what was destroyed, will be much wiser spent on the region’s accelerated economic development and raising the standard of living.\(^5\) If used correctly and on time, large financial injections into volatile polyethnic zones may help avoid conflicts and radically improve ethnic relations. Preventive measures, however, are rarely used, since money must be spent on them now, while the results will not become obvious until much later, or not even be seen at all (such as prevented wars and other calamities).

**Conclusion**

In the post-Cold War period, ethnic conflicts have moved to the fore all across the world. The countries that have experienced ethnic conflicts and are still trying to cope with them should not be left to their own devices: they need wide-scale international support.

The ever-growing intensity of local ethnic conflicts suggests that the time has come to try to identify the broader problem behind such conflicts.

Are ethnic conflicts fragments of global contradictions—between the North and the South or between poverty and wealth?

Are ethnic conflicts a spontaneous, not always realized and so far unorganized, form of struggle for redistributing deficit world resources? If this is the case, then ethnic conflicts are akin to the anti-globalist or green movements and even international terrorist actions.

An in-depth and comprehensive economic analysis can produce the answer and help formulate recommendations based on theoretical conclusions for international organizations engaged in anti-conflict policies and economic reforms in polyethnic regions. It will be possible to work out methods of “intensive economic therapy” for ethnic conflicts and of preventive economic policies in explosive regions.

Ethnic conflicts, at the same time, should not be regarded solely as social catastrophes to be liquidated, but also as indicators of the shortcomings in the present world order. We can say that an analysis of ethnic conflicts urges society toward self-improvement and points to the path of its development.

We can even say with a certain degree of conventionality that a post-conflict world becomes much better and that the loss of life and material values is a sort of payment for improving world order. Yet this pushes the cost of progress too high: it could and should be achieved without armed struggle, through reasoning and cooperation. To make this possible we should first study ethnic conflicts as a phenomenon. Armed with adequate scientifically substantiated knowledge about the true causes of ethnic conflicts, we can cut down the losses and victims or even put an end to all conflicts.

\(^5\) For example, NATO members can probably allocate part of their defense budgets to a fund designed to make timely forecast of, prevent, monitor, and settle ethnic conflicts and eliminate their repercussions. This can be regarded as a kind of a tax.
Senior research worker at the Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences (Prague, the Czech Republic).

OIL AND GAS IN THE CASPIAN: CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Abstract

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 high hopes and expectations arose concerning production possibilities of oil and gas in the Caspian region, which encompasses territories of five states—Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan. These expectations were to some extent fomented by local governments and businesses, which were eager to incite interest as well as investments of Western companies; the governments realized soon enough that they are economically dependent on extraction of energy resources. At that time the Caspian was often considered as possible future competitor of the Middle East in terms of energy supplies. The so-called “Great Game,” in which Great Britain, Russia and China competed for influence in Central Asia throughout the 19th century, unfolded anew with novel variations. This time different actors sought access to and control over the development of energy resources and related transit corridors. Competing actors included international oil-producing companies, states in the region, governments of European countries, the U.S. and the EU. In recent years China became very active in this respect as well.

Current Situation in the Caspian

The initial euphoria had been slowly replaced throughout the 1990s by more sober assessments of extraction opportunities and amount of reserves, as well as of related problems with transportation of extracted materials to world markets. It became clear that the region will not become a full-fledged competitor for the Middle East, but that its deposits will be relevant for supplying not only the neighboring regions, but more distant areas of Europe and Asia as well. This is true for Azerbaijan and especially for Kazakhstan. Serious prospecting and exploration efforts on their territories commenced only recently and have already resulted in locating several important oil fields in northern part and gas deposits in the southern part of the Caspian. It seems likely that in terms of quantity, Caspian deposits of gas might be even more important than those of crude oil. However, as oil is easier to transport and oil-extraction projects offer faster returns on investments, at the moment existing infrastructure is designed for oil production, for which there is currently high demand on world markets. Oil production will thus provide the main pull in the development of Caspian deposits in the coming decade.
After disintegration of the Soviet Union, dynamics of crude oil production in countries of the Caspian basin (excluding Russia and Iran) was the following:

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>12.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>15.7</td>
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<td>20.6</td>
<td>35.3</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Most countries experienced decline in crude oil production after the disintegration of the Soviet Union; yet, this trend was reversed in the second half of the 1990s by relatively sharp increases. Kazakhstan is by far the biggest oil producer with 60 millions of tonnes annually.

For the future, estimates of proven reserves are much more relevant. The estimates for oil reserves are the following:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>R/P ratio (in years)</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>R/P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The estimates are becoming more precise each year and are increasing due to extensive prospecting and exploration resulting in discoveries of new fields. The R/P ratio, i.e. ratio of proven reserves to production, is important as it measures for how long would the reserves of each country last given current level of production. In this respect, Kazakhstan has the most advantageous position among Central Asian states, as its reserves estimates have risen sharply, even though volatility of available data is significant. It is estimated that the Russian sector of the Caspian Sea has reserves of about 0.3 billion barrels of oil while the Iranian one 0.1 billion barrels, which is not a big share relative to their overall production levels.

The situation is somewhat different concerning production of gas, as the following table demonstrates.
Production is relatively high only in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The latter however consumes domestically almost all the gas it produces; the same is true for other countries as well. The only significant exporter is thus Turkmenistan, which consumes about 15 bcm domestically and is therefore able to export about 40 bcm mostly to Ukraine and also to Russia and Iran. Production levels are beginning to rise sharply in Kazakhstan.

Proven reserves of gas are indeed promising as is shown in the following table:

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Gas Production in the Caspian</th>
<th>(in billions of cubic meters per year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>81.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Future of oil production in the Caspian is dependent to a large extent on world prices. Costs for production and transportation of Caspian oil to the market are approximately $8-10 per barrel, which means world price needs to be at least $18/barrel. If it falls below this level, additional investments in production will not be profitable. Long-term perspectives were based on the assumption that oil price stabilizes at around $22-27/barrel; in 2004, however, the average price of Brent oil was at $38.27/barrel and in the following months it remained at a relatively stable level of around $60/barrel or higher. It is estimated that in 2015 the Caspian (excluding Russia) may pro-
duce almost 4 million barrels of oil per day. From this amount, over 50% will be produced in Kazakhstan and additional 15-30% in Azerbaijan. According to this estimate, Turkmenistan will not export any significant amount of oil and Uzbekistan is likely to become a net oil importer.¹

If investments in oil production continue at least at the current level and if adequate infrastructure is provided, International Energy Agency estimated at the beginning of the millennium that Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan could together produce 3.9 million barrels of oil per day (i.e. 194 million tonnes per year) in 2010 following the optimistic scenario. According to pessimistic scenario, which takes into account delays in opening of new fields, production would rise only to 2.7 million barrels per day (i.e. about 135 million tonnes per year). This would mean that the Caspian region will produce about 4% of world oil. At the same time, it is estimated that the share of world oil production will be over 50% for the Middle East.²

Export of oil from the Caspian Sea basin should according to the baseline scenario rise from 1.5 million barrels per day (i.e. 75 million tonnes) in 2005 to 2.5 million b/d in 2010 (about 120 million tonnes annually). The area could reach the export peak in 2015, when all countries in the region combined could sell about 3 million barrels per day (i.e. 150 million tonnes) abroad. Nevertheless current plans of Kazakhstan to increase oil production seem overly ambitious, which could eventually lower this figure. Exports in 2020 are expected to fall to about 2.7 million barrels per day.

Given the fact that oil production in the region is currently (as well as in the near future) dependent on few huge fields, delays in development of any of these would have significant impact on overall production of the whole area. If world prices remain high in the long term, attractiveness of Caspian oil would rise correspondingly. Peak in production could in this case come already in 2010 instead of 2015. Kazakhstan alone plans to produce 150 million tonnes of oil in 2015 already.³

Influx of Caspian oil will have only limited impact on world prices, but when combined with overall Russian production its effect could become significant. Share of OPEC countries on world production is likely to rise till 2010 as production of several non-members will start to fall (e.g. countries surrounding the North Sea) and Caspian oil will likely replace only about half of this decrease.

As opposed to oil, development of gas production depends more on demands of the market than on accessible reserves. Gas reserves are relatively large in the region and production will not reach its peak until 2020. Gas exports from Turkmenistan will be significant in the coming decade not only for post-Soviet space (Ukraine, Russia) and China, but for supplying Europe as well, as it could start competing with Russian gas, which is becoming more and more expensive.⁴ Given the fact that Kazakhstan wants to stop importing Russian gas in the coming ten years, its export potential will be somewhat weakened.

Insufficiency of infrastructure is one of the main obstacles toward realizing the full potential of the Caspian region and it hinders exports from the area. It is estimated that construction of full-fledged infrastructure for production and transportation of oil and gas in the Caspian would require investments of approximately $200 billion. At the same time, Caspian countries are forced to compete with one another for foreign direct investments (FDI). Investor-friendly climate, both in the target and transit countries, is as important as technical and geological calculations. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are currently offering the best conditions for foreign investments.

FDI in the energy sector reached $5bn for all the newly independent states of the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia in 1999. Future investments following already signed contracts should amount to more than $60bn. Kazakhstan alone received $8.4bn in FDI in 2004. However, experts warn that financing projects in a region with such high political as well as security risks is potentially perilous for smaller investors.¹

Even though potential profits for foreign investors are great, so are the barriers for successful investment. They range from lack of information about local companies, inefficient state bureaucracy, combined with unclear competences of administrative bodies, to disputes over ownership of oil fields that are on the Caspian shelf or in remote autonomous regions. Further problems arise due to underdeveloped transportation and communication infrastructure, errant government policies as well as political instability and ethnic conflicts.

Most foreign companies operate on several oil fields. Chevron was leading in oil production in 1999 (it produced 88 thousand barrels per day) followed by ExxonMobil (68 thousand b/d), LUKoil (64 thousand b/d), British Petroleum (33 thousand b/d) and number of others (Agip, BG, Statoil). Agip was the leader in gas production, followed by British Gas, Chevron and LUKoil.⁶

Oil and Gas Pipelines

With the exception of Iran, the system of oil and gas pipelines in the Caspian region was built to serve the needs of centralized Soviet Union, which meant that it emphasized routes leading to the European part of the country. After collapse of the Soviet Union, pipelines leading from the Caspian cross territories of several independent states, notably Russia, and until recently did not have any direct “outlet” to the outer world. This historical legacy persists to this day and is only gradually being removed.

The biggest problem facing foreign investors in the Caspian region is the insufficient infrastructure of export pipelines, which would enable the energy resources to reach world markets. Construction of new pipelines is thus a top priority.

Main oil export routes are the following:

- **Atyrau-Samara oil pipeline.** This 690 km long pipeline was built more than 30 years ago. In Samara it connects to the Druzhba pipeline network. It has capacity of 10.3 million tonnes per year, which is currently being upgraded to 15.4 million tonnes.

- **Tengiz-Novorossiisk oil pipeline.** This 1,900 km long pipeline was built by Caspian Pipeline Consortium. Construction costs for the first phase of the project in 2001 were $2.4bn. The pipeline has capacity of 28 million tonnes per year. In the second phase of the project it should be raised to 66 million tonnes.

- **Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline,** which was lobbied by the United States, as it does not cross Russian nor Iranian territory. It is 1,764 km long with annual capacity of 50 million

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tonnes, which can be enhanced up to 85 million tonnes. Construction costs were $3.6bn. The pipeline became operational at the end of May 2005, and first oil tankers began filling up in the Mediterranean in the fall of the same year.

- Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline project, with length about 3,000 km and annual capacity of about 20-40 million tonnes per year. A preliminary agreement was concluded in 1997, but further construction was halted. Construction of new pipeline from Kazakhstan to Western China commenced instead. This 960 km long pipeline with initial capacity of 10 million tonnes connected the Kumkol oil field in central Kazakhstan with eager Chinese market in December of 2005.7

- Trans-Caspian project, a 590 km long pipeline which is supposed to connect Aktau (on the Kazakh side of the Caspian Sea) with Baku, where it could join the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. Feasibility studies have been completed in the late 1990s, but decision to begin construction is still pending.

Main gas export routes from the Caspian are the following:

- Central Asia-Center gas pipeline, connecting Turkmenistan via Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan with Russia and Europe. It uses existing infrastructure built under Soviet Union and its capacity is 110 bcm per year. Since 2002, it has enabled for example the supplies of up to 50 bcm of Turkmen gas to Ukraine.

- Turkmenistan-Iran gas pipeline. This pipeline with annual capacity under 10 bcm became operational in December of 1997. Several proposals to increase its capacity exist; however, the potential of this export route is limited, as Iran itself is a major competing gas producer.

- Blue Stream gas pipeline, connecting southern Russia with Turkey. This pipeline is laid on the bed of the Black Sea. First supplies through this almost 400 km long pipeline began in December 2001, but the intake is only several billion cubic meters per year as opposed to the planned 16 bcm annually.

- Trans-Caspian gas pipeline project, with length of 1,686 km, which would connect Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. Preliminary study for this $3 billion project has been completed; realization is yet unclear.

- Baku-Erzurum gas pipeline project, which would transport gas from the Azerbaijan Shakh Deniz gas field to Turkey and further to Europe. This project proposed by BP has been postponed several times due to uncertain yield of the field and over-supply of the Turkish market.

- Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline project. Proposed length is 8,000 km, and construction costs are estimated to reach approximately $12bn. Only preliminary study has been completed so far, but the project was confirmed in the Sino-Turkmen agreement on gas supplies (signed on April 2006).8

The Russo-Ukrainian price dispute and short cancellation of gas supplies in winter months of 2005 and 2006 induced the European Union to focus on supply security. One of the proposed options is project Nabucco of the Nabucco consortium consisting of five companies from five Central and South Eastern European countries. The plan is to build a gas pipeline 3,400 km long with initial capacity of 4.5 bcm per year, which could be enhanced to 25-30 bcm. Such pipeline would transport gas

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8 Based on J.P. Dorian, op. cit., p. 26; H. Wołowska, op. cit., pp. 49-50; R. Smith, op. cit., p. 38.
from Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Iran to Europe. However, possible realization of this project will not start until next decade.9

Total capacity of oil pipelines for transportation of Caspian oil to Russia was 18.5 million tonnes per year in 1998. This capacity had been almost fully utilized, and in the following years it increased even further. The situation concerning gas was even more complicated. Given effective control of export pipelines Moscow was able to exclude Central Asian gas from lucrative markets, as it could substitute the Russian gas. Export opportunities for Uzbekistan and especially Turkmenistan remained limited to insolvent countries in the post-Soviet space (especially Ukraine). Azerbaijan and other countries even imported Russian gas. However, since the turn of the century the position of Gazprom as well as of Russia began to shift. The reason is that Gazprom wants to buy vast quantities of Turkmen and Kazakh gas and reassert its control over energy infrastructure in the Southern Caucasus as well as in Central Asia.

In 2010 Central Asian states will have together with Azerbaijan about 120 million tonnes of oil and 80 bcm of gas available for export per year. Current capacity of pipelines does not enable transportation of such volumes. This is why construction of new pipelines and rehabilitation of current pipeline network began in the second half of the 1990s. Most of these need to cross or come dangerously close to crisis-prone areas, which raises concerns that they might become targets of attacks. Other proposed routes leading through Iran are blocked by U.S. sanctions and its policies toward Tehran. At the same time, U.S. tries to diversify export routes in order to reduce dependence of Central Asian countries on Russia.

Caspian oil can successfully compete with Russian oil, as it is of higher quality (the Russian oil has high content of sulphur) and extraction is cheaper. German, Czech and other oil refineries are indeed showing great interest in this type of oil. Apart from the European market, China, which already takes part in oil production in Kazakhstan, is another prospective consumer, and in medium to long run it will undoubtedly become an important buyer of Central Asian energy resources. Construction of new internal Chinese oil pipeline from Northwestern China to Shanghai will help link Central Asia with this country. Relevant agreement about construction of the 4,000 km long pipeline, which will cost $20bn, was signed by consortium led by Royal/Dutch Shell in July 2002.10

Biggest consumers of gas from Azerbaijan and Central Asia will probably remain in the post-Soviet space (Uzbekistan, Ukraine); Russia is bound to play a prominent role. The perspectives for enhancing exports of Russian gas to Western Europe (possibly even to 200 bcm per year) are not quite clear at the moment. Supplies of Turkmen gas to Russia would free its own gas for exports to Europe. However, in the medium run exports to western China look promising as the 2006 agreement on gas pipeline construction and energy supplies from Turkmenistan to China demonstrated. Gas from Azerbaijan will head for Georgia and possibly even Europe in the medium to long term perspective. Other neighboring countries, especially Turkey, can become its consumers as well, even though political considerations can block such development. In the case of Turkey, competition from Russian gas is particularly strong.11

The current network of oil and gas pipelines serves Russian interests best. Almost all Central Asian countries are observing Russian intentions with certain distrust, both in general and concerning energy resources in particular. Moreover, recent years encumbered bilateral relations with a number of disputes and conflicts. For this reason, operators of Caspian oil fields have since the beginning of

10 See: Ísp-dájské n-viny, 8 July, 2002.
the 1990s been looking for alternative ways of reducing the dependence on Russia. Even though many options have been considered, virtually none has been completed so far. Complex security environment in the region is the main reason, apart from high financial costs and time-consuming preparatory works. There are several hotbeds of serious conflict, which limit the possibilities of transit routes for pipelines from Central Asia and the Caspian basin. Environmental concerns come to the fore as well.\footnote{See: M. Clark, “The Bosporus Bottleneck,” Petroleum Economist, Vol. 71, No. 6, June 2004, pp. 28-29.}

Instability in domestic politics, security concerns and permanent tensions between Pakistan and India as well as the situation in Afghanistan lead to the conclusion that southeastern direction for alternative pipelines is not a realistic option. The same is true for proposals that traverse Iranian territory, as U.S. sanctions against Iran have been repeatedly prolonged. The routes leading from Western Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan to China are free from high security risks. However, distances between oil and gas fields near the Caspian Sea and markets in Eastern or Southeastern China or even Korea and Japan are too long. Nevertheless, Chinese authorities seem committed to pursue these alternatives.\footnote{See: Caspian Oil and Gas. The Supply Potential of Central Asia and Transcaucasia, pp. 133-144; The Politics of Caspian Oil, ed. by B. Gökay, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2001, pp. 121-125; The New Economy of Oil. Impact on Business, Geopolitics and Society, ed. by J. Mitchell, Earthscan Publications, London, 2001, pp. 131-138. For discussions on possible pipeline routes see also: M.B. Olcott, “Pipelines and Pipe Dreams: Energy Development and Caspian Society,” Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 53, No. 1, Fall 1999, pp. 305-323; C. Miles, “The Caspian Pipeline Debate Continues: Why not Iran,” Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 53, No. 1, Fall 1999, pp. 325-346.}

Routes leading through Russia include mainly the pipeline built by Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which includes several Kazakh, U.S., Russian and other companies. This pipeline transports oil from the Caspian Tengiz field to the Russian port of Novorossiisk. It is then necessary to ship it on tankers through the overloaded Turkish Straits. An alternative route for Kazakh oil will be provided by the Odessa-Brody pipeline through Ukraine and then from Brody through Druzhba pipeline to Central Europe, even though the Odessa-Brody pipeline is currently used by TNK-BP to transport small quantities of oil in reverse direction. Discussions are underway about prolonging this pipeline further to Gdansk in Poland. This would enable the transportation of Central Asian oil practically to whole Europe. The Odessa-Brody pipeline is a part of the Eurasian oil transportation corridor, an international project, which should ease the transportation of Caspian oil to Europe without necessarily passing through Russian territory.\footnote{See: Trend, No. 24, 12 June, 2002, p. 6.}

Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline provides connection between Azerbaijan and the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan through Georgia, and was built by the Consortium under leadership of British Petroleum. Its construction was technologically challenging, economic viability remains questionable, and there are serious environmental concerns. The pipeline should transport Azerbaijani and possibly also Kazakh and Russian (LUKoil, TNK-BP) oil from the northern part of the Caspian Sea. At the same time, Kazakhstan wants to diminish its dependency on Russian supplies of oil to its eastern regions, and thus plans to build an internal pipeline leading from western to eastern Kazakhstan. This would enable Kazakhstan to stop costly exchanges of oil with Russia, which leads to parts of Kazakh oil being exported to Russia. Concurrently, Kazakhstan was negotiating with Turkey and Iran the construction of pipelines which would connect it with Europe. In this case, however, it ran into U.S. resistance. For its part, the U.S. tries to convince President Nursultan Nazarbaev that Kazakhstan should export its oil through the BTC pipeline.\footnote{See: Alexander’s Gas & Oil Connections, 6 July, 2005, available at [http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news/ntc52755.htm].}

With respect to severely limited export routes for gas, only Turkmenistan currently has wider range of export options. Iran keeps blaming United States for pressuring late President Niyazov to
focus export routes to the west through Azerbaijan and Georgia instead of Iran, which offers significantly lower transit fees. The most important alternative proposal of Turkmenistan has been the project of Trans-Caspian Pipeline leading through the Southern Caucasus to Turkey. From there Turkmen gas could be transported to Europe in the future. Plans for a gas pipeline Iran-Turkey-Europe are already prepared, but political considerations hinder the beginning of construction works. Nevertheless, a 144 km long pipeline connecting fields in western Turkmenistan with northern Iran was completed already in 1997. Routes through Afghanistan to Pakistan are being considered, but they remain only theoretical at the moment.

The biggest volume of Turkmen gas for export flows through Russian pipelines to Ukraine as well as to Russia itself, as Gazprom is highly interested in long-term supplies of Turkmen gas. In the long-term perspective (at least ten years) it is necessary to count with dependence of Turkmenistan and whole Central Asia on Russian gas transportation system, even though Turkmenistan concluded an export agreement with China as well.

Uzbekistan was considering construction of several new gas pipelines. However, according to estimates the country will become a net importer of gas in the medium-run. Only discoveries of new gas reserves could provide some hope for future exports.

**Energy Politics and Policies in the Caspian**

**Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is the largest newly independent state in the Caspian in terms of land area and second biggest country in Central Asia population-wise. At the moment the production is concentrated on three key fields—Tengiz (consortium led by ChevronTexaco), Karachaganak (British Gas) and Kashagan (Agip). With the exception of Azerbaijan, no government in the region provided such favorable conditions for foreign investment as Kazakhstan did in the early years of independence. These included enactment of relevant legislation, formulation of an independent national energy strategy or even elimination of bureaucratic hurdles and delays. President Nazarbaev personally supervised the progress in important negotiations. Income from oil exports and foreign investment serves to finance his megalomaniac projects which include the construction of brand new capital city. Kazakh economic growth in recent years averaged 9% annually, mainly thanks to expanding oil production and high world price of this commodity.¹⁶

Founding of joint ventures between Western companies and former Kazakh state company KazakhOil became common practice. The biggest multinational companies such as Chevron invested in fields like Tengiz, which is the most abundant field in the country with reserves of 2.4 to 2.9bn tonnes of oil. Joint-venture company Tengizchevroil, where Kazakhstan owns 20%, U.S. companies Chevron and ExxonMobil 50% and 25%, respectively, and Russian LukArco 5%, produced 12 million tonnes of oil per year there.¹⁷ Another consortium financed the construction of oil pipeline to Russian Novorossiisk. KazMunaiGaz was founded in 2002 and controls all governmental share in new projects.

In recent years Kazakhstan government tried to revise contracts with oil companies in order to ensure greater revenues for the state budget. It focuses on intergovernmental agreements rather than on launching international tenders for exploration and development of separate production blocks.

Foreign oil companies are thus facing a dilemma—rich oil deposits have great potential, but at the same time pressure of the state increases.18

**Azerbaijan**

The situation of Azerbaijan, traditional oil producer in the region, has been sufficiently analyzed.19 The fact that many exploration drills in its sector of the Caspian Sea ended by failure or by locating only a field of gas is a problem for the country.20 It seems that the only hope for Azerbaijan is the contract signed with AIOC consortium concerning Azeri, Chirag and Gunashli oil fields. It has been signed as a “deal of the century” in 1994 for 30 years, with BP being the biggest shareholder. First oil was extracted in 1997, but 2005 became the decisive year. At that time the BTC pipeline, operated by a consortium also led by BP, became operational. In order to fill the pipeline, AIOC began to increase production from 130 thousand b/d at the end of 2004 to current 220 thousand b/d. It is estimated that it might push the production as high as 754 thousand b/d in 2007. The aim is to reach 1 million b/day the following year. The production will reach its peak at this level, after which a decline to 800 thousand barrels is expected at the beginning of next decade, at the end of which the production is estimated to fall further behind to 250 thousand b/d.21

With the oil boom currently underway, Azerbaijan needs new oil fields. The outlook is rather bleak in this respect, as number of exploration drills remained dry and prepared projects were cancelled. The hopes are focused on the northern part of the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea, where Russian LUKoil undertakes exploration drills, and on the area next to Azerbaijani-Iranian and Azerbaijani-Turkmen sector borders. In both cases the areas in question are disputed. Only an agreement on joint production modeled on the Russo-Kazakh agreement could open the fields for drilling. The absence of such an agreement and improbability of its signing in the near future lead to the conclusion that production and export of oil and the accompanying inflow of financial resources are dependent only on the three oil fields mentioned above.

Production of gas could supplement the production of oil in the long-term perspective, as gas has been found in several exploration drills instead of oil. This is especially the case of Shakh Deniz field.

**Turkmenistan**

Turkmenistan is the leading country in production and export of gas. It holds eighth biggest reserves of gas in the world, which is second only to Russia in the post-Soviet space. Additional exploration is likely to further raise this estimate. More than half of Turkmenistan’s gas comes from the Dauletabad field in eastern part of the country. Major obstacle adversely affecting possible increases in production is the geographic isolation of the country. Hopes for a production boom remain constrained unless reliable transportation routes to markets in Europe, Turkey or even China are established. In this respect, Turkmenistan will be dependent on Russia’s attitude in the coming years.

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The same holds for production of oil, even if Turkmenistan produces only over 7 million tonnes per year after a decline in production in the early 1990s. Isolationist policies of President Niyazov as well as combination of economic and political factors preclude more activity on the part of Western or Russian companies. So far, Turkmenistan exported small quantities of its gas to Iran and—from dire lack of other options—to Ukraine, which was supposed to consume 250 bcm of Turkmen gas between 2002 and 2006, even though the country is still hardly solvent. Under the agreement between Russia and Turkmenistan, Gazprom is supposed to gradually increase its purchases of Turkmen gas to 80 bcm per year since 2009 (30 bcm in 2006 already). Given such high volumes of export to Russia, it is questionable whether Turkmenistan will be able to keep the extent of its supplies to Ukraine. Niyazov moreover promised to export further 30 bcm to China since 2009. The 2006 Sino-Turkmen agreement stipulates that this gas should be transported through a new pipeline, and both sides should undertake joint exploration and drilling in the Amudarya basin. However, realization of the agreement will most likely be less ambitious in the end.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan lies in the geographical center of Central Asia, and it serves as a hub for its transportation and energy-related infrastructure. Its production of oil (7.5 million tonnes in 2000) has doubled since the beginning of the 1990s which enabled Uzbekistan to stop importing oil for purposes of generating electric power. Uzbekistan even exports smaller quantities of this commodity at the moment. The state-controlled Uzbekneftegaz company focuses on exploration and development of new fields as well as on full utilization of currently used as well as depleted fields.

Iran

Iran demands an equal share of 20% of the Caspian Sea area for each littoral state, which puts it at odds with its neighbors. Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan reached a separate understanding in 2003 which would effectively leave only 13% for Iran in case Turkmenistan adhered to the same delimitation principles. Despite these conflicts Iran shows signs of pragmatism and keeps increasing production on its oil fields. Its aim is to raise oil production from recent level of 110 thousand b/d to 1.6 million b/d at the end of the decade.

Russia

Fields in the Russian sector of the Caspian Sea remain largely untapped as Russian oil companies focus on other regions. However, Russia has been active throughout the 1990s in diplomatic and legal disputes over production rights. Putin administration started to put more emphasis on development of oil fields in this territory. Several agreements with Kazakhstan and later with Azerbaijan paved the way for further development, as they formalized the delimitation of the Caspian Sea bed and enabled founding of joint ventures.

Strong support of Russian companies trying to regain positions and influence in the Southern Caucasus and especially in Central Asia has been a significant aspect of Putin administration’s energy strategy. Apart from the already mentioned deal with Turkmenistan, Gazprom signed agreements on cooperation in the gas sector with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The agreements include provisions on prospecting and exploration, possible gas production and its purchases by Gazprom. A similar deal was signed with Kazakhstan as well.24

Two years later, in November of 2005, Gazprom signed an agreement with KazMunaiGaz concerning five-year buyout of all Kazakh gas exports, which is being exported to Russia through Bukhara-Ural pipeline. The agreement also deals with transit of gas from Turkmen and Uzbek fields. Shortly before that, in September of the same year, Gazprom signed another contract with Uzbek Uztransgaz, in which Gazprom acquired rights for practically all capacity of Uzbek transit pipelines for gas from Uzbekistan and especially from Turkmenistan.25 Vladimir Putin’s support of the Uzbek regime of Islam Karimov during the 2005 Andijan riots had direct economic consequences. As part of a strategic partnership between Russia and Uzbekistan a contract with LUKoil was signed concerning exploration and production rights in the Bukhara and Khiva regions.

The aim of Gazprom to acquire maximum control over Caspian gas production and its export to Europe is evident. Directing flows of gas to Russia is part of this strategy, as import of Central Asian gas would make more Russian gas available for export to Europe. This would lower the pressure on Gazprom to open more production facilities in Russia itself. It seems that this objective could be accomplished in 2007 through a series of agreements with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and an older contract with Turkmenistan. Strong Russian resistance to the proposed gas pipeline underneath the Caspian Sea is based on this strategic approach, as this U.S.-backed project would connect Central Asian fields with Azerbaijan and allow further transportation of gas through Georgia and Turkey to European markets.26

At the moment there are no indicators that the position of Russia as a virtual monopolist in transportation of gas from Central Asia and as an important oil transit country could seriously weaken in the near future. In the coming years governments in the region as well as energy companies will need to overcome a number of obstacles connected with increased levels of production of energy resources and with their secure transportation to regional and world markets. This will not be possible without foreign investment. At the same time, investments to oil and gas production and transportation can significantly increase incomes of national governments, and stimulate investment and development of other economic sectors. This could provide financial independence for Central Asian countries. Local governments should create a climate favorable for investment which includes adequate legal and administrative environment, functioning institutions and suitable educated personnel. For this reason, many reforms are still necessary.

**Conclusions**

1. Production of energy resources, especially of oil, in the wider Caspian region is full of political, security and economic risks; nevertheless it is highly interesting for international companies, which are investing considerable sums in it. The region will become a new supplier of energy resources, but it will most probably not become a producer of such volume which could affect world prices.

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2. Main obstacles for development of oil and gas production are the still underdeveloped infrastructure and lasting disputes over status of the Caspian Sea.

3. Azerbaijan is still considered to be the main oil producer in the region. Yet, its production will reach its peak in the near future and the oil boom there will be relatively short-lived. Kazakhstan is more promising in this respect, but it shows an increasingly stricter attitude toward international oil companies.

4. With the exception of Turkmenistan, where future development is inextricably linked to natural gas, perspectives of production and export of this commodity are largely unclear at the moment, as the focus of foreign investment is still predominantly on the oil sector.

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POSTCOMMUNIST CAPITALISM AND TRANSITION CULTURE IN GEORGIA
Essay on Necroeconomics:
The Political Economy of Post-Communist Capitalism (Lessons from Georgia) by Vladimer Papava (New York, Lincoln, Shanghai: Universe, Inc. 2005)

Vladimer Papava, former Minister of Economy in Georgia between 1994 and 2000 and now a Fulbright Scholar at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), is just the kind of person you want in your intellectual company, and probably in your government too. Widely read and articulate, able to fashion vivid images in conver-
sation or in text, he communicates effectively and knows what he thinks. And while many economists already know his work, this volume brings both his disciplinary accomplishment and practical experience to a broader community of scholars and policy makers. It’s a good read, and a provocative challenge to what Kennedy has called transition culture.¹

This culture of course emphasizes the opposition of socialism and capitalism, with the exhaustion of the former and both the normative and institutional superiority of the latter; it also highlights the value of generalizing expertise around the workings of market economies and democratic polities. Papava contributes enormously on these grounds, significantly extending general theories of postcommunist capitalism. He also contributes importantly at the empirical level, by considering Georgian economic reform on its own terms, as well as in its resemblance and contrast to Polish transformations. By combining good theoretical sense and practical experience, Papava invites us to rethink the best elements of transition culture’s tool kit, especially when it comes to contextual expertise.

Contextual expertise is not especially valued in transition culture, at least by those whose principal claims to competence lie in abstract theory and general comparisons. However, over time one should expect that those who understand both transnational arguments and their contextual transformations ought to be the most effective proponents of consequential change, as Papava himself represents.

One of the book’s most intriguing sections comes in his discussion of IMF “mistakes,” in which Papava notes how the Fund “often disregards the history, cultural traditions, and national peculiarities of the countries in which it operates.”² That predisposition helps us understand why the Fund would recommend something so outrageous to their Georgian negotiators in 1992 as to stay in the ruble zone. That very suggestion hardly fits with Georgian post-Soviet ambitions to rid themselves of Soviet and then Russian imperial domination. Of course there may have been other technical and political reasons for the IMF ruble preference, as Papava himself discusses, but this only reinforces the point about the transnational/contextual imbalance of expertise in transition culture.

Despite his criticism of the IMF’s relative ignorance of contextual factors, Papava emphasizes the centrality of the IMF and other transnational institutions to assuring effective transition; were they to avoid all mistakes, no doubt reforms would be more effective and efficient. Reading Papava’s book could thus help transnational actors, but it might be even more helpful for their national partners in transition culture to take heed of what Papava has to say.

Papava’s sociological sense is terrific in recognizing the double bind governments put themselves in when they attribute unpopular changes to IMF pressure. After all, commitments are only made when government negotiators agree to IMF terms (Papava doesn’t consider the power relations shaping the voluntarism of this agreement, however). By passing off responsibility to the IMF, government actors help to delegitimate good IMF advice among the public, and make themselves look even more ineffective or incompetent in negotiations. Maybe they are bad at that negotiating table, however; Papava recalls occasional Georgian failures to assemble good teams of negotiators, which in turn led IMF actors to overlook even good Georgian arguments. In short, Papava’s reflections can help governments think more critically about how to represent national/transnational negotiations in public and how to constitute them better in private. Indeed, one might even consider him an ideal partner in helping to figure more effectively those public reverberations and expert negotiations.

His contributions to expert negotiations are especially apparent in the ways in which he addresses government finance. Although we are not sufficiently expert in this branch of economics to assess

¹ See: M.D. Kennedy, Cultural Formations of Postcommunism: Emancipation, Transition, Nation, and War, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2002.
his arguments, he offers both sensible rhetorical and formulaic justifications for why we should be thinking of some kind of Laffer-Keynesian synthesis for postcommunist capitalism’s “tax therapy” and for thinking about the state as a fifth factor of production in postcommunist public finance. Experts will find his arguments useful.

Beyond his own disciplinary expertise, he shows his own sociological sense when it comes to his theory of economic actors. So much of economics depends on homo economicus for its theory, but Papava rightly argues that such actors are not sufficiently common in postcommunist capitalism to provide a good foundation for the theory and design of transition. One cannot assume that actors are simply motivated, even in modeling behavior, to maximize profit for one’s company or benefits for one’s household. But it is also wrong to model postcommunist economic behavior on homo sovieticus, for actors are no longer entirely dependent on or oppressed by the state. Rather, the disposition of subjects is in transition too, and combines elements of both types of subjects. If we therefore take his notion of “homo transformaticus” seriously, we might improve our theories of change by ceasing to think of economic agents in post-Soviet, especially Georgian space, as entrepreneurs. Papava proposes calling them deltsy based on the Russian word delets, for it properly connotes the shadow economy in which they work.

This group is quite effective at using their networks to make money, rather than using their managerial or entrepreneurial activities to develop better or cheaper products. The range of examples Papava offers is daunting; but more consequential for our sense of postcommunist transformations, it’s not obvious how effective reform will ever diminish this sector when this elite of deltsy retains such influential network locations. Clearly political will is a necessary if not sufficient condition for this, and it was apparently quite lacking in Shevardnadze’s later years (evidenced by his failure to implement the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Program of Georgia in 2003). It’s more difficult to tell what is lacking in the post-Rose revolutionary government.

Papava notes some of the improvements: The IMF withdrew its programs from Georgia in 2002, and then, after the Rose revolution, the IMF returned in the summer of 2004. The 6 May, 2004 revolution in Aaria also brought better relations between that rebellious province and the center, and more tax revenues for the government. A new tax code has been introduced as well. Major campaigns against corruption have also been initiated. Papava thus gives the new government credit where credit is due, but the IMF itself goes further. They praise the new post-Rose revolutionary government: «Since the Rose Revolution in November 2003, the government has accelerated the transition to an open, market-based economy, most visibly in the reform of the tax code, the privatization drive, and supporting steps to improve the business climate. Turning around the fiscal position was a remarkable success. More broadly, Georgia is on a promising path toward sustained growth and the alleviation of poverty.” Later, they continue to note the “impressive turnaround in the fiscal position that was underpinned by a decisive attack on corruption.” Papava counters that all is not so rosy, but we miss this in part because the conditionality the IMF imposes is no longer as strict as it was in the 1990s, and the critiques the IMF and World Bank offer are no longer as audible or consequential. For example, despite IMF advice to the contrary, the revenues brought from this anti-corruption initiative are not being managed with normal accounting procedures, and are leading to a new kind of discretionary power beyond parliamentary or governmental oversight. And while privatization might be desirable, most of those purchases are being made by

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1 Ibid., p. 108.
Russian firms, with direct or indirect Russian state ties. Papava worries therefore about a new kind of arbitrary power in Tbilisi, and about a new kind of imperialism from abroad, except this time made through Russian capital rather than Soviet power. Of course these geopolitical issues always lay at the heart of transition culture. Kennedy has recently begun to reconsider the force foundations and energy security underlying 1990s transition culture, but Papava is way ahead of him. Papava relies on a good deal of formal market theory to elaborate his argument. Indeed, his term “necroeconomy” acquires its sense in opposition to “vitaeconomy”, for while both produce goods, only in the latter is there demand; “those produced in necroeconomy (because of their poor quality and/or expense) cannot cause any demand.” Much of state policy depends on preserving that dead space despite the lack of living demand for its goods. By recognizing this reality of postcommunist capitalist political economy, Papava invites new and creative economic theory and intervention. But it is not clear what the relationship is between necroeconomy and imperialism, and that, it seems, is a central question for both economic theory and practical policy. Does increasing Russian ownership of Georgian economy, and attempts by Russians to increase control over the energy infrastructure of the Southern Caucasus, matter for developing an effective market economy? Does American support for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline reflect only an interest in diversifying energy supplies from the Caspian Sea, or a particular kind of geopolitical contest with Russia? Georgia sits clearly in the middle of these strategic questions, but we also have, in Papava, someone who is himself at the center of this kind of intellectual and policy consideration.
ETHNIC MYTHS AND PERCEPTIONS AS A HURDLE TO CONFLICT SETTLEMENT: THE ARmenIAN–AZERBAIJANI CASE

Abstract

In their search for conflict settlement, the parties and mediators concerned focus on political and economic formulae which address such major concerns as territorial arrangements, power sharing agreements, allocation of resources, and so forth. But in the case of ethnic conflicts, the myths and perceptions created both before and during the conflict are impeding the settlement process along with the very reasons for the conflict-territorial disputes and minority problems. This essay explores the influence of these myths and perceptions on the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. It illustrates the perspectives of the two sides in the conflict on the history of Nagorno-Karabakh and on the past events related to the conflict. The author gives the theoretical background of the relations revolving around ethnic identity, myths, and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. He con-
The contemporary phase of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan began in February 1988. On 13 February, the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh staged their first demonstration, demanding the transfer of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (Region) from Azerbaijan to Armenia. On 20 February, 1988, the Armenian deputies to the National Council of Nagorno-Karabakh voted to unite the region with Armenia. On 24 February, two young Azerbaijanis, killed in the settlement of Askeran in Nagorno-Karabakh during a standoff between Armenian and Azerbaijani demonstrators, became the first victims of the conflict. On 26-28 February, anti-Armenian riots in the Azerbaijani city of Sumgayit left 26 Armenians and 6 Azerbaijanis dead. After that, the Soviet authorities took the situation under control until November-December 1988. In November, information about an Armenian plan to build an industrial factory in Tophane—a territory in Nagorno-Karabakh, rich in natural resources, sparked a series of demonstrations in Baku—the capital of Azerbaijan. As the tension rose, more than 200,000 Azerbaijanis were expelled from Armenia. Then the Soviet authorities again took the situation under control and imposed a curfew. A new turn in the violence broke out in January 1990 when Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia attacked Armenian residents in Baku and forced them to leave Azerbaijan. Along with this, the opposition Popular Front of Azerbaijan was about to overthrow the communist authorities. Moscow sent troops into Azerbaijan on 20 January, killing 132 civilians, and soon restored its full control in Azerbaijan.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, full-scale armed hostilities began between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Better-prepared Armenian forces defeated the Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh, who were entangled in an internal fight for power, and then occupied seven regions outside the area. On 25-26 February, 1992, Armenian armed forces razed the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly to the ground, killing 613 Azerbaijanis. Armenians claim that this event occurred due to a conspiracy by the Azerbaijani opposition. In May 1992, Armenian armed forces captured Shusha—an Azerbaijani-populated and strategically located city in Nagorno-Karabakh—this was a huge blow to the Azerbaijanis. After a brief advancement by the Azerbaijanis in the summer of 1992, the Armenians carried out a successful armed operation in 1993, and Armenia occupied seven regions outside Nagorno-Karabakh.

In 1993, the U.N. Security Council adopted four resolutions—Nos. 822, 853, 874, and 884, demanding the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied Azerbaijani territories. In May 1994, Russia brokered a cease-fire agreement in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Despite frequent violations on the line of contact, Azerbaijan and Armenia adhered to the cease-fire agreement.

This is a brief history of the conflict, highlighting the major events; in between these events were many others. Each is interpreted differently and emotionally by both the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis and linked to the personal tragedies of refugees, displaced persons, and families of those killed and wounded. Overall, experts estimate that the conflict has claimed the lives of 30,000 people.

There are about 220,000 Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia and more than 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) in Azerbaijan, as well as 300,000 Armenian refugees from Azerbai-
These figures are also subject to dispute: Armenia estimates that its refugees from Azerbaijan total as many as 400,000 and put the number of Azerbaijani IDPs as low as 500,000.

Mediation efforts are being undertaken under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chaired by France, Russia, and the U.S. Despite a number of proposals put forward, the sides in the conflict have not reached any agreement on a peace plan.

The main hurdle involves the opposing demands for territorial arrangement—Armenia wants Nagorno-Karabakh to become independent and rejects any deal on an autonomous status for the region, while Azerbaijan wants to preserve its territorial integrity and similarly declines any proposal which might lead to independence of the region. Legal experts argue over the clash of two irreconcilable principles of international law—territorial integrity vs. self-determination. A middle line, in the light of the extreme positions, is hard to achieve, though from time to time the sides in the conflict have manifested some flexibility. In 1997, Armenian President Ter-Petrosian was about to agree on a Minsk Group proposal on stage-by-stage settlement, and the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan adopted a joint statement in October 1997 in Strasbourg. However, as a result of this policy, Ter-Petrosian was ousted from power in February 1998. The second time the parties manifested flexibility was in November 1999, but after the shootings in the Armenian parliament, when the speaker of the parliament and the prime minister were killed, the negotiation process was broken. Mediators believe that a third chance occurred during the negotiations in Key-West, the U.S. in April 2001, but no agreement was reached there either. The recent talks between Armenian President Kocharian and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliev in Rambouillet, France in February 2006 were also invested with high hopes, but failed to produce any positive results. However, the parties agreed to continue peaceful negotiations in search of a final solution.

Legal questions surrounding the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh are believed to be the main hurdle interfering with conflict settlement. Historical grievances—namely, the perceived grievances distorted by myths (as I will show below, the Armenians and Azerbaijanis lived peacefully for centuries)—play equally important roles, as the two nations depict each other in monstrous images. The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is one of the bloodiest and cruelest conflicts in the world, not in terms of numbers killed, but in the intensity and occurrence of the ethnic cleansing. The memory of past quarrels is exacerbated by the mass killings and tortures during the conflict between the two countries. The Azerbaijanis see themselves as the aggrieved party in the conflict, with some 20 percent of their country occupied by Armenian forces and one million refugees and IDPs. The Armenians regard the Azerbaijanis as Turks (they call them “Turks” in the Armenian language), whom they blame for the mass killings in 1915 during World War I.

Historians and experts from both sides give different interpretations of the history of the two peoples and of the conflict itself. Foreign academics and observers are caught in the propaganda war and sometimes fall victim to it, some intentionally favor one of the sides, some unintentionally, some are confused by the opposing versions, although pro-Armenian writings dominate due to the strong

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1 According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) “2003 Statistical Yearbook,” 304,000 Armenians were displaced from Azerbaijan to Armenia and 894,737 Azerbaijanis from Armenia, occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding regions to Azerbaijan (see: [http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/statistics/opendoc.htm?tbl=STATISTICS&id=42af7e84]).
lobby and long presence of Armenian communities in the Western countries. The conflict created a whole slew of myths; ethnic identity became a matter of obsession, pride, and hatred.

Ethnic identity has a pivotal role in the conflict. Despite the volume of research on the notion of ethnicity, there is no conventional agreement on its exact term. “The difficulty in defining ethnicity is that it is a dynamic concept encompassing both subjective and objective elements. It is the mixture of perception and external contextual reality which provides it with meaning. In political theory, ‘ethnicity’ describes a group possessing some degree of coherence and solidarity, composed of people who are aware, perhaps only latently, of having common origins and interests. Thus, an ethnic group is not a mere aggregate of people but a self-conscious collection of people united, or closely related, by shared experiences and a common history.”

Dell Hymes points to subjective factors such as perception, belonging, and self-identification. In a place like the Caucasus, the notion of nation and ethnicity is highly emotional and contentious. Valery A. Tishkov writes: “Because of the multi-ethnic composition of almost all major areas of the former Soviet Union (the only exception is Armenia after the exodus of the Azeris from this territory), practically all kinds of conflicts and clashes—social or political (from young men’s fights in local discotheques to collisions at the highest levels of power)—easily acquire an ethnic manifestation and flavor, making these conflicts and contradictions deeper, more complex, and extremely hard to resolve.”

Stuart Kaufman stresses in his international award-winning book *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* that people did not identify themselves as Serbs or Croats, because there was no sense of national identity before the twentieth century. But myths justify the hostility and fears of group extinction and lie at the root of the hostilities, and politicians play on these to obtain support. Kaufman denounces the idea that the real cause of the conflicts in the former U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia lies in historical grievances. Yet ethnic hatred can be falsely perceived as a prolongation of historical animosity. He mentions other factors—the role of political elites, economic problems, and security vulnerability. But the real cause, in his opinion, is “symbolic politics” of conflicts. Kaufman argues that existing perceptions about neighboring ethnic groups provoke violence, and once violence breaks out those perceptions justify themselves.

“If you read Armenian history it sounds as though the Turks have been slaughtering the Armenians for hundreds of years,” Kaufman said. That myth has been used to justify the Armenian hostilities in Turkic-speaking Azerbaijan. “You need to change the way history is taught so it does not reinforce hostile myths.”

Charles King, in a *Foreign Affairs* article entitled “The Myths of Ethnic Warfare,” argues that the ethnic wars were caused by “entrepreneurs who benefit from violence, arms supplied by foreign powers, charismatic leadership, and plenty of bored young men,” rather than by ethnic myths. Although he agrees that “in some cases, the cultural myths that Kaufman identifies as essential to violence are long-standing—as between the Armenians and the Azerbaijani ‘Turks,’ for example. But in plenty of others, the myths were manufactured in relatively short order, and usually after the violence had already started.”

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Despite the fact that the first clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijanis occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century, in earlier history we hardly find any animosity between the Turks and the Armenians. Many historical myths have been manufactured by a group of jingoists and then successfully exploited by public leaders, especially when Armenian scholars and dissidents began the Karabakh campaign in 1987-1988.

Myth creation and heroic behavior has an accumulating effect and is imitated in a chainlike way within the masses. That mimetic pattern of behavior in conflict, described by Réné Girard,\(^8\) prevents any attempt to uncover the truth, which increasingly falls under many layers of tales and stereotypes. The question of land exacerbates rivalry between groups. Where the question of land causes the conflict, it reinforces the myths. Land becomes crucial to identity—it interacts with all other categories implicated in ethnonationalism,\(^9\) bearing the symbol of ancestral graveyards (even with respect to new settlers) and religious rituals, as well as the source of income (even if the territory is barren). “The territory is considered not only a source of subsistence, especially under contemporary conditions, where the market economy effectively fails to recognize ethnic and political boundaries. The struggle between the Armenians and the Azeris for Karabakh, the Japanese desire for the return of the northern territories, or the Russians’ feelings towards the Crimea spring from symbolic rather than pragmatic interests. But these symbolic interests are not mere irrational mystifications; they can acquire a real strength.”\(^10\)

There are two main reasons—land and minority discrimination—for the initial sources of discontent in ethnic and interstate conflicts becoming veiled in perceptions, sometimes distorted ones. Valery Tishkov points out: “Probably the aspects of behavioural psychology and socio-psychological mechanisms play a more significant role in ethnic conflicts than traditional interpretations have suggested. We have enough evidence to prove that groups with diminished status and who are subject to discrimination in dominated environments quite often express fears for their own existence, even when objective demographic, political, or cultural conditions would normally not lead to such conclusions. This ‘reaction of concern’ comes from the exaggerated feeling of danger and leads to ‘extreme actions in response to rather moderate dangers’ (D. Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, p. 383)...”\(^11\) In Nagorno-Karabakh, for example, the social status of the Armenians in the enclave was higher than that of the Azeris inside and outside the territory (see: A. Yamskov, “Ethnic Conflict in Transcaucasus: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh,” Theory and Society, Vol. 20, No. 5, 1991, pp. 631-660).\(^12\)

In January 2003, Armenian President Robert Kocharian made a remark about “the ethnic incompatibility of the Azerbaijani and Armenian people” during his election campaign. He implied longstanding enmity between the two peoples. This statement was condemned by Secretary-General of the Council of Europe Walter Schwimmer, who stressed that “recalling the dark pages of European history will never be a good electoral strategy.”\(^13\) On the other hand, warmonger rhetoric and bellicose statements are frequently heard in Azerbaijan.

But were Turks and Armenians “ethnically incompatible” in the 18th, 16th, or 15th centuries? History proves they were not. Here are a few examples. A medieval Armenian chronicler, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, wrote about the leadership of one of the first Turkic Seljuk sultans of the 11th century, Melik Shah, who freed the Armenian priesthood from having to pay taxes, that “he tamed the universe, not by violence, but through love and peace.”\(^14\) Shah Ismail Hatai, leader of the Turkic tribe kizilbash and founder of the Safavids dynasty, which ruled over Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, and Iran in

\(^10\) V. Tishkov, op. cit.
\(^11\) Ibidem.
\(^12\) Ibidem.
\(^14\) K. Gandzaketsi, Istoria Armenii, Moscow, 1991, p. 89.
the 16th-18th centuries, gave Armenian traders exclusive rights over silk. There is a popular folk epic poem in Azerbaijan entitled “Asli ve Kerim” about the love between a Turkic man and an Armenian woman. Sayat Nova, a famous Armenian poet, wrote also in the Turkic language.¹⁵

Nowadays, it is futile to present these or other facts to the public in either country, since scholars competing in writing the history of “the most ancient tribes” in the Caucasus, as well as “the most brutal and wild ones,” and emotions hurt by the conflict and losses inflicted overshadow the scientific discourses. Ideology sustains and exacerbates ethnic animosity and the notion of supremacy of one ethnic group over another. People acquired the phenomenon of “selective memory,” when one violent act committed by the opposite side becomes an object of hatred, while one’s own deed is overlooked. Events which contradict the common perception are moved to a “blind spot” in the collective memory.

In his book *Black Garden*, Tom de Waal presented many examples of friendly interactions between the ethnic groups before and during the conflict.¹⁶ He concludes that the two nations lived in harmony before the conflict, which was launched by group of nationalists (many of them from the diaspora, who never lived in Nagorno-Karabakh) and further orchestrated by outside powers. “Blood-and-soil” nationalism, the creator of «hate narratives» is a modern phenomenon. De Waal further points out that the conflict cannot be considered only in the framework of political or socioeconomic problems. History and identity, or rather misguided and dangerous ideas of history and identity, played a more important role. He writes: “The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict makes sense only if we acknowledge that hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Azerbaijanis were driven to act by passionately held ideas about history, identity, and rights.”¹⁷

Stuart Kaufman draws a similar conclusion. Neither economic problems (the Armenians rejected a package of economic benefits offered by the Soviet authorities at the beginning of the conflict) nor insecurity (the U.S.S.R. was a stable country) caused the violence and subsequent war. “Prejudice, fear, and a hostile myth-symbol complex can create a contest for dominance and an interethnic security dilemma.”¹⁸ The Armenian ethnic identity with the highlight on its ancient history and myths of genocide collided with the Azerbaijani one focused on its territory and statehood. “What made the situation so fiendishly hard to manage was not the existence of ethnic minorities, or even the tragic history of the two groups, but the way the historical myths and hostile attitudes led them to insist on mutually exclusive political goals.”¹⁹

In this chapter I will illustrate how the Azerbaijanis and the Armenians perceive the history of Nagorno-Karabakh and the past events. I present a table with two versions supported by various research studies and findings from both sides.²⁰

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¹⁵ A number of examples can be drawn from Azerbaijani historian Suleyman Mamedov’s PhD dissertation “Friendship between the Azerbaijani and Armenian People” written in 1985. A year earlier, in 1984, Armenian writer Zori Balayan wrote a notorious book called “Hearth” replete with anti-Turkic sentiments. The author is regarded in Azerbaijan as the main propagator of the Armenian nationalist movement in Karabakh. Ironically, Balayan as a surname has a Turkic origin: “Bala”—son.


¹⁷ Ibid., p. 272.

¹⁸ S. Kaufman, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 206.

²⁰ I will omit numerous references below; interpretations can be drawn from many Azerbaijani and Armenian websites on the Internet, in official statements and books.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARMENIAN VERSION</th>
<th>AZERBAIJANI VERSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ancient History of Karabakh</strong></td>
<td><strong>Karabakh or Artsakh was a part of Great Armenia and the Armenians have long lived in that territory. Greater Armenia embraced a large portion of the Caucasus, Turkey, and Iran.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Karabakh was part of Caucasian Albania from the very beginning of its existence, i.e. from the 4th century BC to the 8th century AD.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medieval History of Karabakh</strong></td>
<td><strong>Throughout the Middle Ages, Armenians lived in Karabakh and formed several small feudal melicates (principalities). Caucasian Albanians had no presence in Karabakh. The Armenians of Karabakh fought against Arabs and Turkic Seljuks and managed to preserve semi-independence.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Karabakh was populated and ruled by Caucasian Albanians who were gradually Armenianized after the Arabic conquest in the 7th century AD. This process was accelerated after the subordination of the Albanian Catholicasate to the Armenian Echmiadzin in 1836.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishment of the Karabakh Khanate</strong></td>
<td><strong>A certain Panah Ali was able to capture the main fortresses of Karabakh and proclaim himself Khan. Then his son Ibrahim took advantage of the continuous strife among the Armenian meliks and gradually subdued the whole of Karabakh.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Karabakh Khanate was founded in 1747 as an independent khanate, the founder of which was Azerbaijani Turk Panah Ali khan from the clan of Javanshir (1693-1761).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Russian Conquest of the Southern Caucasus, including Karabakh</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(As a result of the Russian-Persian wars at the beginning of the 19th century Azerbaijan was divided between Russia and Iran, and Russia took control over the Southern Caucasus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The settlement of the Armenians has no major implications for the demographic composition of Karabakh. As for the Azerbaijani Turks, they are relatively new settlers in the Caucasus (after the 13th c.). They appeared in Nagorno-Karabakh only in the last third of the eighteenth century and never constituted more than 3 to 4 percent of the population, right up to the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan in 1921. The ethnic classification “Azerbayanis” did not appear until the 1930s. Prior to this, they were referred to as “Caucasian Tatars” or “Turks” in Russian sources.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Azerbayanis believe that all the problems and tragedies that have befallen them started with the Russian conquest. The Russian tsar ordered for Armenians from Iran and the Ottoman Empire to be settled in the Caucasian and Azerbaijani lands in particular. This policy was reflected in the letters of a renowned Russian diplomat and poet Alexander Griboедov. In accordance with the Russian census at the beginning of the 20th century, Azerbayanis constituted 43% of the population of Erevan—the Armenian capital. The Armenians installed a memorial in NK in 1978, celebrating the 150th anniversary of their settlement there. A relevant inscription on the memorial was destroyed at the beginning of the conflict.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ARMENIAN VERSION

**Karabakh in 1918-1920**

*(After the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917 three new republics—Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia—emerged in the Southern Caucasus)*

Nagorno-Karabakh fought for its unification with Armenia and in 1919 the National Council of Nagorno-Karabakh signed an agreement with the Azerbaijani authorities in which the parties agreed that the question of Nagorno-Karabakh must be resolved at the Paris Peace Conference. The Armenians temporarily agreed to subordination to the Azerbaijani authorities until the Paris Conference.

### AZERBAIJANI VERSION

**Karabakh in 1918-1920**

*Nagorno-Karabakh was part of Azerbaijan in 1918-1920, and the Armenians launched a war trying to capture it as well as other Azerbaijani regions. In 1919, the National Assembly of Nagorno-Karabakh recognized the supreme power of Azerbaijan. On 12 January, 1920, at the Paris Peace Conference, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers de-facto recognized Azerbaijan’s independence.*

#### The March 1918 Event

Armenians were under threat in Baku and any killing occurred due to mutual offensives.

#### Nagorno-Karabakh and the League of Nations

The League of Nations refused to recognize Azerbaijan because of its territorial claims to the Armenian-populated Eastern Caucasus, including in particular Nagorny Karabakh, as well as the lack of efficient state control over its supposed territory and inability to legitimize the borders of this territory.

#### Question of Nagorno-Karabakh after the Sovietization of the Caucasus in 1921-1923

After the arrival of communism in the Southern Caucasus in 1921, Stalin gave Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan. This decision was designed to appease Turkey and its leader Atatürk, as well. Azerbaijan also obtained Nakhichevan.

### Continued
## Nagorno-Karabakh during the Soviet Period

Nagorno-Karabakh suffered from discrimination throughout the Soviet period and its population shrank, while the Azerbaijani population rose.

The economic situation in Nagorno-Karabakh was better than the Azerbaijani average. While Armenians had autonomy in Azerbaijan, thousands of Azerbaijanis in Armenia (in Zangezur in particular) had no status at all.

## Beginning of the Conflict in 1988

The Armenians began peaceful demonstrations and petitioned Moscow on the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. The Azerbaijani responded with violence.

Two young Azerbaijanis, killed on 24 February, 1988, were the first victims of the conflict. The Armenians were well prepared and armed before the start of the conflict.

## Sumgayit

Violence in Sumgayit was the response of the Azerbaijanis to the Armenian petition and displayed the Azerbaijanis’ attitude toward the Armenians. After the Sumgayit event, the Armenians felt themselves liberated from the rule of the Azerbaijanis.

It was grass-roots violence caused by the influx of Azerbaijanis refugees from Armenia. At the same time, several days before the events, several Armenian and other television stations had already arrived in Azerbaijan in order to report on the “forthcoming” pogroms, whereas many well-to-do Armenian families residing in Sumgayit had left the city well in advance of the events. The three-time convicted felon Armenian Eduard Grigorian murdered five Armenians in Sumgayit.

## Exodus of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Populations

About 300,000 Armenians were expelled from Azerbaijan in 1988-1991. The expulsion was accompanied by murders in Baku and Ganja.

About 200,000 Azerbaijanis were expelled from Armenia. The expulsion was accompanied by murders in Gugark and other settlements.

## Armenian Earthquakes in 1988

The Armenians do not recall an accident with a plane carrying the Azerbaijani rescue team. Instead they claim that the Azerbaijanis tried to take advantage of the situation created in the aftermath of the earthquakes.

Azerbaijan sent a rescue team, and the plane carrying the team crashed near Erevan. Armenian navigators intentionally misguided the plane crew.

## Operation “Ring”

In April 1991, special Azerbaijani and Soviet police detachment forces began the so-called Ring operation and ousted Armenian armed bands terrorized the local Azerbaijani population and made raids within Azerbaijan, in which
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARmenian Version</th>
<th>AZerbaijani Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenians from Chaykend and other villages on Azerbaijani territory.</td>
<td>54 people were killed. In response, the law-enforcement agencies carried out a special operation to gain control in Chaykend and other adjacent districts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dissolution of the U.S.S.R. and Nagorno-Karabakh**

Nagorno-Karabakh held a referendum in 1991 and declared its independence. The referendum was illegal, as the conditions involved armed conflict and the absence of the Azerbaijani population of NK. Azerbaijan attained independence after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. and Azerbaijan has never used the procedure contained in the Soviet law of March 1991 on secession of Soviet Republics. Therefore, reference to that law is irrelevant. The U.N. Security Council in its relevant resolutions reconfirmed the sovereignty of Azerbaijan over NK.

**Armed Hostilities in 1992-1993**

The Armenians were forced to create a buffer/security zone to secure its population from the Azerbaijani armed forces. The Armenians began ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh and then in seven regions outside Nagorno-Karabakh, taking advantage of the internal instability in Azerbaijan.

**Fall of Shusha**

Shusha was a strategically important city from where Azerbaijani armed forces bombed the surrounding areas and towns. While Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders negotiated a peaceful solution in Tehran under the auspices of the Iranian president, Armenian armed forces stormed Shusha and captured it.

**Fall of Khojaly**

The Khojaly event was a conspiracy by the Azerbaijani opposition to overthrow Azerbaijani President Ayaz Mutallibov (1990-1992). The Armenians left a corridor to allow the Azerbaijani population to flee from Khojaly. In support of their argument, the Armenians quote former Azerbaijani president Mutallibov: “The shooting of Khojaly was obviously organized by someone to take control in Azerbaijan.” It was genocide committed in order to intimidate the Azerbaijanis. They quote the executive director of Human Rights Watch, who stated in her letter to Armenian Foreign Minister: “We place direct responsibility for the civilian deaths on the Karabakh Armenian forces. Indeed, neither our report nor that of Memorial includes any evidence to support the argument that Azerbaijani forces obstructed the flight of, or fired on Azeri civilians.”
### Armenian Version

**Armenian Terrorism**

Acts committed by individual Armenians should not be linked to the Armenian government. The Azerbaijanis also exploded gas pipelines in Georgia that supplied Armenia.

**Use of Mercenaries**

Azerbaijan invited Afghan mujahedeen to fight against the Armenians.

**Russian Support and Involvement**

Armenia won the military campaigns in 1992-1993 because its forces were well trained and united.

**Blockade**

Azerbaijan imposed a blockade on Armenia. Armenia has limited access to global routes and suffers economically from it.

**Destruction of Cultural Heritage**

The Azerbaijanis destroyed Armenian cemeteries and churches on its territory, these include an old Armenian cemetery in Julfa, Nakhchivan.

**Armenian Settlement in Occupied Regions**

New Armenian settlers in NK are refugees from Azerbaijan.

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### Azerbaijani Version

**Armenian Terrorism**

In 1988-1995, Armenian terrorists committed a number of acts in Azerbaijan, particularly in the mass public transport network, resulting in the death or injury of 2,000 people. Armenia supported terrorism at the state level.

**Use of Mercenaries**

Armenia used Armenian terrorists from the Middle East, Lebanon, and Syria in particular.

**Russian Support and Involvement**

Russia supplied Armenia heavily with arms and ammunitions and supported it politically. In 1997, Russian MP Lev Rokhlin revealed that one billion dollars worth of Russian arms had been transferred to Armenia.

**Blockade**

Armenia blockaded Azerbaijan’s enclave Nakhichevan. Armenia has access through Iran and Georgia.

**Destruction of Cultural Heritage**

The Armenians destroyed and pillaged numerous Azerbaijani museums, mosques, and cemeteries on the occupied territories.

**Armenian Settlement in Occupied Regions**

Armenia is conducting a policy of mass settlement in occupied Azerbaijani territories in order to change the demographic situation in the region.

As we see, the two sides have opposite perspectives on the past events. There were few attempts to bring both sides together and try to find middle version. Some international NGOs have been holding psychological training sessions that allow the parties to express their anger and emotions and then explore common denominations.\(^{21}\)

Attempts have been made in the past to combine the diverging views. Several years ago, the British Embassies in Armenia and Azerbaijan sponsored two websites where Azerbaijani and Armenian experts offered their visions of the history of the conflict and their proposal for economic interaction. In January 2006, the London-based Conciliation Resources’ Accord Program (again a British initiative), with the combined efforts of four other organizations, issued a publication entitled *The Limits of Leadership: Elites and Societies in the Nagorny Karabakh Peace Process,*\(^{22}\) which represents the ideas and perspectives of the two sides in the conflict and of international experts.

Thus far, the historians and experts from both sides continue launching offensives on each other. Azerbaijan is full of military rhetoric promoting the use of force for liberating the occupied territories. Armenia and its strong diaspora continue to employ ideology to undermine Azerbaijan’s ethnicity and statehood.

**Overcoming Hatred with the Right Peacebuilding Formula**

Mediators and experts believe that 2006 represented a good opportunity for conflict settlement since there were no elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan. This fact itself merely acknowledges that, when one is trying to achieve a peace deal, it is easier to deal with leaders rather than with two countries’ societies that have been poisoned with hatred. Efforts to reach out to civil society in Armenia and Azerbaijan are limited and have not yet been successful. Interestingly, no significant attempt has been made to engage historians and scholars—those who actually write the history of the countries and the conflict.

The geopolitical agendas and interests of the regional powers also play a great role in the conflict resolution process. OSCE mediators (France, Russia, and the U.S.) are basically working on a combination of two approaches—phased and packaged resolutions centered on the future status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. And here geopolitics and international perceptions matter.

The OSCE mediators themselves recently suggested that it would be better to put off the status question until later and begin by resolving the other issues—the return of refugees, the opening up of communications, etc. International organizations—the Council of Europe and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly—proposed autonomy formulas in their relevant reports, referring to European experiences.

But the West, as a whole, tends to recommend self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh through a referendum in exchange for the return of the occupied Azerbaijani territories outside NK to Baku’s control. The Western experts mentioned above, such as de Waal and Charles King, support this idea, although they are in favor of a “step-by-step” approach to conflict settlement.

The West supports eventual self-determination for Nagorno-Karabakh, while rejecting any separatist aspirations in other parts of the former U.S.S.R.—Transdniestria in Moldova and South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia. Is it an accident that many Western experts sympathize with the Christian populations in Darfur, Nagorno-Karabakh, but rebuff the Turkic Cypriots? Kosovo with its mixed Christian-Muslim Albanians is a special case which entails a non-religious dimension in the view of the Western media. However, any standard newspaper article in the West describes the Armenia-Azerbaijani conflict as between Muslim-populated Azerbaijan and the Christian Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. The West itself suffers from the misperception that conflicts, such as that over Nagorno-Karabakh, have religious connotations. That situation only adds to the grievances in Azerbaijan and in some other countries, where the population suspects the impartiality of the Western experts and media. (But this article is not about a civilizational Christian-Muslim stand-off.)

\(^{22}\) Online version at: [http://www.c-r.org/accord/nk/accord17/index.shtml].
Certainly the following question arises: if such extreme hatred is embedded in the Armenian and Azerbaijani societies, wouldn’t separation be the easiest and best solution? History proves the opposite—only cooperative formulæ aimed at interaction can ensure a durable peace, no matter how painfully this process may advance. Europe, after two bloody wars, settled its territorial disputes based on an autonomy formula that was strengthened by the umbrella of a political and economic union. New EU members, Rumania and Hungary, were also required to resolve their disputes within established borders based on local self-governance. One of the most brutal post-Cold War conflicts in Europe, the Bosnia question was settled on the basis of preserving the state’s multiethnic structure. Despite the problems and still bitter recollections, Bosnia is gradually recovering.

The separation of Nagorno-Karabakh will legitimize the result of the military achievements. What is more, it has a corrupt moral aspect, and that formula will imply the possibility of settling this and other disputes by military means in the future. Moreover, it will not ensure security for the Azerbaijani refugees from Shusha and other settlements within Nagorno-Karabakh. But preservation of NK in Azerbaijan with broad autonomy will force Azerbaijan to provide safety for its Armenian population in order, in turn, to provide security for the Karabakhi Azerbaijanis under the local authority of the Karabakh Armenians.

Now it might be impossible to imagine peaceful coexistence between the Azerbaijanis and the Armenians. But after the interethnic clashes in 1905-1920, the two ethnic groups lived peacefully under the Soviet regime. Armenian-Azerbaijani intermarriages were a widespread phenomenon. Of course, they were forced to live under authoritarian rule. However, nowadays, such structures as the EU can give better incentives.

If we take the separation formula as a way of settling ethnic problems, we will have homogenization of the states for several decades ahead. Can we imagine Europe built on ethnic lines? Then why should we recommend it for other parts of the world? After decolonization, the numerous newly-emerged states in Africa were not a solution to the problems; the creation of new ones will not be either. Still a myth is developing that the creation of new states will solve the problems that the people have been experiencing under the current state arrangements. Economic hardships and the lack of democracy and good governance definitely have an impact on ethnic tension, thus fragmenting the international community. But ethnic myths and prejudices stab at the heart of globalization.

The U.N. Secretary-General in his report “Agenda for Peace” of 1992 clearly stated: “[i]f every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limit to fragmentation, and peace, security and economic well-being for all would become ever more difficult to achieve.”23 In Karabakh we are dealing with an ethnic group which has already obtained independent international identity—the state of Armenia. And on many occasions the Armenian officials and separatists in NK acknowledge that the final goal is unification of Armenia and NK.

In mediating the Armenia-Azerbaijani conflict and while searching for best power sharing formulæ, international organizations and NGOs should redouble their efforts to reach out to civil societies (no matter how weak they tend to be in the Southern Caucasus), as well as to the media and academic circles. Kaufman suggests that peacebuilding programs must be aimed at eliminating stereotypes, prejudices, and ethnic-symbol-type propaganda. Unless these efforts are made a central part of the peace-making strategy, the strategy will not work.24

The diaspora, particularly in Western countries, continues to play a destructive and extremist role, instead of facilitating peace. The communities’ members should also be involved in the peace-building initiatives. Unfortunately, local politicians, particularly in Western countries, preoccupied with constituency support, only add tension to the conflict, appeasing the radical slogans of some diaspora organizations.

Once trust and interaction between the two nations begin, the final solution will come much easier. A step-by-step approach would promote the overcoming of ethnic hatred, the softening of myths, and the elimination of prejudices. The Azerbaijanis and Armenians, bound together in a regional framework, territorial borders, and a local administrative arrangement, will achieve peace sooner, rather than remaining divided and clashing over a piece of land. The solution lies in coexistence and cooperation both between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as between the Karabakh Armenians and the Karabakh Azerbaijani.

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ISLAMIC REVIVAL IN AZERBAIJAN: THE PROCESS AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Abstract

The author analyzes the Islamic revival in the Republic of Azerbaijan, its specific characteristics, main actors, and potential trends; he also formulates possible responses from the government to the challenges of the times. He is convinced that the country can hypothetically use religion to improve the social and economic context: today it has the unique chance of setting up a new model that combines secularism and revived Islam, since public perception of this concept has so far managed to escape the influence of radical ideologies.

Introduction

Religious revival in practically all the Soviet successor states arose from the ruins of the official ideology of atheism and the communist system and gradually spread to all spheres of political, economic, social, and cultural life. The predominantly Muslim post-Soviet states supply the most graphic example of this revival; today many more people than before attend services and take part in other religious ceremonies in mosques; the media and the academic community are actively discussing the process and its possible results; and sociopolitical discussions of the subject are as vehement as ever.¹

On the whole, all sorts of religious groups and movements (not only Islamic) were very active in the Muslim regions during the post-communist transition period. Missionaries and preachers of all hues, each with lots of money, arrived in huge numbers to change, together with the local “supporters of the faith,” the commonly accepted religious ideas and traditions and the already established lifestyle.

Much in post-Soviet Islam brought to mind other Muslim countries that tried to set up new political institutions in the first years of their post-colonial independence. Today, the recent trends and events that took place in the Muslim world are affecting the CIS Muslim nations.  

The Republic of Azerbaijan, in which the Shi’a majority and Sunni minority (not a small minority, by the way) are living side by side with each other as well as with all sorts of Christian confessions and Judaism, could serve as a model of peaceful coexistence and cooperation among religions. In the past, the country was an example of religious tolerance: the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR), which existed between 1918 and 1920, successfully combined democracy and Islam, which means that Azerbaijan has certain religious and democratic traditions that should be revived today.

Islam in Soviet Azerbaijan  

After seizing power in 1920 by defeating the ADR, the Bolsheviks were at first too weak to suppress the Muslim clergy and national intelligentsia—they tried to lure them onto their side. The Azeris were allowed to retain their national identity, of which Islam was one of the components.  At the same time, Soviet power consistently undermined it by replacing the Islamic ummah with the Azeri national self-identity.

Soviet Islamic policy lived through several stages. As Tadeusz Swietochowski wrote, at first the state remained within the limits of general modernization, which included expropriation of the waqfs (charity foundations), closing Islamic civil courts of justice, schools, and mosques, banning public religious ceremonies, and forcing women to refrain from covering their heads.

Late in the 1920s, the regime began fighting Islam (and other religions) in earnest. The Arabic script was replaced with Latin and then Cyrillic letters, which undermined the influence of the Islamic clerics, Muslim intellectuals, and religious books on the popular masses. The new laws robbed the nation of many directly or indirectly religious customs; the recalcitrant were severely punished. In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, nearly all the mosques were closed; clerics accused of pan-Islamism were arrested in great numbers and deported, or even executed.

It was a severe test for Islam’s continued presence in the republic, yet the faith deeply rooted in the nation’s mentality survived. Tadeusz Swietochowski has the following to say about this period: “No longer able to perform its rituals in public, Islam became a private religion, it retreated into the family, the most conservative of all institutions in Azerbaijan. ...The Soviet period saw a revival of the tagiya tradition—apostasy under pressure—in the tradition’s historical homeland.”

World War II relieved the pressure: the Soviet government rallied all forces in the face of a foreign invasion.

At that time, the ideology of militant atheism coexisted with official allegedly independent Muslim religious structures: the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the European and Siberian Parts of the U.S.S.R. (with its center in Ufa, the Bashkirian A.S.S.R.), the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Northern Caucasus (that operated first out of Buynaksk and later out of

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5 Ibid., p. 72.
Makhachkala, Daghestan); and the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Transcaucasia (with its center in Baku, Azerbaijan). These structures never opposed the Soviet government and even tried to bring the communist ideology closer to Islam by pointing out that they shared many common features, such as equality, freedom of conscience, the right to safe labor, the right of those who tilled land to own it, etc., proclaimed in the early post-October 1917 period. 6

The Muslim elite of the Transcaucasia operated under conditions that differed radically from those found in all the other Soviet Muslim republics. The Baku Spiritual Administration was filled with Azeri members and worked with the Azeri communities in Armenia (until they were murdered in great numbers or deported), Georgia (where Azeris comprised the bulk of the local Muslim communities) and Daghestan.

Before it regained its independence, the republic had 54 registered “religious entities,” including 11 Shi’a, two Sunni, and two mixed mosques. Educated clerics were a rarity; the republic had no Islamic scholars educated in the famous educational centers abroad.

Islam in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan

Collapse of the Soviet Union provided a strong impetus for Islamic revival in the formerly atheist republics. Self-identification with Islam, which was absent among the broad popular masses in the late Soviet period, is the best illustration of re-Islamization. 7 This process might acquire political implications: social and economic conditions are deteriorating, while the people are bitterly disappointed in the secular corrupt and undemocratic regimes.

In Azerbaijan, religious and national customs and ethnic identity are inseparable: the local people usually speak of themselves as Muslims and Azeri without distinguishing between the two. 8 It has been demonstrated that some of the customs perceived as Islamic are in actual fact local customs that “predate or even contradict Islam.” This means that folk and Islamic customs blended, which allows us to speak about ethnos, regionalism, language, and Islam as the main sources of national self-awareness. 9

According to Raoul Motika, in the first decade of the transition period, between four and six percent of the total population could be described as active faithful, which means that they followed the Islamic rules of conduct; 87-92 percent regarded themselves as Muslims, but obeyed only part (a small part, as a rule) of the religious injunctions; while only three percent described themselves as atheists. 10

The fact that the Spiritual Administration in Baku was the legal heir to the religious administration that functioned in czarist Russia was of immense importance: even under Soviet power it enjoyed certain legitimacy among the locals. The fact that most of the republic’s Muslims are Shi’a is of even greater importance: as distinct from Sunni Islam, a formal religious hierarchy is not alien to Shi’a Islam. This makes the official regulatory religious institutions a component of the republic’s Shi’a heritage. 11

The republic shares certain elements of Islamic revival with other post-Soviet regions. It had its share of Salafi and radical Wahhabi movements, which came here relatively recently and never devel-

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7 See: Y. Ro’i, op. cit.
10 See: R. Motika, op. cit.
11 See: M. Saroyan, op. cit.
oped as widely as in Central Asia and the Northern Caucasus. Certain groups acting on Iranian money tried to upset the status quo, but, as distinct from other countries, no force in Azerbaijan openly opposed the idea of a secular state.

The state has already accepted some of the outward religious features and is prepared to protect religion as part of the nation’s identity, but it is not yet ready to accept the implications of Islamic revival or any Islamic activities uncontrolled by the state. Ro’i argues regarding the governments in Muslims CIS countries in the following manner: “Like their Soviet predecessors, while preaching the separation of state and church, they have created administrative machinery to ensure that all religious activity will be subject to government supervision and surveillance.” 12 In fact, all religious structures and manifestations uncontrolled by the official religious institutions are viewed as “suspicious.”

The continued Armenian military occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent Azeri territories has already instigated a deluge of over a million forced migrants and thousands of war veterans and shahid families. This has created fertile soil for the spread of religious feelings among the destitute people badly hit by the sufferings of their country. One wonders, however, who shapes the religious feelings of the faithful and which Islam should be accepted as genuine.

It should be said that the Islamic ideas differ from region to region. Baku and the adjacent areas are mainly pro-Shi’a, but there are also Salafis in the capital and Sumgayit. The Wahhabis are stronger in the country’s north, which is populated by compact groups of Daghestanian Sunni minorities. The people living close to the Iranian border are influenced by the Iranian Islamic model.

Today, Islam has no great role to play in the republic’s political life, yet Islamic rhetoric is gaining popularity. Until recently, Islam was much weaker politically in Azerbaijan than in the Central Asian republics. The public opinion poll conducted in several Central Asian states and Azerbaijan revealed that while 60 percent of the Muslims of Uzbekistan and 33 percent of the Muslims of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan agreed that Islam played an important role in their countries’ political life, in Azerbaijan less than 20 percent agreed with this, 13 even though Islam has gained considerable political weight in the last five years. 14

The Main Actors

The Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Caucasus (SAMC) is the only one among the similar institutions in other republics that survived the Gorbachev reforms and the Soviet Union’s collapse. Headed by Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pasha-zadeh since the 1980s, the official structure of the religious establishment of Azerbaijan has been losing its former prestige and influence: the public shifted its trust and respect to certain members of the unofficial Muslim clergy. The rapidly unfolding process says that Islam has developed into a haven for all those who have lost hope, who live in poverty, and who have no work, as well as for those who reject much in Western culture.

It became obvious during the transition period that the SAMC had lost its unique role in Islamic revival. Today, this role is claimed by several forces:

— The popular and generally recognized Shi’a religious leaders opposed to the official center: Gajji Shakhin, Gajji Iqbal, and Gajji Ilgar Ibrahimoglu, best known among them. He is the

12 Y. Ro’i, op. cit., p. 51.
13 Ibidem.
so-called imam-jamaat (leader of collective prayers) of the Juma Mosque. He also represents
the International Association for Religious Freedom and is known as a human rights activist.
He does not obey the SAMC and criticizes it and the government.

— The self-appointed mullahs and religious leaders who opposed Shi’a and, consequently, the
Spiritual Administration. Gajii Gamet Suleymanov, who is believed to be a Salafi, is the most
prominent of them. They have their mosques, in which their followers congregate. In the
mid-1990s, the republican government tolerated the Salafis, lest it irritate the rich clerics of
the Gulf countries. Between 2001 and 2003, the authorities began to persecute the Salafis, the
growing number of the Salafi mosques being one of the reasons for the dramatic develop-
ments; the intention of the Salafi communities to elect their own leaders instead of the SAMC
supplied another reason for the persecutions. The Salafis are fairly influential in the coun-
try’s north, mainly among the ethnic minorities.

— The pro-Turkish Islamic movements and organizations (the Nurchular being one of them)
engaged in mosque building, charities, education, and setting up a network of their followers.

— The pro-Iranian Islamic Party of Azerbaijan registered in 1992. In 1996, its leaders were ar-
rested and accused of spying in favor of Iran and sending young people to this country for
military training. The party, with up to 70,000 members (according to its own information),
does not have the support of either the SAMC or the intellectuals.

— The Muslim intellectuals who may also be described as Islamic reformers and modernists.
This group includes such people as Ilgar Ibrahimoglu, Nariman Gasymoglu, and others.
They hold different, or even opposite ideas, about Islam and its role in Azeri society.

The above suggests that, on the whole, during the transition period Islam in Azerbaijan re-
ained controlled by the SAMC, which itself is controlled by the state. During that time, Islam de-
veloped into a component of the Azeri national self-identity, which, in turn, strengthened what is known
as traditional Islam. However new religious Islamic and other movements and sects appeared on the
fertile soil created by insufficient religious knowledge, as well as the ignorance and corruption among
the clerics.

Some Empirical Observations

To get a better idea of the scope of the Islamic revival in Azerbaijan, let us look at some of the
empirical studies on this topic.

A public opinion poll conducted in 2001 in the republic’s five regions revealed that 62.7 per-
cent of the respondents considered themselves religious, while 6.4 percent said they were very reli-
gious people; 10.6 percent were “undecided,” they formed the second largest group. Only 16.3 per-
cent of the first group performed regular prayers. When asked about the role of religion in their
everyday life, 25.7 percent described it as important; 41 percent as moderate; 11 percent as very
important; 11.9 percent as negligible, while 10.5 percent said it was of no importance at all. Most
of the polled (77.4 percent) were interested in religion; a large number of the respondents (71.7 per-
cent) said that they had general knowledge about religion; 7.3 percent believed that their religious
knowledge was adequate; and 13.3 percent failed to answer this seemingly easy question.

Knowledge of Islam presupposes knowledge of the Shari’a. The majority (57.1 percent) was
convinced that they had a certain amount of general knowledge about Islamic law; 14.9 percent knew
a lot, while 23 percent knew nothing at all. A small group (5.2 percent) claimed very good knowledge
of the Shari’a principles. According to the poll, 71.6 percent did not gamble; 62.6 percent did not eat
pork; and 49.3 percent abstained from liquor. When asked about the Koran, 49.9 percent admitted that
they never read it; 19.8 percent intended to read it; 10.4 percent read it occasionally; 9.9 percent read
it frequently; 5.6 percent had begun reading it recently, while 4.6 percent not only read it, but also studied it.

In 2005, the FAR-Center carried out a very representative poll in 12 regions of Azerbaijan. When asked whether they regarded themselves as religious people, 87.1 percent of the respondents replied in the affirmative; 9.6 percent described themselves as “religious rather than atheists;” 0.6 percent as “atheists,” while 0.4 percent was undecided. When asked about the Muslim ritual prayer (namaz), 19.9 percent of the religious people said they prayed every day; 13.2 percent prayed irregularly; while 63.6 percent never prayed. Over half of the polled said that they wanted to live according to the Shari’a either “completely” (23.2 percent) or “partially” (28.9 percent). About 76 percent of the respondents said that they would not like to have a non-Muslim president.

The polled were asked about the causes of poorly developed democracy in the Muslim world: 5.5 percent blamed “the colonial heritage;” 14.3 percent referred to “foreign forces and the enmity of other states;” 27.8 percent blamed “corrupt leaders and officials;” 16.6 percent put the cause down to “the citizens and their laziness and unprincipled position;” 6.3 percent pointed to “culture and traditions;” 24.6 percent were undecided, while 4.9 percent offered other answers. People did not emphasize any destructive role of Islam in democratic developments; “culture and traditions,” as the closest answer, was given by a small share of the polled.

The majority (65.5 percent) had no religious authority; the answers of those who did look at someone as a religious authority failed to identify a specific person. The group of five people identified as religious authorities by the largest number of the polled included: Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh, 4.1 percent; Gajji Sabir, rector of the Islamic University of Azerbaijan, 3.3 percent; Vasif Mammadaliev (who translated the Koran into Azeri, member of the Spiritual Administration), 1.8 percent; Gajji Ilgar Ibrahimoglu, 0.7 percent; and Ayatollah Khamenei (the religious leader of Iran). 0.7 percent.

The author of this article carried out the latest poll in 2006 (with support of the Caucasian Resource Studies Center) among the Azerbaijanian business community. Two hundred members of the business community from Baku, Ganja, and Lenkoran were asked about the role of ethics and religion in their business activities. Professional interviewers met each of the 200 respondents personally (70.5 percent of them were men and 29.5 percent were women). The majority (60 percent) had university degrees; 98.5 percent of the polled considered themselves Muslims.

The poll demonstrated that the majority (40 percent) of Azerbaijan’s business community believed education and upbringing to be the main sources of the system of values; while two groups of 24.5 percent each described either religion or tradition as such a source. Lack of faith (atheism) was selected, along with another three negative personal traits, from among the eight negative points offered. This shows that, hypothetically, the Azeri population is devoted to religion. Atheism was often mentioned as one of the negative features of a businessperson.

When asked to assess their everyday principles on a 6-point scale, the polled supplied the following answers:

(1) the permissible (in Azerbaijani—“halallyg” [meaning “halal”]—something allowed by the Islamic law; the word is frequently used to describe something correct or ethical);

(2) dignity;

(3) efficiency;

(4) professionalism;

(5) profitability;

(6) thrift.

These results are striking, since business people spoke of “non-business values” as being the most important for them in everyday life. Experts, however, doubted the respondents’ sincerity: corruption, deceit, unreturned debts, and mutual mistrust among business people, as well as a crisis of
ethics, are all too obvious in Azerbaijan. It seems that most of the polled passed the desired for the actual principles.

When asked about the level of their religiosity, 72 percent described themselves as moderately religious; 14 percent as very religious; 12.5 percent were not sure of their religiosity, while 1.5 percent had no religious feelings at all. The answers had a regional dimension: the most religious business people lived in Lenkoran, the moderately religious in Baku, while those not sure of their religious feelings were found more frequently in Ganja. When asked about the role of religion in their everyday activities, 47.5 percent described it as moderate; 25 percent as important; 22.5 percent as imperceptible, while 5 percent admitted that religion played no role in their business activities.

To identify the level of their religious knowledge, we asked the business people whether they read the Koran and other spiritual literature. It turned out that a relatively large share (30 percent) never read this type of literature; 26.5 percent read it occasionally; 21.5 percent rarely; 14.5 percent regularly, while 7.5 percent read it very often. The business people from Lenkoran described themselves as religious, but it turned out that their colleagues from Baku read more religious literature than the others. This is explained by the relatively larger share of educated people among them and the predominance of urban dwellers among the Baku respondents.

To check the level of fundamental religious knowledge, we asked about Kalima Shahadat. The majority was familiar with it, but 36.5 percent (a surprisingly large number for a Muslim nation) admitted that they knew nothing about this principle of faith.

A large number of business people (85 percent) did not perform Muslim ritual prayers, while a half of them said that they wanted to start praying; 11 percent prayed every day; 4 percent occasionally. We revealed serious regional distinctions: in Lenkoran, 45.5 percent prayed regularly, while in Baku and Ganja, the figure was only 8 percent. A comparison with earlier figures reveals that the share of practicing Muslims has increased over less than ten years.

The questions about hajj to Mecca produced more or less similar results. The majority had not performed hajj, but planned to perform it in the future (41.5 percent), a large share was not even planning it (37 percent), while 13.5 percent never thought about it; 5 percent dismissed the idea as unimportant, while only 3 percent had already performed hajj.

Forty-seven percent visit mosques or holy places very rarely (less than 10 times a year); 23.5 percent never do this, 19.5 percent do this once or twice a month, and 10 percent do this regularly.

On the whole, the polled business people were absolutely ignorant of Islamic economic principles; interest-free loans, associations based on dividing profits, zakat, and other things. The majority, however, believed that these principles should be practiced in Azerbaijan; 30.5 percent remained undecided, while 11 percent gave negative answers. At the same time, a large share (40.5 percent) doubted that this economic model could be incorporated in the republic, while 30.5 percent did not believe in its potential.

The majority of the polled (58 percent) believed that loan interest was a forbidden practice and never took part in such deals; 11 percent, while forced to take part, believed that this was a banned and negative phenomenon; 27 percent did not object to such operations, but were never involved in them; a small share (4 percent) had no moral qualms about paying or obtaining loan interest.

The most striking answers were given to the questions about the Shari'a: 30 percent believed that the Shari’a should be introduced in all spheres of life; 25.5 percent thought it should be practiced in some spheres (business activities included); 21 percent believed it should be introduced, but not in the business sphere; 19 percent remained undecided, while 4.5 percent gave negative answers. This means that the absolute majority wanted the Shari’a to be introduced (to different degrees).

15 The Muslim declaration of dedication to Islam in Arabic: “I witness that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger.”
There are several possible explanations for the widely differing answers:
1. Most of the business community does not ponder on existentialist issues and answered on the spur of the moment.
2. Most of the business community is not educated enough and knows next to nothing about religion, the Shari’a, and its introduction and implications in particular.
3. Most of the respondents were merely showing off and deceived the interviewers and themselves.
4. People are frustrated with the current political and economic model; they do not trust it and know it cannot resolve the snowballing social problems.

The latest sociological poll carried out by the Pulse-R service also revealed several interesting facts. The share of those who wanted Islamic values to play a greater role in the republic’s sociopolitical life increased more than two-fold: from 6.2 percent in 2004 to 14.5 percent in 2005; today four-fold more respondents want closer cooperation with the OIC (2.3 percent in 2004 and 10.5 percent in 2005), while the share of those who approved of NATO has dropped considerably: from 12.4 percent to 7 percent, respectively. For the first time, Iran gathered more votes as a “friend of Azerbaijan” than the United States.\(^{16}\)

**Concluding Remarks: Embracing Islam**

The above suggests the following conclusions:
1. In the last decade, mass consciousness and behavioral patterns have changed a great deal. Religious consciousness is now governed by broad and highly diverse religious aims, motives, and interests; the number of people interested in religion and wishing to practice it is growing daily. At the same time, the minds of religious people are full of contradictory ideas.

2. All sociological studies register a growing level of religiosity among the Azeri population. Recently, the process has intensified and become even more dynamic: the number of those who described themselves as religious people is on the rise, together with the number of practicing believers. At the same time, a fairly large number of people remain undecided about their attitude toward religion. This process can be explained in the context of the changed system of personal motives, values, and interests. The changes, in turn, are caused by the deep-cutting and widespread social processes underway in the republic.

3. Mass consciousness still perceives religion as a merely cultural and moral-ethical phenomenon and an abstract source of everyday behavioral patterns and traditions. The people crave for detailed, objective, and reliable religious information or even specialized religious education. Today, such information is being supplied, albeit sporadically, in greater volumes; some of it might be unreliable or gained through self-education. The quality of religious knowledge suffers; what should be perceived as a system is a fragmented mass of religious knowledge. In fact, greater religiosity has not yet extended the sphere of high-quality religious knowledge, partly because of the clerics’ and the local religious institutions’ relatively low prestige.

4. Islam is already affecting public consciousness to a much greater extent than before; this trend will intensify and continue in the near future. This, in turn, will create serious political and economic changes.

The recent elections in Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, and, finally, in Palestine showed that Islam had moved to the forefront of local politics. At the same time, its position is somewhat undermined by the nationalist ideologies (the nation-state ideology in particular) that have flooded the Muslim world. They have divided the ummah into disunited nations. Recently, however, intensified globalization has created an opposite trend and pushed Islam to the forefront once more.

How should we respond to these developments? Are they dangerous for a secular state, especially if it is still weak and still coping with the problems of the transition period? Should such a state be apprehensive of religion (particularly Islam) and try to stem its spread? Mankind has accumulated enough experience to learn by now that the objective processes cannot be defeated or annulled.

Azerbaijan, in which a peaceful and highly tolerant version of Islam predominates, is much luckier than many other Muslim states, yet, as A. Veliev has pointed out, some of the local elements look every much like what Iran experienced in the early 1970s: corrupt elites, relatively hard social and economic conditions, and a certain disillusionment in democracy. If the situation persists, religious organizations with adequate foreign funding will attract crowds of supporters. During the Iranian revolution, a large share of people with no sympathies for any type of Islamic governance closed ranks around the Islamist leaders to unsaddle the Shah. 17

It seems that the philosophy put in a nutshell by the slogan “Embrace Islam!” is the only correct approach to the problem of interaction between a secular state (particularly of a transition type) and Islam. Some countries (Malaysia) have already successfully realized this slogan: there a relatively large non-Muslim population, a secular state, and a national ideology based on Islam are living peacefully side by side.

It is critically important to launch a policy of embracing Islam before the Islamic revivalist movement and groups become marginalized and radicalized. In fact, the Sudan, Pakistan, Algeria, and some other states failed to achieve this because the governments relied on radical religious groups to secure their political aims, while the radicals later moved against the authorities.

So far, radical Islam is weakly developed in Azerbaijan, while the radical groups are not numerous and not rich enough to upset the status quo. There is time to launch the “battle for Islam” and win it.

To succeed, the state should pay particular attention to its institutional, educational, and stimulating components. The institutional component consists of creating a foundation for the new relations by:

- **Amending the laws, which will rule out any discrimination against the faithful and will give them a chance to take part in the country’s public, political, and economic life.**
  
  — This does not mean that the country is prepared to drop the principle of separation of religion and the state (Art 18 of the Constitution), but it would be wise to abolish the prohibition on religious leaders running for parliament (Art 85 of the Constitution). It should be pointed out that this category of Azeri citizens can run for presidency; they can also be civil servants or judges. If the prohibition is abolished, clerics could become de-marginalized and included in the country’s social and political life (if all members of the clergy accept the Azeri statehood and the Constitution).

  — The time has come to create a law on the waqfs (charity foundations based on the property of religious communities) to outline the boundaries of such property and turn the existing

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holy places (the so-called pirs) into civilized, transparent, accountable, and effective charities; to attract even more donations and Islamic taxes (zakat, hums) for the sake of local and, later, national socioeconomic projects. In the final analysis, this would decrease the local religious communities’ dependence on foreign funding.

— It would be wise to amend the laws on the central bank, commercial banks and banking, credit unions, microfunding, etc., so that the country acquires a legal basis for interest-free loans according to Islamic principles.

- **Structural changes to and increasing the potential of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations (SCWRO) and the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the Caucasus.** Today, the State Committee functions as a punitive state structure with a vague status and an equally vague range of duties, while the Administration is a relict of the Soviet epoch and is ill-suited to both traditional Islamic and secular organizational structures.

— It would be useful to transform the SCWRO into a state structure responsible for licensing, controlling, and regulating religious activities and religious organizations, including the waqfs. It should promote religious tolerance, education, and the religious component of the republic’s state ideology.

— The SAMC should be transformed into a consultative structure (association) that would include autonomous Muslim communities of all sorts. It should own property of the waqf type. Its experts, as well as experts of other official confessional institutions, should be invited to cooperate with the SCWRO.

- **Introduction and promotion of the Islamic economic and financial principles aimed at the conceptual level at liquidating poverty and introducing social justice.** Among other things this would help to attract Islamic financial institutions to our country.

— The government could include promotion of these structures in the current and future programs (such as decreasing the level of poverty, encouraging economic progress, socioeconomic development of the regions, etc.).

— Having done this, the government, to a greater extent than before, could expect support and funding from the Islamic Development Bank, as well as from other international donors, to develop the institutions of waqf, zakat, and Islamic finances.

— By accomplishing this, the government will acquire tools of control over these institutions and stem any secret illegal designs.

The new state policies in the sphere of education should cover many dimensions. The fundamentals of religion should be taught in school to meet the requirements of the rising generation in religious knowledge; this will help to create a progressive image of Islam free from radicalism and extremism. This subject should be taught as part of the course of comparative religious studies.

To stimulate society, the state should promote ethical norms by relying on the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, imams, and companions, as well as by cooperating with the most prominent religious leaders (intellectuals in particular) and civil society to create and implement all sorts of projects in this sphere.

If promptly and efficiently realized, this political approach will play a positive role in the Islamic revival and help to avoid conflicts between Islam and the secular state.
The pleasure afforded by a deft turn of phrase was valued so highly that when Mecca was destroyed by a flood in 823 and the caliph sent money and a letter of consolation, it was given to understand that the “people of Mecca appreciated the letter more than the money.”

A. Mets, *The Islamic Renaissance*

The next season of the literary prize “The Islamic Breakthrough” was announced in October 2006. This is the second year a contest has been held for this prize, after it arose on the basis of a web poetry competition called “Reading the Sweet Koran” held with the support of the Federal Press and Mass Media Agency. The main goal of the award is to ignite Russian society’s interest in the Muslim culture. Last season, the journal Druzhba narodov (Friendship of Nations), the Ummah Publishing House, and the Sobranie Association of Public Organizations acted as the founders of the award. Original (untranslated) works by currently living authors in the Russian language competed for the prize. There were three categories: “Poetry,” “Prose,” and “Journalism.”

If we are to believe the Regulations of the Open Literary Prize “The Islamic Breakthrough,” its main goal is “to awaken and ignite Russians’ interest in Islam.” To be honest, this is rather a bizarre goal. Is it not rather absurd to be trying to awaken and ignite interest in one of the largest world religions on the planet, which has occupied the center of mankind’s, whereby not only progressive mankind’s, attention for several decades now? The last thing Islam needs at present is an awakening interest in it. What Islam and the Muslims need today (in spite of the coquettish statements of certain Muslim officials) is the formation of a positive image of this great world religion.

Of course, fiction is a powerful weapon capable of having an effect on the minds of those who are still able to discern letters amidst the deluge of numbers and symbols. It is only unfortunate that far from everyone is capable of intelligently handling this double-edged sword. You could get cut!

We all know that experiments do not always end well, and when non-professionals are involved, the chances of success are practically nil. The complete absence of relevant literary traditions dooms the formation of Muslim fiction in Russia to a sure death before it is even born. It is not surprising that instituting a Muslim literary prize in Russia aroused bewilderment in many, to say the least.
“Islamic? Breakthrough? Where are you going to get the authors from? Do you only accept theological works?” writers I know asked me and took fright when they heard that “The Islamic Breakthrough” prize claims no more and no less than the role of “midwife” for Muslim literature in Russia. Later I was disappointed to learn that I do not take precedence in trying to build a basis for contemporary Muslim literature. As early as the last quarter of the 20th century, an Islamization campaign began in Malayan literature. You might be wondering what Confucian-Muslim Malaysia has to do with secular Orthodox Russia?

But the thing is that by the beginning of the 1970s, that is, by the beginning of that very Islamization campaign, there was no longer any Muslim literature in Malaysia, nor was there any in other Muslim countries, despite the previous literary tradition closely tied with Islam. So the claim that Malayan literature would not have come about without Islam can to one extent or another be projected onto the literature of many Muslim states.

In the Middle Ages and the New Age, in addition to a significant stratum of scientific-popular literature in the Arabic-script Malayan language, which acquainted readers with the basics of Muslim theology, as well as with the biographies of outstanding figures of Muslim history, literary works were also well known in Malaysia: Sufi poems (shairs), and so-called novels in prose and verse (hikayats and shairs, respectively) from the 18th century, in which Islamic motifs and themes were used. For example, the main character of the heroic poem Shaire on Siti Zubaid—the wife of a Muslim ruler—not only frees his husband from Chinese captivity, but also converts the local czarinas to Islam.1

But by the mid-20th century, Malayan literature was Westernized, and the government had to exert great effort to interest local writers in the Islamic problem: literary awards were instituted, discussions were held in the press with the participation of well-known writers, and so on.

As M.M. Bakhtin noted (and it is difficult not to agree with a classicist), the history of literature cannot be separated from the history of culture. Does this mean that we can think nothing of it and classify the creative works of some Muslim authors, in which Islamic traditions are undoubtedly reflected to this day, as Muslim literature? In other words, should the theme determine whether a work belongs to this literature? If the heroes of the works are Muslims or they talk about Islam and Muslim traditions, can these works be called Muslim?

And what are we to do about those authors who are not Muslims but use Islamic topics in their creative work? If we follow this theoretical approach, Pushkin’s Podrazhania Koranu (Imitations of the Koran) can automatically be classified as a Muslim work, which is essentially laughable, if we recall the Pushkin’s own well-known comment about his own poetry: “‘The unrighteous,’ writes Muhammad, ‘…think that the Koran is a collection of new lies and old fables.’ The opinion of these unrighteous is, of course, justified; but, despite this, many moral truths are set forth in the Koran in strong and poetic fashions.” Rushdie’s Satanic Verses, in which the author presents his version of the history of the birth of Islam, is also Muslim literature according to all the technical signs.

It is equally unfair to only regard literature as Muslim on the grounds that it was written by a Muslim.

Another more sensible and functional approach, in my view, makes it possible to classify only those works as Muslim literature that touch on the everyday problems of Islam and Muslims in the main storyline. For example, the question of retaining Islamic values in today’s family. Not writing about topics that are pertinent for Muslims, referring only to the fact that there is no text more perfect than the Koran, is not the best solution for “the engineers of human souls.” Muslim writers are faced with the task of looking at the defects of the world around us through the eyes of a Muslim, objectively, without bigotry and hypocrisy.

The biographical works of outstanding figures of Muslim history should also be mentioned. These works also directly relate to Muslim literature.

There is no need to talk about spiritual poetry. As long as people are interested in Sufi poetry, which does not have any national boundaries, there will always be the hope of a revival in Muslim literature.

*In other words, Muslim literature is not literature “about Islam,” but pro-Islamic literature.* Muslim literature is in the full sense high-quality poems, verses, novels, stories, tales, and so on, and not biased and moralizing psalms with an ideal positive hero and indistinct antiheroes. We should realize that there are not that many authors who will be able to find a golden mean between religion as such and literature. But is quantity really that important?…

In 2005, I, as one of the founding fathers of “The Islamic Breakthrough” prize, was one of the jury members, among whom were also people with different views, such as writer and editor-in-chief of *Druzhba narodov* A.L. Ebanoidze, writer and politician E.V. Limonov, poet and publisher I.V. Kormil'tsev, and writer S.A. Shargunov. I also (because of the meager funds offered by sponsors) carried out the function of reader and, in this way, had the opportunity to acquaint myself with all the works submitted to contend for the prize. In this respect, I ask the reader’s apology in advance if, when setting forth my view of the results of the award’s first season, I refer from time to time to works not included on the Short List, but which without a doubt deserve serious (or not very serious) attention.

For convenience sake, I have broken down the works into three sections, each of which I entitled in the same way as each of the prize categories: “Poetry,” “Prose,” and “Journalism.”

**Poetry**

Turning the web poetry competition “Reading the Sweet Koran” into the literary prize “The Islamic Breakthrough” (by introducing two more categories—“Prose” and “Journalism”) was, as subsequent experience showed, the only correct decision. However the poetic component of the prize contenders proved, to the organizers’ surprise, beyond all criticism. I long did not want to believe that the great literature that gave the Russian-reading public Pushkin’s even not entirely Muslim *Pol'drazhania Korana* could produce nothing more commendable than the poem *El-Mina (Vzgliad s moria na menia)* (El-Mina [View of Me from the Sea]):

Sea
Ships
Islands
Boats
Beach
Palms
People
Hotel
Restaurant
Terrace
Armchair
Coca-Cola
Me

The author of this Coca-Cola advertisement poem is Sergei Isaev, a former Franciscan and Hospitaller monk, who converted to Islam. When we first met each other, I asked him straight out: “Why Coca-Cola? In poems submitted to ‘The Islamic Breakthrough’ we should be drinking Mecca-Cola.” Isaev smiled sadly in reply: “I can’t stand cola: either Coca or Mecca.”

Justifying his strange, at first glance, choice, Ilya Kormil’tsev, who was the jury member responsible for the “Poetry” category, noted sadly that Isaev’s poem was the only one that related to Muslim poetry as such. All the others were nothing more than rather unsuccessful attempts at stylization “in
the Oriental style.” But not all the jury members shared the viewpoint of Nautilus’ former songwriter. Most were in favor of giving first place to Petersburg Islam expert Mikhail Rodionov, the author of a free translation of several verses from the Surah “The Elephant” done way back in 1965.

Have you seen what your Lord did to the people of the elephant? Did He not cause their schemes to backfire? He turned their arrogance to vainglory: By sending upon them swarms of birds That struck their shields with their beaks And pecked out their eyes. God’s thunder raged over them And showered them with hard stones. Falling like ears under the scythe, He made them like chewed up hay.

The dispute about what is more important in poetry—the form or the content—was of principal significance not only for the “Poetry” category, but also for the entire award in general. Keeping a balance between a high-quality literary “wrapping” and contents relevant to the award’s name proved to be a most difficult task. The “Journalism” and in part the “Prose” categories coped with this task quite well. I will talk about that below.

As for Isaev’s poems, far from all of them can be classified as Muslim poetry, that is, poetry using Islamic topics. Let’s take that ill-fated El-Mina as an example. I think the only works by Isaev that can really be called Muslim are the virtuous Musul’manka (Muslim Woman) and the impossibly protracted Krepost’ Sindzhil (Fortress of Saint-Gilles), in which a former monk bellicosely cries:

Leave our faith alone! Leave our mosques alone! Leave our cities alone! Leave our people alone!

Reading the poems of the prize-winners, I just could not rid myself of a bothersome question: if this is what contemporary Muslim poetry is like, perhaps it would be better to wait until the proper time, rather than trying to extract a premature child out of its mother’s womb with forceps?

If I had given Isaev first place, it would not have been for his literary merits, but for his priceless gift of prophecy, which so many, sometimes very talented, poets lack. The poem Esli zavtra nachniotsia voina (If a War Starts Tomorrow) was written before the Lebanese-Israeli war of the summer of 2006:

If a war Starts Tomorrow…

What will it change In the world, If a war Starts Tomorrow?!

The wind tosses The branches Of the Lebanese cedar— An evil Western wind.
I fall asleep
Peacefully,
Without fear—
But all the same:

What will happen to the cedar,
If a war
Starts
Tomorrow?…

However, whereas Isaev walks through the ancient ruins of the Fortress of Saint-Gilles in search of catharsis, the other two poets from the Short List (Marina Kivirian and Mikhail Rodionov, already mentioned) find travel to the East primarily an exciting adventure, sometimes with a romantic “filling:”

Finding myself far from home,
In the holy days of Ramadan,
I encountered beautiful Ali
By the mosque of Great Kayruan.

After this meeting, the young poetess and artist was filled with an overwhelming desire to see the beautiful young man again:

If the chance to travel arises again—
I will cast away distant lands,
But will return to look once more
On the Great mosque of Kayruan.

The only antidote to the impotence of contemporary Muslim poetry in Russia might be the locally produced rubais, if they a) were not so numerous and b) had at least some originality. I will not risk trying the reader’s patience by presenting the creative works of the other “Khayyams.”

The Islamic breakthrough in poetry failed…

Prose

After the critics castigated the novel about Apostle Paul, prose writer from Ufa Svetlana Churraeva wrote another novel that was hardly noticed by the critics called Nizhe neba (Lower than Heaven), which amazed the chairman of the prize jury A.L. Ebanoidze with its “beauty of moral feeling.” Admittedly, people who knew the prototype of the work’s main hero—Bashkirian artist Devletkildeev—claim that he was an entirely different person. But is this important? The novel talks not so much about a specific artist, as about the problems of freedom of creativity for the believer and, in this case, for the Muslim.

It is a well-known fact that Islam prohibits depicting any live beings, at least if the matter concerns painting, and not photography. Devletkildeev, on the other hand, is, as though deliberately, a talented portrait-painter. Blessed by God.

After overcoming all the internal prohibitions, the artist chooses freedom of creativity. He makes this choice in order, at the end of his life, to come to the following conclusion when asked by his young and guileless student: “What for? God draws flowers more beautifully than you. And makes sickness more terrible, and bread more aromatic. But when you look at a painting, when you listen to music, when you cry over a book, you know that God exists.”

The art of the artist becomes an act of praising the Almighty, rapture over His inimitable creations, which in spite of everything, you want to put on record and keep for your descendants.
There is no place for preaching in Churaeva’s novel, she does not moralize and does not enlighten. If the reader wants to find out something new about Islam, it will hardly be worth reading *Nizhe neba*. Churaeva’s novel was written for those who are interested in the life of Russian Muslims. In this sense, *Nizhe neba* is a Muslim novel to the same extent as Tarkovskiy’s *Andrei Rublev* is a Christian film.

The complete opposite to the novel *Nizhe neba* is Holm van Zaitchik’s anti-utopian novel *Delo nepogashennoi luni* (The Case of the Unextinguished Moon), where events unfolded in Palestine, however not real Palestine, but a fictitious one that never was and possibly never will be. The Arabs who sheltered the Jews fleeing from the Nazis and lived with them in complete harmony are no less fantastical than the fox-werewolves or independent Ukrainian dervishes from other novels by van Zaitchik. But this entertainingly written fairy tale “on the verge of a foul” is something there is not enough of in contemporary Russian literature.

*Delo nepogashennoi luni* was welcomed with open arms in Israel, which gave reason for several cyber Muslims—the denizens of forums—to backbite: “whose hands are you playing into?” Does this mean you should reject everything your ideological adversaries like merely out of a spirit of contradiction? The novel *Delo nepogashennoi luni* is near and dear to the Muslims because the ideas of humanism preached by van Zaitchik’s author—“translators” in no way run counter to the moral standards of Islam.

The fact that the jury’s choice of van Zaitchik’s novel was justified is confirmed by other novels and stories in the genre of alternative-historical prose among the large number of entries for the prize. Dmitri Akhtiamov’s *Russkiy khalifat* (The Russian Caliphate) is a good bet, in which he sets forth Russian history, beginning with Prince Vladimir after he converted to Islam along with the rest of Old Russia.

What is more, essentially not one work was submitted for the prize in which topics from Muslim history were used. And we all know that there are tons of such topics.

The only and, fortunately, very successful exception is the beautiful story by Kalian Alyshanov “I uzkii serp luny—pechali simvol” (And the Sliver of a Sickle Moon—the Symbol of Sorrow), which plays up the well-known Koranic topic of the disappearance of the younger wife of the Prophet Muhammad, Aisha, during a campaign.

Why do Muslim writers not recall the glorious past of Islam in their works? The answer is easy to surmise. Most of the author-contenders for the prize are terribly illiterate. They acquired their knowledge about Islam from popular brochures of dubious origin, which are hardly likely to inspire the creation of anything more than books like *Russkiy khalifat*, *Islamskiy proryv* (The Islamic Breakthrough), and others.

The creator of historical novels should have at least some knowledge about the era he is describing. All that is needed to think up yet one more anti-utopian novel is a little imagination and the utmost literary impudence.

**Journalism**

Everyone understands the word “journalism” differently in Russia. For some, journalism is what is published on the last pages of thick magazines. For others, it is yesterday’s conversation with friends recorded in a rough-and-ready fashion. “Journalism is everything that is not poetry or prose,” says the third. And all will be to a certain extent correct.

So there is nothing surprising about the fact that such disparate pieces as a theological work by Karelian mufti called *Blagotvoritel’nost v islame. Zakiat* (Charity in Islam. Zakat), notes by a psychotherapist from Piatigorsk entitled *Islam otkryvayet vsemu miru put’ k fizicheskomu i psikhicheskomu sovershenstvu* (Islam Opens the Way to Physical and Psychic Perfection), the reminiscences of a front-line soldier about his first love for a Muslim girl, an article on the role of women in the Islamic
economy, a regional study monograph called *Moskva musul’manskaia* (Muslim Moscow), a travel novel about Lebanon by the same irrepressible Isaev, and many more contended for the prize in the “Journalism” category.

But if there had been a separate category called “Oddities” in the competition, the winner here would probably have been Lazar Fleischman, a 79-year-old engineer electrician as well as amateur theologian from near Tel Aviv—the author of the work *Dzhikhad protiv Izraelia—eto Dzhikhad protiv Allaha* (Jihad Against Israel is Jihad Against Allah). Relying on a way outmoded translation of the meanings of the Koran by Sablukov with “Ъ” and “Ъ” [“yers” and “yats”—old Cyrillic letters] and elevating it almost to the rank of the Word of God, the former repatriate from “the city of Orel” proves that Muslims should make an immense fuss over Jews if they do not want to bring the wrath of Allah down on themselves.

For lack of real opponents, the author, continuing the famous tradition of Jacob’s struggle with God, engages in a bitter debate now with Allah, now with Academician Primakov. “How splendidly you refuted the Academician! (why with a capital letter? Or is the theologian placing Primakov on the same level as Allah?—R.B.),” boasts Fleischman after “chopping in,” not very successfully, a few quotes from the works of the former Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin and several English publications of the middle of the last century. After refuting the Academician, Fleischman descends to criticizing an Arab professor (with a small letter).

This pamphlet ends with an accursed economic question: the theologian seriously wracks his brains over how much gold must be paid to the Palestinians for them to cleanse their land for those to whom it rightly belongs: “And when the Arab Palestinians and the entire Muslim world find out the true truths (the only thing left for us to do is take our hats off to the “true truths.”—R.B.) of the Koran—the Holy Land bestowed on the Jews by Allah and bequeathed to them—and believe in these truths of the Koran, the need for a conscious voluntary transfer will inevitably come to full fruition. Not an ordinary transfer, but a golden one… It appears we are to subject ourselves to the will of Allah, but not with empty hands. For there are many poor people and even very poor people among them. And if the Torah did not permit the Jew-slave owner to set his slaves free empty-handed, it stands to reason that our relatives along Abraham’s, Isaac’s, and Jacob’s lines should not be allowed to go without compensation either. And not small compensations, but those designated by Allah.”

Such authors shouldn’t be claiming any “The Islamic Breakthrough” prize, but going straight for the Nobel Peace Prize. And the money received should be given to the Palestinian brothers.

It is amazing thing, but the jury did not get a peep of journalistic works on the Palestinian problem (with the exception of Fleischman’s opus mentioned). The same can be said of the war in Chechnya: no attempts were seen at “The Islamic Breakthrough” competition to understand what is going on in the republic from the Muslim viewpoint. The authors who sent their novels on the latest Chechen wars to compete for the award were more interested in combat action than philosophy.

Unfortunately, the large number of autobiographical essays by Muslims who freely converted to Islam (and not those who were made to convert to Islam) were superficial and did not go beyond the bounds of a pointless theological dispute. The overwhelming number of such authors are intellectuals who found the answers to many of their own questions in Islam.

It goes without saying that the researcher who at some point takes up study of the phenomenon of Russian Muslims will not be able to manage without analyzing their creative work: the religious fervor of Russian Muslims often assumes literary forms. In “The Islamic Breakthrough,” they make up more than 3/4 of the prize contenders. Ethnic Muslims, on the other hand, who are dabbling their hand in writing, are more occupied with national topics. For example, if we analyze the geographical location of the contenders, we are immediately struck by the essentially total absence of works from the Northern Caucasus and Tatarstan. Most of the works submitted came from Moscow, St. Petersburg, and, for some reason, Riga.
Leftist intellectuals who have a liking for Islam constitute a special group among the author-contenders for the prize; its most striking representative in contemporary Russian literature is Alexei Tsvetkov, Jr. His travel essay on Istanbul *Vtoroi Rim v aprele, ili nastroichivoe chuvtstvo Vsevyshnego* (The Second Rome in April, or An Insistent Sense of the Almighty)\(^2\) could have competed with the well-known essay by Joseph Brodsky *Puteshestvie v Stambul* (Journey to Istanbul). And whereas Brodsky likens Istanbul’s mosques to toads, Tsvetkov studies the city architecture not through the eyes of a naturalist, but as a gourmet: “The porphyritic, like frozen meat, court columns are what I remember about the mosques of Beyazit;” “From afar, Eyüp looks like a pile of sugar on a hill overgrown with black cypresses. Close up, the sugar turns out to be endless rows of gravestones. After a long trek up the hill, you suddenly turn into a cemetery and find yourself in a memorial forest of white pillars covered with an unfamiliar alphabet. At some of them, relatives sing quietly, turning their palms skyward. I would like to hide forever among these sugar-like tombstones from everything in the world, or, at least, sit down for a long time.”

In contrast to some Muslim authors, who were unable to figure out their relationship with God, and in contrast to Brodsky, who did not feel the beauty of Islam, it seems that Tsvetkov managed to do both: “An ant, who runs along the lines all of its life, gradually begins to understand what is written, and also surmises something about the author, this is what a sense of the Almighty is.”

But Tsvetkov would not be Tsvetkov if he had not found red alavits (*al-ʻalaviyya*)—Muslim dissidents fighting for justice under a mixture of Islamic and Communist slogans—while walking among the thousand-year walls of Constantinople.

I have often heard authors I respect say that writing travel essays is a waste of time. “Who needs travel notes in our day and age, when anyone can take if not an actual, at least a virtual, journey to essentially any place in the world,” one well-wisher said to me. After reading Tsvetkov’s *Vtoroi Rim v aprele*…, I understood that it is too early to hand over the genre of travel essays to young participants contending for the “Debut” prize and suffering from a shortage of topics.

I have always been a curious tourist to the point of being a pain in the neck. When I found myself in Istanbul for the first time, I tried to see everything, or almost everything, there was to see in this city. When I returned to Russia, I enjoyed watching programs about Istanbul, reveling in the fact that I had been to places where the average tourist had not looked. After reading Tsvetkov’s essay, I understood that I knew nothing about true Istanbul…

Julia Prudnikova, who was on the Short List with her essay *Glavnaia musul'manskaia kniga* (The Main Muslim Book) and critical article called “Islam ot protivnogo” (Islam Interpreted by Contraries), can be included among the leftist intellectuals who have a liking for Islam.\(^3\)

It is not often that poetry at the end of a prose work by the same author is successful. Prudnikova’s case, who took second place in the “Journalism” category, is no exception. The three poems at the end of the essay *Glavnaia musul'manskaia kniga* significantly spoil the impression created by the earlier prose relating the young author’s relationship with the Koran.

Two of the three poems are a free translation of the meanings of two short Surah of the Koran “The Traducer” and “The Earthquake.” For all their shortcomings, in comparison with the translation of the Koran by Porokhova, which hangs helplessly in the airless space between science and literature, Prudnikova’s poetry looks somehow convincing. Keeping in mind the low level of the works in the “Poetry” category, I would have raised it with the poems from *Glavnaia musul'manskaia kniga*. The “Journalism” category would definitely not have suffered from this.

The article called “Islam ot protivnogo,” which took the book that gave the award its name to pieces, is a significant argument in favor of the jury members’ impartiality. At first the impression is created that Prudnikova entirely yields to the extremely emotional criticism of the obviously hopeless novel by Akhtiamov, but the article ends with important conclusions that relate to Muslim literature

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as a whole. Successfully comparing Akhtiamov’s Islamskiy proryv with Chudinova’s Mechet’ parizhskoi bogomateri (The Mosque of Our Lady of Paris), the author claims: “The idea of an ‘Orthodox’ novel by Chudinova is just as far from Christianity as the idea of the ‘Islamic’ novel sermon by Akhtiamov is from Islam.”

If Akhtiamov’s novel is in fact capable of arousing a negative reaction in people who have a liking for Islam (and Glavnaia musul’manskaia kniga does not leave any doubt about this), what can we say about those who relate to the Muslim religion at least with mistrust? Prudnikova is ever so right: “works” like Akhtiamov’s Islamskiy proryv and Chudinova’s Mechet’ parizhskoi bogomateri can do much more damage to Islam and Christianity, respectively, than any conceived hostile propaganda.

In contrast to Tsvetkov’s and Prudnikova’s works, Alfinora Gafurova’s biographical essay Ataulla Bayazitov is written in a meager style and does not indulge the reader with sharp turns in storyline. The hero of the essay himself is probably to blame in part for this. The merit of the author of Ataulla Bayazitov lies in something else: in 1990, it was Alfinora Gafurova who revived the newspaper Nur (Light) created at the beginning of the 20th century by a Tatar public and religious figure, Ataulla Bayazitov. Admittedly, pre-revolutionary Nur, in contrast to the current, post-Soviet publication, was to a greater extent Islamic than Tatar. In our day and age, the newspaper, on the contrary, gives priority to the national over the religious, although (another paradox of the globalization era!) it comes out in Russian.

**Conclusions**

The seasons to come may make it possible to correct several of the author’s conclusions about the prize. For the time being, however, the works submitted to the organizing committee of “The Islamic Breakthrough” during the second season announced in October 2006 only confirm the observations made earlier and summarized below:

— most of the authors of works on the Islamic theme are Russian Muslim neophytes;
— works written by members of the leftist intelligentsia who have a liking for Islam have high literary quality and understanding;
— among the works submitted to contend for the prize there are none in which topics from the history of Islam and the Muslim world were used;
— not one (!) work expresses any hate for the members of other religions, or criticizes any particular confession, even when the matter concerns conversion from Christianity to Islam;
— poetry, as a rule, is of a very low quality with a prevalence of Orientalist themes;
— a style that tends toward describing everyday phenomena is clearly traced in the prose;
— a new trend is observed in the alternative history genre: the depiction of the main dogmas of Islam in literary form;
— no attempts are made in the works presented to look at the war in Chechnia through the eyes of today’s Russian Muslim.

4 The first attempt to set forth several provisions of Islam and the Shari’a in the form of literary works was the novel by R. Bekkin called Islam from Monk Bahira published in 2002. His second publication was sent to press at the Ultra Culture Publishing House in 2006.
The collapse of the U.S.S.R. and the appearance of the newly independent states were denoted by certain phenomena that have historical analogies, on the one hand, and introduced quite a number of innovations into the contemporary political processes, on the other. The little attention paid the

ow that each of the South Caucasian states has survived the crisis it found itself at the beginning of the 1990s and sees its independence as permanent, regional integration has once again become a pertinent topic. Strong territorial ties in our globalizing world help to guarantee regional security, on the one hand, and are vital for a smooth entry into the global political-economic expanse, on the other. The regional nations, which have been in the spheres of influence and struggle of the Persian, Ottoman, and Russian empires from time immemorial, have their own and, to some extent, unique historical experience of state-political integration, which is what this article aims to discuss.

The collapse of the U.S.S.R. and the appearance of the newly independent states were denoted by certain phenomena that have historical analogies, on the one hand, and introduced quite a number of innovations into the contemporary political processes, on the other. The little attention paid the
Yalta-Potsdam agreements (1945) and the Helsinki Declaration (1975), which declared the inviolability of the post-war borders, caused an increase in ethnic separatism, which logically led to the military conflicts that flared up, including in the Southern Caucasus. The natural consequence of this development of events was a complete breakdown in relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the great aggravation of economic relations among the three countries of the region due to the chaos that inevitably accompanies the collapse of any empire.

It should be emphasized that the Southern Caucasus was recognized by the West as a single region right from the beginning of the post-Soviet period, despite all the existing contradictions. In recent years, due to the increasing involvement of the U.S. and the European countries, as well as Russia, in the domestic political and economic processes in the Caucasus, the mentioned countries have adjusted their interrelations with the three South Caucasian states to some extent. The initial optimism over the integration processes in the Southern Caucasus gave way to a more pragmatic analysis of the situation and the establishment of more realistic relations with each of the countries in the region.

The creation of an integrated economic space is one of the most attractive models of South Caucasian integration, which can naturally only be carried out after the political situation is regulated, that is, the protracted interstate and ethnic conflicts are settled. The historical experience of the regional nations, which have been in the sphere of influence and struggle of the Persian, Ottoman, and Russian empires from time immemorial, knows of two precedents of state-political integration in the 20th century alone. The matter concerns the consolidated governing structures and the first Transcaucasian Federation (1917-1918), as well as the Soviet Transcaucasian Federation (1922-1936). Certain integration attempts were also made after the collapse of the U.S.S.R. and after the end of the military phase of the ethnic conflicts during the second half of the 1990s.

All the pluses and minuses of this experience naturally require careful analysis by researchers and could be incorporated when drawing up future integration models. Let’s take a look below at the main historical stages in the establishment and development of the integration processes requiring more in-depth research in the next few years.

Twists and Turns in the Post-Imperial Period and the First Integration Experience

After shaking themselves loose from the Russian Empire’s control, the South Caucasian nations began promoting integration trends in 1917-1918 in the form of the Transcaucasian power bodies—the Special Transcaucasian Committee (STRACOM), the Transcaucasian Commissariat, and the Transcaucasian Sejm. The first Transcaucasian Federation, which was created under Turkey’s pressure, existed briefly from April to May 1918. At the end of May 1918, the federation (again not without the help of foreign forces) fell apart—it proved to be only a stage on the way to forming the three Transcaucasian republics—of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.

There were no open calls for independence in the Caucasus during the time of the czarist and provisional governments. After the October coup a decision was adopted on 11 November, 1917 at a meeting of the members of the Georgian Social-Democratic Party (Mensheviks), the Musavatists (Azerbaijan), and the Dashnaktsutiun members and rightist social-revolutionaries (Armenia) in Tiflis to create an Independent Government of Transcaucasia. On 15 November, the Transcaucasian Commissariat was formed, which refused to recognize the power of the Council of People’s Commissars headed by Lenin. Its members included the following outstanding sociopolitical leaders of that time—E. Gegechkori, A. Chkhenkeli, M. Jafarov, Kh. Khasmamedov, H. Melik-Aslanov,
and G. Ter-Gazarian. A declaration published in Tiflis on 18 November (1 December), 1917 said: "After walking hand in hand with Russia and tying their destiny to it for more than one hundred years, the peoples of the Transcaucasus have found themselves for the first time, at this point in history, to be left to their own devices. They must undertake their own measures to prevent an imminent economic and social disaster. And the fate of the Transcaucasian peoples and their normal development will depend on whether Transcaucasian revolutionary democracy can defend itself against all kinds of encroachments and guarantee the region the most necessary foundations of revolutionary order…"

However, there was no intention at this time of completely separating from Russia. The Southern Caucasus was waiting for the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, hoping that the Bolshevik government would fall any day. Preparations for the elections in the Southern Caucasus began as early as summer 1917, when the Central Transcaucasian Commission on Elections to the Constituent Assembly was created under the Special Transcaucasian Committee formed after the February Revolution and a special Resolution on Elections, which was very democratic for its time, was issued. A proportional system of voting was envisaged for most districts, and women and service-men were also allowed to participate in the elections.  

Elections to the Constituent Assembly for the entire Transcaucasus were held on 26 November, 1917. Fifteen parties participated in them, among which the Georgian Social-Democrats (Mensheviks), the Musavatists, and the Dashnaks obtained more than 73% of the votes. The Bolsheviks won the votes of 4.4% of the electorate, most of which consisted of Baku blue-collar workers and soldiers from the Baku garrison. All of the Transcaucasus was represented at these elections as one electoral district with 35 deputy mandates. Since the Transcaucasian Commissariat no longer wielded any real power by this time, the deputies elected to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly formed a Transcaucasian Sejm—the representative body uniting the Southern Caucasus—in Tiflis on 23 February, 1918 (after the Bolsheviks routed the Constituent Assembly on 6 January). The number of members in the Transcaucasian Sejm reached 133. The Sejm’s main political factions included the Georgian Social-Democrats (Mensheviks) consisting of 32 deputies, the Armenian Dashnaktsutiun members consisting of 27 deputies, and the Azerbaijani Musavatists, as well as 30 non-party deputies who joined the last group. The Sejm formed the Transcaucasian government headed by E. Gegechkori.

Foreign political factors presented by the leading geopolitical players, the Entente countries with separate Russia, on the one hand, and Turkey and Germany, on the other, had a significant influence on the activity and existence of this government itself. As early as the end of 1917, after the peace talks between Russia and Germany in Brest-Litovsk failed, the Turkish troops took up the offensive and, by the beginning of January 1918, occupied the Kars, Ardahan, and Batum (now Batumi) regions. This compelled the Transcaucasian government to send a telegram to Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Front Vekhib Pasha expressing its willingness to begin peace talks with Turkey. The Sejm adopted an agenda for the talks, in which it demanded restoration of the interstate border of 1914. Representatives of all three South Caucasian republics were delegated at the talks.

But soon a separate peace treaty was signed in Brest-Litovsk between Russia and Germany, according to which Kars, Ardahan and Batum were given to Turkey. The Transcaucasian Sejm sent a
telegram to Petrograd, in which it stated that it did not recognize the Brest Treaty, since it did not recognize Soviet power. All the same, Turkey demanded that the Transcaucasian Sejm immediately be removed from all three cities. On 14 March, 1918, a peace conference opened in Trabzon (Trabzon), in which Turkey and the Transcaucasian Sejm participated. The Turks insisted on the conditions of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and refused to recognize the Transcaucasian Sejm delegation as a legal entity at the talks, since the Transcaucasian Sejm did not declare itself a state formation independent of Russia.

The opinions of the Transcaucasian Sejm representatives were divided. Nor was there unanimity among the Azerbaijani delegation. For example, Kh. Khasmamedov and Sh. Rustambekov believed that Batum, to which oil was sent from Baku via pipeline, should remain in the Transcaucasus. The pro-Turkish orientation of the Azerbaijani deputies grew after the events in Baku of 30 March-1 April, when under the pretense of repressing the supposedly Musavatist uprising, the troops of the Baku Soviet of People’s Deputies, with the help of the Dashnak armed formations, staged a mass massacre of the Azerbaijanis, as a result of which more than 12,000 people were killed. The Azerbaijani deputies of the Sejm demanded that military aid be sent to Baku, but this was not crowned with success. After numerous meetings, on 22 April, 1918, the Transcaucasian Sejm adopted a resolution under pressure from the Azerbaijani faction on declaring an independent Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic. Gegechkori’s government resigned; a new government was approved headed by A. Chkhenkeli. Noi Zhordania expressed the position of the Georgian Mensheviks: “The Center (Moscow.—I.B.) cannot save us, we are deluding ourselves if we place our hopes on it; and until a central government is set up, a local government must be created that will resort to every means in its competence to save the Transcaucasus.”

On 26 April, a government declaration was adopted that declared the sovereignty of the Transcaucasus and established the most friendly relations with all the states of the world, in particular with those sharing borders with the region. The declaration also envisaged the equality of the peoples living in the area, equality with the Russian population, fair territorial demarcation of the Transcaucasian nations, stopping the war, organizing defense of the region, and fighting the counterrevolution and anarchy.

But the relatively independent Transcaucasus did not exist for very long. The new government asked Turkey to extend the Trabzon talks, which were renewed on 11 May (this time in Batum). The German representatives headed by General Otto von Lossow, who in turn participated in the talks with the Georgian delegation, attended the Batum conference as observers. What is more, under the command of General von Kress, the German troops landed in the Georgian port of Poti with the intention of occupying Georgian territory. The Turkish forces continued their offensive, and by mid-May took Alexandropol. The Musavatists strove for a union with Turkey, and the Georgian Mensheviks counted on Germany: there was a treaty between the latter and Turkey, according to which the areas occupied by the Germans could not be occupied by the Turks. Armenia, which remained loyal to the Entente and Russian interests, was not supported by anyone. In this situation, the Armenians were oriented toward Russia being restored and its protection.

Under pressure from the German representatives, the Georgian delegation decided to announce Georgia’s withdrawal from the Transcaucasian Federative Republic and declare its independence. On 25 May, A. Tsereteli made a statement in which he noted that the Transcaucasian nationalities had not succeeded in uniting under the slogan of “independence,” and it was obvious that the Transcaucasus was about to collapse. In so doing, the Georgians placed the blame for the federation’s downfall on

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7 State Archives of the Azerbaijani Republic (SAAR), rec. gr. 970, inv. 1, f. 7, sheet 4.
8 SAAR, rec. gr. 894, inv. 10, f. 148, sheet 30.
10 Ibid., p. 43.
the Azerbaijani faction, accusing it of being pro-Turkish. This aroused a severe reaction in the latter, which believed these accusations to be ungrounded and, in turn, accused the Georgians of striving for an “isolated political existence.”

Acquiring Independence and Interstate Contradictions

On 26 May, 1918, the Transcaucasian Sejm adopted its final decision: “In view of the fact that there are radical differences among the nations that created the Transcaucasian independent republic on the question of war and peace, and that it was impossible for one authoritarian power to talk on behalf of the Transcaucasus, the Sejm acknowledges the collapse of the Transcaucasus and lays down its powers.”11 Immediately following this, Georgia (26 May), as well as Azerbaijan and Armenia (28 May), declared their independence.

On 4 June, 1918, a peace treaty was entered in Batum among Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, which delineated the borders between these states, and on 31 July, it was ratified at a conference in Istanbul. According to the treaty, Turkey acquired possession of the Batum and Kars regions, the Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe uezds of the Tiflis Gubernia, and the Surmala Uezd of the Erivan Gubernia. This situation was retained right up until Turkey’s defeat in World War I.

Azerbaijan’s position was aggravated by the struggle for Baku oil going on among the R.S.F.S.R., Germany, and Turkey. Whereas the Georgian and Armenian delegations were based in their capitals, the Azerbaijani delegation (as did the entire government of the ADR) went to Ganja since Baku was under the power of the Bolsheviks—the so-called Baku Commune. Not until mid-September 1918, after numerous bloody battles, did the Azerbaijani government move to Baku.

In 1918-1920, the national elites of all the South Caucasian states made unsuccessful attempts to create a confederation—this time to carry out the proposals of the Entente nations that won the world war (in particular England). At first, the Entente countries, which retained their alliance with the White Guard troops, had no desire to recognize the South Caucasian republics as independent state formations. On 2 December, General Thomson, the commander of the British armed forces in the Caucasus, made a statement, in which he said: “The allied nations, like the new Russian government in Ufa, with which they are acting in unison, do not recognize any of the independent formations that have arisen in Russia… Their task includes restoring the former vicegerency in the Caucasus, on behalf of the Russian government, in order to ease restoration of the area’s political and economic life…”12

In compliance with the Armistice of Mudros, the British occupied Batum and the entire Transcaucasian railroad from the Black to the Caspian seas, which, according to William Churchill, meant owning “one of the most important strategic routes in the world.”13 These statements make it possible to say that the Entente nations were interested in a united Transcaucasus not so much out of solidarity with the Ufa Directory and Denikin, or out of considerations for Russia’s integrity, as due to their own geostrategic and geo-economic interests. But nor did the British manage to achieve unification of the South Caucasian republics: the territorial disputes were the main obstacle here. The land-surveying commission founded in Georgia under the chairmanship of I. Tsereteli suggested designating the borders of the Georgian republic from the south along the Lesser Caucasus Mountain Range to the northern shores of Lake Gokcha (Sevan) and then to the north along the Akstafa River to Dzegam

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11 S. Arkomed, Materiały po istorii otpadeniia Zakavkazja ot Rossii, Tiflis, 1931, p. 100.
12 Quoted from: Dni gospodstva men’shevikov v Gruzii, Tiflis, 1931, p. 39.
station (including the Zakataly District). Naturally, the Azerbaijani and Armenian delegations protested, and the talks were interrupted. What is more, after the Turkish and German troops were evacuated from the territory between Georgia and Armenia, border clashes began in the Lori Region, which escalated into combat action at the beginning of December.

The war between Georgia and Armenia lasted until the end of December 1918 and ended only under pressure from the British and French missions on 31 December. Ongoing military clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan continued in Nagorno-Karabakh, despite the fact that a general governorship was founded there in 1919 headed by Hosrof bek Sultanov and the region was joined to the ADR. Nor did Georgia drop its claims to the Zakataly District, the National Council of which voted in 1918 for joining Azerbaijan, and to which Gashimbekov was appointed governor. However, things did not go as far as combat action this time—economic interests took the upper hand, since all of Azerbaijan’s export-import passed through Georgia. When Denikin’s army occupied Daghestan and there was a real threat of the Southern Caucasus being conquered by it, a military treaty was signed between Azerbaijan and Georgia on 27 June, 1919 on the joint defense of their state borders. The Ararat (Armenian) Republic, which did not want to join any kind of anti-Russian bloc, did not sign the agreement. In this way, the multi-vector orientation of the foreign policy of the three South Caucasian republics prevented them again from integrating into a single military-political and economic space.

The Soviet Experiment

In April 1920, the Red Army entered Azerbaijan, in November of the same year, it entered Armenia, and in February 1921, Georgia. But even after establishment of Soviet power, it was decided at the Kars Conference (1921) that a trade agreement with Turkey would not be entered by the republics of the Transcaucasus individually, but by the united Ministry of Foreign Trade.

The main task Moscow assigned the new government in the first days of the Caucasus’ Sovietization was unification into “one common Communist family” at the regional level, followed by the whole of its territory joining the U.S.S.R., which was formed in 1922. Lenin especially insisted on this. The question arose of where to begin. A decision was put forward at a plenary session of the Baku Soviet on uniting the Transcaucasian railroads. Ordzhonikidze explained the need to adopt this measure as follows: “Everyone knows that the Main Railroad Workshops are in Tiflis, everything necessary for industry is in Baku, in particular the fuel needed for transport, while Armenia, which is standing on the sidelines, has neither one nor the other… The question should be raised differently; the main thing to be remembered is that the Tiflis workshops cannot exist without Baku oil, Baku cannot streamline its transport without the Tiflis workshops, and Armenia cannot exist without the help of Azerbaijan and Georgia.”

The scheme for managing the Transcaucasian railroads between Baku and Tiflis was based, both before the revolution and during independence, on the same principle, but by the end of World War I and as a result of the combat action on the borders, these supply lines fell into disuse. Due to the disastrous situation in the economy and deterioration of the state of the railroads, the only salvation for the new government was to consolidate the management of all the Caucasian main transportation routes in order to save resources and use them more economically. It managed to do this until the end of 1921.

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15 See: G.K. Ordzhonikidze, Statiy i rechi, Erevan, 1956, p. 274.
16 Doklad na Kavkazskom soveshchanii Kommunisticheskogo soiuza molodozhi, Tiflis, 15 July, 1921.
The next just as important question concerned foreign trade operations, which until 1921 were carried out by each republic independently on a competitive basis. This situation did not suit the Soviets striving to monopolize this extremely important area of the economy. By mid-1921, the foreign trade ministries of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia were joined into the Union of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia for Foreign Trade—the regional foreign trade department. Its headquarters were in Tiflis and governed by a special board appointed according to an agreement among the governments of the three republics.

An economic commission was also formed, which began working on the full economic unification of the Transcaucasian republics.

In response to society’s dissatisfaction caused by rumors that the old gubernias were to be restored within the borders of czarist Russia, the newly formed republics were declared fully independent. This is what Joseph Stalin said at a meeting of the Tiflis organization of the Georgian Communist Party on 6 July, 1921: “In order to dispel the atmosphere of mutual mistrust and restore the fraternal ties among the workers of the nationalities of the Transcaucus and Russia. Georgia, as well as Azerbaijan and Armenia, must retain their independence. This does not exclude, but, on the contrary, presupposes the need for mutual economic and other support, as well as the need for joining the economic efforts of the independent Soviet republics on the basis of a voluntary agreement, on the basis of a convention.”

But Stalin illustrated in an extremely Bolshevik spirit the means by which the “independence” of the three republics was to be carried out: “…I found out that Georgia and Armenia are receiving petroleum products from Azerbaijan free of charge, something that is inconceivable in the life of bourgeois states, even those tied by the notorious ‘cordial agreement’ (Entente cordiale—this implies the Entente.—I.B.). There is no need to prove that these and similar acts do not weaken, but strengthen the independence of these states.”

The thoughts that Stalin voiced while in Georgia in no way correlated with the well-known conception of “autonomization” he elaborated in Moscow, according to which the national republics were supposed to join a single Soviet state in the form of autonomous formations with direct subordination to the center. Many contemporary Russian historians—so-called etatists—believe that Stalin was right when he protested against the liberalism shown by Lenin, “which was lobbied by the national-communists of the peripheries,” and spoke out against that “useless and unwieldy model of national-state structures,” which Lenin invented for Russia. What is more, in their opinion, implementation of the idea of autonomization would have been a way to prevent national “atomization”—Russia’s dismemberment to the detriment of its political and economic unity.

In December 1921, the Plenary Session of the Caucasian Bureau of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee, and then the First Congress of Communist Organizations of the Transcaucus (February 1922) resolved to accelerate the creation of a general political united center of the Transcaucus, without which successful work to revive its economic might would have been impossible. The congress approved the draft of a Union Treaty of Soviet Socialist Republics of the Transcaucus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia), as well as Provisions on the Higher Economic Council. The Transcaucasian Territory Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) was elected at the same time.

On 12 March, 1922, the conference of Central Executive Committee representatives of all three republics adopted a Union Treaty on the Formation of a Federative Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of the Transcaucus (FUSSRT). The document noted that the Socialist Soviet Republics (Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia) should act among themselves in close military, political, and eco-

17 Pravda Gruzii, No. 108, 13 July, 1921.
18 Ibidem.
20 See: Perviy zakavkazskii s’yezd kommunisticheskikh organizatsii, Verbatim report, Tiflis, 1923, p. 100.
economic alliance. Army and financial affairs, questions of foreign policy, foreign trade, supply lines, communications, the conducting of economic policy and the fight against the counterrevolution were transferred to the competence of the Union Council. The Union Council organized united Transcaucasian national commissariats, and settled border disputes and questions relating to the use of forests, water, and pastures.

At the same time, the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party, where the majority was made up of so-called national-deviationists headed by Mdivani, adopted a resolution stating that autonomization was premature and all the attributes of independence should be retained. All the same, a commission of the Organizing Bureau of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee adopted Stalin’s draft as a basis, after rejecting the resolution of the Georgian Central Committee. The commission’s documents were sent to Lenin, who immediately after reading them met with Stalin, Ordzhonikidze, Mdivani, Dumbadze, Tsintsadze, and others. The very next day (26 September), Lenin wrote a letter to the members of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee Politburo, in which, after criticizing the autonomization project, suggested an essentially new basis for creating a Union state—voluntary membership of all the independent Union republics, including the R.S.F.S.R., in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (on the basis of their full equality and sovereignty). Keeping in mind Lenin’s suggestions, Joseph Stalin rewrote the resolution of the Central Committee Organizing Bureau commission. On 6 October, 1922, the Plenary Session of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee adopted Lenin’s plan to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In this way, it is not difficult to trace the indirect influence of the Georgian Central Committee’s position on the final edition of the Union agreement draft.

But the Georgian Bolsheviks were not happy this time either with the fact that the Transcaucasia would become part of the U.S.S.R. as a federation. Mdivani’s group insisted that each republic become part of the Union independently and be granted real independence, speaking out against the actual monopolization of all economic resources by the federal center and considering the existence of the Transcaucasian Union Council superfluous, as well as the introduction of Transcaucasian currency units.21

In the end, the disagreements led to a group of members of the Communist Party of Georgia Central Committee retiring; their position was qualified as “nationalist deviation.” At the same time, note was taken of the Transcaucasian Territory Committee’s mistakes, which were expressed in excessive centralization of several branches of the economy- and state-building of the Transcaucasian republics.22 In this way, the main obstacles to forming a Transcaucasian Federation were removed in pure Bolshevik style—by the willful decision of the center.

On 10 December, 1922, the First Transcaucasian Congress of Soviets, which declared the creation of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (T.S.F.S.R.), opened in Baku with an introductory speech by N. Narimanov. It unanimously adopted the T.S.F.S.R. Constitution, and elected a Transcaucasian Central Executive Committee of 150 members and 50 candidates. At its first session held in January 1923, the Transcaucasian Central Executive Committee formed the Council of People’s Commissars of the T.S.F.S.R., under which the Supreme Economic Council (SEC) was set up.23 At the First Congress, the Constitution of the T.S.F.S.R. was adopted, according to the resolutions of which the three republics united voluntarily, whereby each of them remained a sovereign state with its own Fundamental Law, corresponding to the Constitutions of the T.S.F.S.R. and U.S.S.R., and also retained the right to withdraw from the T.S.F.S.R.

This was a new type of interrelations among the Soviet republics. In contrast to the R.S.F.S.R., it was not built on the basis of autonomy, but on contractual relations among three equal and sov-

ereign republics. Essentially the T.S.F.S.R. was the first stage on the way to establishing the U.S.S.R.

On 30 December, 1922, at the 10th All-Russian Congress of Soviets held in the Kremlin, the authorized delegations of the Soviet republics signed a Declaration and Treaty on the Formation of the U.S.S.R. On the evening of the same day, the First All-Union Congress of Soviets opened, which elected the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. M. Kalinin, G. Petrovskiy, N. Narimanov, and A. Cherviakov were elected chairmen of the U.S.S.R. Central Executive Committee. The independence of the republics was officially declared—right down to the possibility of secession.

The monetary reform, which resulted in all the Transcaucasian republics having the same unit of currency, greatly helped to simplify regional economic relations. On 10 January, 1923, a decree was issued on the circulation of a single Transcaucasian unit of currency (the bon), but a year later one more monetary reform was carried out. In April 1924, a decree of the Transcaucasian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars was issued on introducing national hard currency throughout the federation; the minting and circulation of Transcaucasian money ceased.

For almost the entire restoration period, the T.S.F.S.R. budget was in deficit, and the difference was covered by the Union budget. For example, in January 1925, according to a decision of the U.S.S.R. Council of People’s Commissars, an additional 900,000 rubles was assigned for building a Transcaucasian thermal power plant and the Ajaristskhai hydropower plant, 1 million rubles for financing the work of the Alaverdi mine, etc. This meant that most of the oil revenue coming into the Union budget was essentially redistributed in favor of the Armenian and Georgian economies.

Although NEP had been declared, the Union leadership had its sights set on gradually ousting the private sector from the country’s economy. For this purpose, agricultural cooperatives began to be introduced everywhere in rural areas. The cooperative movement among the peasantry in the T.S.F.S.R. mainly encompassed the most marketable industries—cotton growing, wine growing, fruit growing, market gardening, tobacco cultivation, silkworm breeding, and so on. The main tasks of the cooperative societies were to provide loans to and supply their members with agricultural production equipment, as well as gradually unite individual farms into large cooperative associations—prototypes of the future collective farms. The same went for wholesale trade. In literally two years (from 1923 to 1925), the percentage of the private sector in the overall goods circulation of the Southern Caucasus decreased from 54.6% to 24.2%, and the circulation of the public sector increased three-fold.

The most complicated tasks were restoring and nationalizing the oil industry. The enormous efforts of the workers and the unmerciful exploitation of Baku’s hydrocarbon resources, which from then on guaranteed the supply of the entire Union, promoted a rise in oil production to 4.6 million tons by 1925, which amounted to 63.4% of the prewar level, and to 8.6 million tons by 1927-1928, thus topping the production level in 1913 of 7.25 million tons. Oil processing enterprises put out increasing amounts of gasoline, kerosene, and lubricants.

Railroad transport also was of enormous importance. In a short space of time, the Julfa, Ozurgeti, and Black Sea railroad branches were built. Great efforts were exerted to restore the Caspian oil-loading fleet. The increase in amount of oil exported made it necessary to lay a high-capacity Baku-Batumi pipeline, which made it possible to reduce the load on the Transcaucasian railroad to a great extent. Construction of the oil pipeline was entirely completed by 1930; its total length amounted to 822 km.

24 See: Ocherki istorii kommunisticheskikh organizatsii Zakavkazia, p. 55.
25 See: ZSFSR. Obzor deiatel’nosti pravitelstva, Tiflis, 1929, p. 113.
26 See: Ocherki istorii kommunisticheskikh organizatsii Zakavkazia, p. 80.
27 See: 40 let SSSR i Zakavkazskoi Federatsii, Baku, 1962, p. 189.
28 See: Ocherki istorii kommunisticheskikh organizatsii Zakavkazia, p. 78.
According to Soviet statistics, the reliability of which was seriously disputed as early as the end of the 1980s (in particular, the first five-year plans were only executed on paper), in 1925, the national economy of the Transcaucasus reached the prewar level in essentially every branch of industry, and in some even exceeded it.

As for national peace, this issue was settled by resolutions of the Caucasian Bureau and the Congresses of Republican Soviets on the formation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (1923) and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (1921) as part of Azerbaijan: of the Abkhazian S.S.R. (from 1921 to 1931), and then the A.S.S.R., and of the Ajarian A.S.S.R. (1921) and the South Ossetian Autonomous Region (1922) as part of Georgia. All the ups and downs encountered while dealing with these arduous problems are the topic of a separate study, so here we will limit ourselves to saying that this question was frozen for a long time. If outbreaks of ethnic separatism occurred, they were not mass in nature and, of course, were not publicized by Soviet officialdom.

The Transcaucasian Federation existed until 1936, and was then abolished due to the adoption of the new U.S.S.R. Constitution. The documents of that time said that it had played its historical role: it helped to eradicate ethnic strife and strengthen friendship among the peoples of the Transcaucasus. Now each of the South Caucasian republics independently became part of the Union. All the same, the united railroad administration, which was of priority importance, as well as the united Transcaucasian energy system functioned right up until the collapse of the U.S.S.R.

The second Transcaucasian Federation, which existed, in contrast to the first, for an entire 14 years, was a union with precise functions, which it largely carried out. Created on the initiative of the new Soviet imperial center, the Transcaucasian Federation essentially evened out, at the expense of Azerbaijan, the previously incomparable economic indices of the three republics. To a certain extent, it also marginalized local nationalism and no matter how much the true purpose of this union was camouflaged under the banner of fraternal friendship among nations, which was possible only under the Soviet system, the federation essentially restored the regional system of economic and partially political activity that existed in czarist Russia on a new basis. At the same time, there were also significant differences manifested in a certain increase in the educational level of the population, the formation of political elites, the strengthening of national self-consciousness, and the adoption in the future of the national language as a second state language.

The abrupt rise in national movements expressed in ethnic and interstate conflicts was one of the main catalysts in the collapse of the Soviet empire. The appearance of several hotbeds of tension in the Southern Caucasus made not only regional political unions essentially impossible, but also trilateral economic interrelations.

All the same, beginning in the first half of the 1990s, the idea of a Common Caucasian Home gained momentum, which, following the example of the North Caucasus nations, Eduard Shevardnadze, leader of the Georgian state, put forward in 1992. During President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev’s visit to Georgia in March 1996, one of the bilateral documents signed was the Manifesto on Peace, Security, and Cooperation in the Caucasian Region, which is also called the Tbilisi declaration. This was followed by the Kislovodsk meeting among the heads of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Arme-
nia, and Russia in 1997 and the signing of the declaration “For Peace, Economic and Cultural Cooperation in the Caucasus.” The Pact on Regional Cooperation was also discussed at the Istanbul summit in November 1999.

But all the above-mentioned documents did not change much on the regional scale, apart from streamlining bilateral contacts (Azerbaijan-Georgia, Georgia-Armenia). The idea of regional cooperation was enthusiastically taken up by the West, which was striving to minimize Russia’s role in the region. The topic of regional security of the Southern Caucasus, which the European Union countries and the United States put on the agenda, became a new phenomenon of post-Soviet reality. International forums are discussing the prospects of a South Caucasian community within the framework of a federative state, which could in the future become a member of the European Union. According to both Western and several local political scientists, such a community, which presupposes mutual restriction of the sovereignty of its member states, coordination, as well as joint maintenance of security, will help compromises to be reached and, in the final analysis, the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

In contrast to their foreign colleagues, many Azerbaijani researchers are very pessimistic about the prospects for this integration, motivating this pessimism by the fact that the peoples of the Southern Caucasus are currently undergoing an awakening in their national self-consciousness that was characteristic of the Western European countries in the 19th century, and so are still a long way from the integration processes typical of Western European states from the end of the 20th century. There can be no doubt that one of the main factors objectively hindering this process are the ethno-political and interstate conflicts in the Southern Caucasus, the oldest and most acute of which is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Active participation by the world community and the laws governing globalization could of course accelerate this process, but at the moment the closest economic cooperation has only developed between Georgia and Azerbaijan, which are involved in transnational projects. Armenia, on the other hand, due to its irreconcilable stance in the Nagorno-Karabakh question, essentially remains on the sidelines of the global regional programs. The CIS, which formed from the fragments of the former U.S.S.R., among the participants of which separate political and military blocs have already appeared—GUAM, EurAsEC, CSTO, and so on—has not been a good example of an integrated community.

Nor have foreign policy orientations undergone any significant changes for an entire century, unless we count the fact that the emphasis was switched from Great Britain, France, and Germany to the U.S. and the European Union. Joint military exercises within the NATO Partnership for Peace program are giving rise to a tense internal reaction in the conflicting countries. With respect to public relations, the most significant results are so far only being yielded by humanitarian projects, many of which are based on a coalition of nongovernmental organizations.

**Conclusion**

An analysis of the present-day reality that is developing in the Caucasian Region shows that the ethno-political problems of the region are gradually changing—they can essentially be resolved on the basis of the legal regulations accepted in today’s world. This requires compromises, which the sides in the conflict are still unwilling to make. This concerns not only the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but also the Abkhazian, as well as the South Ossetian, which have recently brought Georgia to the brink of a Cold War with Russia.

In a situation where the feeling of ethnocultural identity is becoming aggravated, the national ideas of the South Caucasian republics—provided they are socialized, that is, the socioeconomic rights of citizens are ensured—can fulfill integrative functions. But as historical practice shows, any
union created under pressure from the outside is sooner or later doomed to collapse. Only a clear understanding by the South Caucasian states themselves of the expediency of this integration (no matter how it occurs) can be of vital potential and have sustainable development.

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THE EMERGENCE OF THE AZERBAIJANI AND GEORGIAN REPUBLICS (1918–1921): ARMY-BUILDING AND MILITARY COOPERATION

Abstract

From the historical viewpoint, Azerbaijani-Georgian relations resemble the Hungarian-Polish relations in Central Europe. The Germans call it Schicksalsgemeinschaft, which means a community of destinies. Although totally different linguistically and ethnically, the Azerbaijanis and Georgians have lived for centuries in one region and partially shared a similar experience. The religious difference between these two nations in the Southern Caucasus shows the heterogeneity and particular cultural richness of the region. For two centuries, both Azerbaijan and Georgia were parts of the Russian Tsarist Empire and later on, they were republics of the Soviet Union. In 1918–1921, Baku and Tbilisi were the capitals of independent states. This article deals with the emergence of Azerbaijan and Georgia as states in 1918 and their subsequent cooperation in army-building and security. It shows the military cooperation between the two new-born states located between regional powers such as Russia and Turkey, which were competing for dominance in the Southern Caucasus.

Historiographic Notes

Until 1991, the period of South Caucasian independence was mostly explored in Western countries. Publications by F. Kazemzadeh, T. Swietochowski,1 A. Altstadt, R. Pipes, R. Suny,

W. Zürrer, 2 and E.-M. Auch dealt with aspects of nation-building, ethnic identity, and state-building in the South Caucasian region at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Caucasian émigrés and intellectuals contributed significantly to the scientific discourse of 1918-1921. The works of A. Nikuradze,3 Hilal Münschi,4 Mir-Yacoub,5 Noe Jordania,6 and Mammad-damin Rasulzade are of particular interest, because these authors witnessed history through their participation in the political processes going on in the region. During the Soviet occupation of the Southern Caucasus, Azerbaijani and Georgian historians studied the years of independence of 1918-1920/21 from the viewpoint of official Communist ideology. The first scientific articles that tried to analyze the short-lived republics without any ideological framework did not emerge until 1988-1989. In 1990, Azerbaijani historian Nasib Nasibzade7 published one of the first books on the history of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR), and three years later, a work by his colleague Camil Hasani8 on the foreign policy of the ADR appeared. Many Georgian historians, such as V. Guruli, A. Menteshashvili, L. Urushadze, etc., specialize on the history of the Georgian Democratic Republic, paying particular attention to the ethnic policy issues in Georgia at the beginning of the 20th century, Georgian-German relations, etc. An in-depth work on Georgian-Turkish relations (1918-1921) was published in 2001 under the editorship of Turkish historian Serpil Sürmeli.9

Russian

Czarist Colonies

Like the nations in Central and Eastern Europe, Azerbaijan and Georgia experienced national emancipation in the second part of the 19th century. The repressions of the local mass media and suppression of the national schools under Tsar Alexander III were among the reasons for the discontent among the intellectuals in the South Caucasian colonies. The whole region became a supplier of natural and energy resources. Tens of thousands of settlers from the western part of the Russian Empire were resettled in the Southern Caucasus. The territories of Azerbaijan and Georgia were used by the Tsarist authorities as places of exile for political oppositionists and national movement activists from European part of Russia. In spite of all that, Caucasian intellectuals emerged as a social group based on the Georgian nobility and the Azerbaijani clerics. Representatives of the Caucasian intelligentsia, such as Ivane Djavakhishvili, Ilia Chavchavadze in Georgia, and Mirza Akhundzade in Azerbaijan, were the protagonists of national enlightenment and cultural emancipation. Criticizing the social trends of that time, they supported the social initiatives in the development of national folklore, as well as the improvement of regional education.

Due to a certain amount of liberalization within the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, the mass media culture was able develop in Baku and particularly in Tbilisi. The number of

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primary schools rose and more Caucasians gained access to higher education institutions in St.-Petersburg, Odessa, and Warsaw. The oil boom in Baku and Tbilisi’s rapid development contributed to the ‘reopening’ of the region to the West. In the context of the large-scale transformation processes going on in the European part of the Russian Empire since 1905, many Georgian intellectuals participated in the socialist discourse, which encompassed the entire European continent at that time. For Georgians like Noe Jordania, Gegechkori, and Chenkeli, hopes for liberalization were related to the development of the social-democratic philosophy in Russia. Azerbaijani national democrats, such as M. Rasulzade, around the Party of Musavat regarded elections to the Russian Duma as political participation, giving them the opportunity to make the Russian authorities pay more attention to the cultural development of the Caucasian Muslims.

There were many reasons for such strong idealism among the Caucasian politicians. Russia, as a state, was weakened partially due to World War I and began to lose control over its peripheries and colonies in 1917-1918. From the domestic political viewpoint, Russia became an arena of deep ideological conflict, followed by its embroilment in the civil war between the Bolsheviks and the Whites. The Caucasians had to learn how to think in foreign policy terms because of Russia’s weakness and the changes in the geopolitical constellation of the regional powers, like Turkey and Persia, and of the European nations, like Germany and Great Britain. However, the factor preventing the Caucasians from reacting uniquely to the processes going on in the region was their failure to acquire an all-regional identity. The Bolshevization of Russia in 1917, the fiasco of the German-Turkish alliance in World War I, and the internal political emancipation processes in the Southern Caucasus extensively challenged Azerbaijani and Georgian intellectuals.

Actually, the Caucasians struggled for national autonomy and cultural rights until 1918, when they declared themselves independent states. Social-democrat Jordania and Musavatist Rasulzade could not see any future in an alliance with the Bolsheviks. After a century of coexistence, the Caucasian nations separated themselves from Russia in April 1918 and founded the so-called Transcaucasian Sejm, which was supposed to regulate the Federation of Azerbaijanis, Georgians, and Armenians. Because of the different foreign policy views, priorities, and affinities of the Caucasians, the Federation was doomed to collapse as early as the end of May 1918.

May 1918
for the Georgians and
Azerbaijanis

The month of May 1918 designated a historical and epochal watershed for the Caucasians. They were finally able to obtain national independence and liberate themselves from their century-long Russian dominance. On 26 May, 1918, the Georgians declared the establishment of the independent state of Georgia. The Azerbaijanis and Armenians followed suit two days later. The very emotional picture of the end of Russian dominance and hopes for a better future under the total chaos in the Southern Caucasus influenced the Caucasian domestic political discourse in the spring months of 1918.10

The independence of the Georgians and Azerbaijanis in 1918 and their ability to create a more or less functioning state was closely related to the social processes going on in the region in the last decades. The emergence of a national intelligentsia and some other factors contributed to that immensely.

10 See: N.N. Jordania, Za dva goda..., p. 98.
Similar to the situation in 1989-1991, in 1917-1918 too, the Caucasian intellectuals became the leading actors in the movement for autonomy, which ended in the declaration of national independence in 1918. The social groups of the local intelligentsia were a recruiting base for the political elite. That is why it is important to analyze the dangerous perception of the leaders of the national movements of Azerbaijan and Georgia— independent states since 1918— Mammedamin Rasulzade (1884-1955) and Noe Jordania (1868-1953). Both of them were among the best-educated men close to the people and who challenged the Bolshevik regime, even when in emigration in 1921-1922.

**Dangers for Independence**

Azerbaijan and Georgia saw the main danger in the Volunteer Army of Russian White General Denikin, who struggled for “a single and indivisible Russia,” and in the Bolsheviks, who had been strengthening their power in Moscow since the coup in October 1917. Although Lenin proclaimed the principle of the self-determination of nations, Bolshevik Russia launched increasingly intolerant policies with respect to “Musavatist” Azerbaijan and “Menshevik” Georgia. Tbilisi and Baku were often called “agents of international imperialism” by the officials in Moscow. Beginning in 1918, the Bolshevik government experienced a shortage of Baku oil, and reoccupation of the Southern Caucasus was discussed more intensely in political circles. The independence of the South Caucasian states and the attempts of Rasulzade and Jordania to pursue their own foreign policies became an additional factor disrupting the Bolsheviks’ plans to achieve future expansion and “regional order.” The Bolsheviks created a strong authoritarian regime in Russia at the end of 1917, which was based on the totalitarian Communist ideology. In spite of all the economic difficulties and the lack of state bureaucratic experience, Azerbaijan and Georgia were not authoritarian dictatorships. So the relationship between Moscow and the South Caucasian capitals corresponded to the model of relations between an autocratically ruled former metropolis, preparing for a permanent world revolution, and weak democratic states “under construction.” That is another significant aspect of Azerbaijani-Russian and Georgian-Russian relations in 1918-1920/21. This challenged the South Caucasian democracies to a great extent and diminished their potential for diplomatic activity.

**The Emergence of National Armies**

Azerbaijan and Georgia emerged as states on the ruins of the Russian Empire’s periphery and also found themselves on the periphery of Eastern Europe. Beginning in 1918, these two new-born republics had to find their way within a system of international relations that was “foreign” to them. The main tasks of Tbilisi’s and Ganja’s diplomacy were to enter into relations with both the Entente and the German-Turkish alliance military blocs, as well as to find a solution to their enormous economic problems. Strengthening national sovereignty and gaining recognition by the Great Powers were of paramount importance for the Azerbaijani and Georgian leaders. Since the new states were established under conditions of non-stop military disputes, acute border problems, and permanent danger from the Bolsheviks, the new governments were eager to create national armies that could defend their population and statehood.

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11 After the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was declared on 28 May, 1918 in Tbilisi, Ganja (Western Azerbaijan) was where the Azerbaijani government was first located. In September 1918, the Azerbaijani authorities moved to Baku after the city was freed from the Bolsheviks.
From the viewpoint of urban development and infrastructure, Georgia was the most developed state in the Southern Caucasus, with its capital in Tbilisi, which was the political center of the region since the beginning of the 19th century. Since the Georgians had access to Russian military schools and were recruited for the Tsarist Army, Georgia had better prerequisites for army-building than Azerbaijan, which, being a Muslim nation, had almost no chance of obtaining a high-level military education in Russian schools, with only a few exceptions. With German assistance, Georgia was able to create a number of military schools for training officers. Although an Azeri-Turkish military school functioned in Ganja since 1918, Azerbaijan suffered from an absolute dearth of officers.

“The formation of the Georgian army began while the Commissariat still existed and before the Georgian State was declared,” writes Noe Jordania in his memoirs. He continues: “The Transcaucasian State needs military forces which consist of three nations and are led by a united General Staff.” The Georgian leadership was eager to preserve the unity of the South Caucasians in one state, which should have a united strong army. Noe Jordania rejected the idea of building troops recruited on the basis of the nationality principle. He supported the creation of a “territorially recruited army.” This territorial principle was reaffirmed by most deputies during a meeting of the Transcaucasian Sejm on 24 March 4, 1918. The issue of military service for all Caucasians was also discussed at that session. However, the Federation of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia was too short-lived.

After declaring the State of Georgia on 26 May, 1918, the National Council of Georgia decided to create a National Guard on 2 June, 1918. Noe Jordania stated that this Guard was a provisional measure, which should cease to exist during peacetime. Jordania was opposed to the idea of a regular army in a democratic state. He intended to organize a popular militia instead of a regular army. In 1918, the Georgian leadership saw the formation of a National Guard as the only solution to the security problem. Georgian soldiers who served in the Tsarist army and returned from the battlefields of WWI could not be engaged in Georgia’s new army due to the very strong Bolshevik propaganda in the Russian troops. Jordania writes that “they (the soldiers—Z.G.) did not belong to us any more.”

Thus, Georgia was able not only to create relatively strong military forces, but also to support the army-building processes in neighboring Azerbaijan, rebuff the Armenian attacks in Southern Georgia in December 1918, and put up military resistance against the Bolshevik expansion. Military resistance against the Bolsheviks continued in Georgia even after occupation of the country in 1921 to 1924. The officers of the old regime played a prominent role in Georgia as well as in Azerbaijan. Georgian generals Kote Abkhazi, Nestor Gardapkhadze, and Colonel Kakutsa Cholokashvili were among the most active fighters in the national guerrilla movement, writes Georgian historian Levan D. Urushadze. We can speculate that the Georgians’ resistance might have had different results if it had not been for the ambivalence within Georgia’s military forces. As already mentioned, Noe Jordania supported the idea of the National Guard, which could not

12 U.S. historian Tadeusz Swietochowski wrote that a small number of Azeris enjoyed military education in Russia. Among them were War Minister of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic General Mehmendantar and a few others. According to Azerbaijani emigrant historian Hilal Münşchi, Azerbaijanis never served in the Russian Army. The same view is shared by contemporary Azeri historian Nasib Nasibzade, who explains this by the Tsarist authorities’ lack of trust in the Muslim soldiers and Iran’s weakness at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, which did not challenge Russia in strengthening the border. In summary, it can be said that an Azerbaijani officer in the Tsarist Russia was a rarity and no significant military elite of Azerbaijani origin could emerge at that time.

13 See: W. Zürner, op. cit., p. 158.
14 N. Jordania, Moja jizn’, p. 92.
15 N.N. Jordania, Za dva goda…. p. 70.
16 Ibid., p. 97.
17 N. Jordania, Moja jizn’. p. 92.
coexist with the regular army in peacetime. Thus, he placed the accent on militia units rather than on a professional army.

The Azerbaijans had almost no experience in military service as part of Tsarist Russia. When the Azerbaijani State was declared in May 1918, the republic possessed only one military unit with about 600 soldiers. On 4 June, 1918, the Azerbaijani government signed the Treaty on Friendship and Peace with Turkey, which had to provide military assistance to Azerbaijan.19 “The Special Azerbaijani Corp” was created in the summer of 1918 with Turkish support.20 But even the first graduates of the Ganja-based military school could not solve the problem of the shortage of professional officers at the end of 1918.

The Azerbaijani authorities were concerned about creating military units able to defend the territorial integrity of the republic. In 1919, 24% of the state budget was devoted to military expenses and, according to historian N. Nasibzade, “War Minister General Mehmandarov wrote that the bigger part of état should be given to the National Army, following Georgia’s example, which was ready to allot 60% of the budget to the army’s concerns.”21 According to the official documents of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, “the Ministry of War possessed a well-organized army of 50,000 soldiers.”22

After the recruitment issues were essentially resolved, the shortage of professional officers still remained an acute problem during the 23-month-long life of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The authorities were obliged to engage former Tsarist military specialists, whose loyalty to the ADR was fragile. The officers’ corps of Azerbaijan consisted largely of Turkish servicemen under the influence of the changing Turkish-Soviet relations and of a small number of high-ranking Azerbaijani generals educated in the Tsarist military schools.

Azerbaijani-Georgian Military Convention of 1919

Seeking confirmation of their own sovereignty, Azerbaijan and Georgia enjoyed the backing of various European and regional powers from the very moment their states emerged. Georgia’s sympathies for Germany and the Azerbaijani-Turkish alliance defined the political processes in the Southern Caucasus at that time.23 Although Berlin and Istanbul had different views on many aspects of Caucasian affairs, these two powers shared the same opinion on the Caucasus’ future: the Caucasian region should remain outside Russia’s sphere of influence. Germany in particular was a protagonist of close Azerbaijani-Georgian cooperation and, together with Turkey, it contributed to army-building and the development of infrastructure in the region.

Baku and Tbilisi exchanged diplomatic missions and understood the importance of interdependence as early as the first months after declaring their independence. Both of the states saw themselves as hostages of the domestic political dispute in Russia. After Germany and Turkey lost World War I and had to withdraw their troops from the region, Georgia and Azerbaijan felt left alone. Both states could count only on their own potential and achievements in the first year of state independence.

In 1919, Azerbaijan and Georgia reached an agreement on military cooperation. The document, called a military convention, was signed in Tbilisi on 16 June, 1919, and as early as 27 June, it was ratified by the Azerbaijani Parliament.24 The Georgian delegation in the talks on the military conven-
tion consisted of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia E. Gegechkori, Minister of Internal Affairs and War M. Ramishvili, General Gedevanov, and General Odishelidze. The Azerbaijani side was represented by Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Jafarov, War Minister General Mehmandarov, and Chief of General Staff General Sulikiewicz. “Considering the danger for the independence of the South Caucasian republics,” both delegations reached an agreement on several aspects of future cooperation and common delimitation of the Azerbaijani-Georgian border. The Military Convention signed by Mehmandarov and Gegechkori was of a clearly defensive nature and was entered for three years. Mutual support using military force was foreseen only in the event one of the signatories was attacked by a third country. 25 Georgia assisted Azerbaijan in army-building and military training of officers and the Azerbaijani side provided Georgia with oil and petroleum products. 26

Azerbaijani historian Camil Hasanli writes that an Agreement on Technical Cooperation was signed in addition to the Military Convention between Georgia and Azerbaijan. The founding of an Azerbaijani-Georgian Military Council consisting of top representatives of the War Ministries of both countries was one of consequences of those talks. The Military Council consisted of General Shikhlinski, General Sulikiewicz, General Kuteladze, and General Odishelidze. 27

Deployed in the western part of the country, the Azerbaijani army failed to put up efficient resistance to the Soviets. The Azerbaijani generals were under the illusion that rapprochement with the Bolsheviks would allow them to preserve their country’s broad internal independence. Kemalist Turkey, Azerbaijan’s closest ally, was collaborating with Communist Russia and was reluctant to support Azerbaijani independence after 1919. 28 The fall of Azerbaijan weakened the former Tbilisi-Baku axis and immensely strengthened the Bolsheviks’ position in the South Caucasian region.

Neither Azerbaijani-Georgian military cooperation, nor the diplomatic achievements of both states helped them to avoid the Bolshevik occupation. On 28 April, 1920, the Red Army invaded Azerbaijan, and on 25 February, 1921, the Georgian capital of Tbilisi was occupied by Bolshevik forces. The re-conquest of the Southern Caucasus began with the fall of Azerbaijan and ended with the Red Army’s invasion of Tbilisi. Most Georgian and Azerbaijani politicians and intellectuals decided to emigrate in order to avoid physical reprisals in the event they refused to collaborate with the Communist authorities.

In May 1920, the anti-Soviet uprising in Ganja was thwarted by the Bolsheviks. The uprising against the Communists in Georgia in 1924 was brutally subdued by the Red Army troops. Representatives of the old armies’ officer corps played a leading role in organizing both the anti-Soviet actions in Georgia and Azerbaijan. 29 Rasulzade and Jordania, two of the former leaders, continued their political activities in France, Poland, and Germany in the 1920-1930s. Consolidating the émigré community and organizing meetings and publications on Caucasian issues and criticism of the Communist policy in the Caucasian region were the only remaining tools in the hands of the politicians and many other political migrants.

The National Armies of Azerbaijan and Georgia emerged as the basis of the state-building process launched by the Caucasian intellectuals and politicians. Being poorly equipped, the Georgian and Azerbaijani military forces and army elites were the most vulnerable part of the whole establishment in the new-born republics. The short-lived Caucasian states were unable to recruit new elites during

27 See: C. Həsanov, op. cit., p. 220.
the period of independence. So not only the weakness of the land forces, but also the ideological weakness of the Georgian and Azerbaijani military establishment played a crucial role in the demise of both states. As democracies, Azerbaijan and Georgia were unable to diminish the local communist activities on their territories, which tried to blow up the new-born republics from the inside. However, even if Georgian-Azerbaijani cooperation ties in the military and security field had been stronger and professionalism of the National Armies higher, this would still have not been enough to preserve the independence of both states. Face to face with Bolshevik Russia, which was striving for Baku’s oil and control over the mountain chain from the Black Sea to the Caspian shores, the Caucasian states had almost no chance of defending their independence at the beginning of the 1920s without serious support from Europe.

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**THE CAUCASIAN DIASPORA—ABKHAZ AND ADIGHES: EPISODES FROM THE PAST**

**Abstract**

The author takes a look into the past in order to shed light on some of the still painful issues relating to the emergence of the Abkhaz-Adighe element of the Caucasian diaspora, the ups and downs of the Caucasian War Russia waged in the Caucasus for many years, the deportation of huge numbers of local people, and their arduous integration into Ottoman Turkey.

**The Beginning**

The Caucasian diaspora dates back to a much earlier period than the mid-19th century, when the mountain dwellers were deported in huge numbers. According to Procopius of Caesarea (the 6th century), the Abkhazian rulers selected handsome young men from among their subjects to be sold into slavery to the Byzantine court. Their relatives were all exterminated just in case, to avoid a blood feud.¹ This

undermined the nation’s gene pool, while it also regulated the birthrate in the relatively small area between the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea.

The steady inflow of slaves from the Caucasian Black Sea coast inevitably affected the social, political, and cultural climate of Byzantine, Egypt and, later, Turkey. Some of the Abkhaz climbed high up the state and military ladder in the Byzantine Empire. Emperor Justinian used Abkhazian archers as his private guards.

The diaspora also swelled with people driven away at different times by all sorts of foreign invaders. According to At-Tabari, for example, in the mid-6th century, Persian ruler Hosrov drove Alans and Abkhaz to Southern Azerbaijan. The Mongols moved about 100,000 Alans-Asi to China. The khans recruited one thousand Alan horsemen into their guards. According to Catholic missionaries, the Alans remained Christians until at least the 14th century and were able, if necessary, to mobilize up to 30,000 fighters. In the 13th century, tens of thousands of Alans-Asi reached Hungary. Their descendants, as many as 100,000, are still living in Jászság, alongside the Cumans (Kuns), descendants of the Polovtsians.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the emergence of the Ottoman Empire opened a new stage in the Caucasian diaspora’s history, even though it swelled for basically the same reasons: forced deportations, slave trade, and emigration for personal reasons to Istanbul and other cities of Asia Minor and the Middle East.

The Ottoman Empire, which regarded itself as a natural heir to Byzantium, launched aggressive foreign policies. In the 16th-17th centuries, due to the extremely favorable foreign policy context and the young state’s inflated military-economic potential, it expanded far and wide, seeking complete control over the Black Sea. Could this be achieved? The Ottoman Turks learned from their own experience that it was easier to conquer the vast territory between Iran and Morocco than to subjugate the Caucasian highlanders.

It should be said that the empire had enough sober-minded politicians to avoid a war of attrition against the mountain peoples. They managed to turn the Black Sea into a “domestic lake” by strengthening the few fortresses scattered along the coast and penetrating the Caucasus with their ideas and commodities. From the very beginning, the relations between the empire and the local people were fairly stable; they developed into good-neighborly and mutually advantageous relations after Istanbul buried its military expansionist designs.

The compromise opened the doors to other countries and encouraged trade. Any attempts by the Ottoman Turks, however, to extend their sphere of influence in Abkhazia and elsewhere in the Western Caucasus were cut short by means of arms. Here is what Theophil Lapinski had to say: “There were Turkish garrisons in the fortresses built along the Black Sea coast—in Anapa, Sudzhuk, and Sukhum-Kale—but the soldiers were unable to stray for more than half an hour’s walk beyond them without being detained by the Abkhaz.”

Here is confirmation that the Caucasian mountain dwellers never recognized the power of the Ottoman Turks: talking to Russian General Raevskiy, a Shapsug (a member of one of the local ethnic

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3 People of Caucasian origin were less prominent in the Byzantine court than later, in the court of the Ottoman sultans. In his classical work _A Study of History_ (“The Growth of Civilizations” chapter), Arnold Toynbee pointed out that people of foreign origin played a prominent role in the Ottoman Empire because the ruler relied, first and foremost, on “slaves.” With no connection with any of the classes and no roots inside the country, “slaves” had no choice but to stand at the sultan’s side. To a certain extent, the empire can be described as a “state of slaves.”


6 T. Lapinski (Iesik Bey), _Gortsy Kavkaza i ikh osvoboditel’naia bor’ba protiv russkikh. Opisanie ochevidtsa Teofila Lapinskogo (Teffik-beia),_ Transl. from the German by V.K. Gardanov, Nalchik, 1995, p. 203.
groups) asked the Russian what he was doing in their land. When the general told him that Turkey had conceded the Caucasus to Russia under the Treaty of Adrianople, the Shapsug said: “Aha! Now I get it. Look at that bird there in the tree. It’s yours, catch it if you can.”

Although they lived side by side, the Ottoman garrisons and mountain people frequently took to arms to settle a point. In the 18th century, Istanbul’s intention to strengthen its Caucasian foothold caused several large-scale armed clashes (in 1725, 1728, and 1771). According to G. Dzidzaria, each of the failed attempts to check the Turkish pressure caused another bout of deportation. There were two large deportation waves (in 1690 and 1760), reliable information about which can be found in so far inaccessible Turkish archives. Kniga puteshestviia (The Book of Travels) by Evliya Çelebi says that the Abkhaz congregated in great numbers in Tophane (a district of Istanbul): “The Abkhaz are sending their children … back to their homeland to be educated in the local traditions.” The author failed to indicate, however, when and under what circumstances the Abkhazian colony appeared.

The following can be said about the Byzantine-Arabian and Turkish stages: the population outflow (either natural or forced) from the Caucasus, which lasted for a millennium and a half, never created a Caucasian diaspora. The Caucasian mountaineers made a huge contribution to the military, political, and cultural life of Byzantium, Egypt, and Turkey, which means that, each time, the newcomers blended with the linguistically and culturally alien milieu. A mass exodus was needed to establish a strong diaspora. This happened in the 19th century.

In the Shadow of the Caucasian War

The late 18th and 19th centuries turned out to be a “black page” in the history of the Northern Caucasus and its peoples. Many of its ancient ethnic groups were pushed to the brink of extinction. Russia, which unleashed the Caucasian War, forced huge masses of local people to leave for Turkey. This created a phenomenon known as “Muhajirism.” A. Genko, a prominent expert on the Caucasus, described how “Muhajirism” affected the present and future of the Adighes (Circassians, today called Cherkesses), Ubykhs, and Abkhaz, who “either disappeared from the Caucasus altogether as a result of eviction, or were preserved in small numbers as fragments of previously large and rich settlements. …As distinct from the rest of the Caucasus … the ethnic makeup of the Northwestern Caucasus changed beyond recognition as a result of several years of emigration and immigration of colonists.” Chechens, Daghestanis, Ossets, Nogais, and other Caucasian peoples were also involved in the process. F. Budishcheva has the following to say on the subject: “Caucasian migration had no analogies in the last 200 years of the history of mankind (it could only be likened to the Exodus of Biblical times). Indeed, the war drove nearly entire (90 percent) peoples (Adighes, today known as Cherkesses, Kabardins, and Adygeis) from their territories, while others lost some of their numerical strength for the same reason.”

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1 F.F. Tornau, Vospominenia kavkazskogo ofitsera, Moscow, 1864, p. 5.
2 Here I deliberately avoid using the commonly accepted term “revolt” because it distorts the real picture: any revolt is a response to conquerors’ oppression, while those who lived in the Caucasian Mountains, the Abkhaz in particular, were never oppressed.
3 See: G.A. Dzidzaria, Makhadzhirstvo i problemy istorii Abkhazii XIX stoletia, Sukhumi, 1975, p. 3.
5 “Muhajirism” is derived from the Arabic “muhajiret” meaning “resettlement, emigration;” the word “muhajir” is often translated as “an exile.”
Under the pressure of objective and especially subjective factors, Russia’s foreign policy in the Caucasus developed into an excessively aggressive one, bringing to mind the cruelties of the Oriental conquerors.

In the latter half of the 18th century, the Caucasus developed into an arena of stiff rivalry between Russia and the Ottoman Porte. T. Feofilaktova described the developments in the following terms: “Diplomatic conflicts, the hostilities of the four Russo-Turkish wars, and the peace agreements directly affected the fate of the Western Adighes.”14 This can be applied to the entire region: the wars affected the interests of practically all Caucasian peoples to different degrees. In the turmoil, the mountain dwellers had either to push for complete (de jure) independence or try to stick to de facto independence. This explains the maneuvering of the Circassian, Abkhaz, and other rulers between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. The ruling Prince of Abkhazia Keleshbey Chachba (Shervashidze) supplied the best example of foreign policy, meandering in an effort to defend, consistently and deliberately, the interests of his country amid the Russian-Turkish contradictions. This remained the only example of foreign policy achievements of the time.

The Caucasian War was ignited by the Treaty of Georgievsk of 1783 between Russia and the Kartli-Kakhetian Kingdom, which made the latter first a Russian vassal and later part of Russia under the manifesto of Alexander I of 11 September, 1801. Prominent Abkhazian historian G. Dzidzaria wrote that joining Eastern Georgia to Russia “predetermined the future not only of Georgia, but of the entire Transcaucasus; it was responsible for far-reaching repercussions affecting all Caucasian peoples. …From that time on, Russia in the Caucasus was fighting for access to the Black and Caspian seas. It was absolutely clear that without ports on the Transcaucasian coast, Russia would be unable to successfully develop its policy in the Middle East and preserve its control over Eastern Georgia, its recent acquisition.”15

The Caucasian War began in 1783 with extermination of the Nogais (who served as a natural buffer between Russia and the Caucasian mountain dwellers) carried out under the command of Alexander Suvorov and their deportation in large numbers to open the “road for the czarist troops to the North Caucasian mountains and to subjugation of the local people.”16

After entering the Adrianople Peace Treaty of 1829, the czarist government sat down to devise a comprehensive plan of several military expeditions designed to bring the local people to submission. Under the treaty, Turkey did not transfer power over the Western Adighes (which Turkey never had) to Russia, but the right to conquer them. The Caucasian War began in earnest.

The efforts of those historians are useless who try to explain Russia’s policies and its undeclared war on the Caucasian mountain dwellers, which had been going on since the latter half of the 18th century, by the fact that “prior to the Adrianople Peace Treaty of 1829, the Adighes were regarded in international legal practice as de jure subjects of the Ottoman Empire, even though they refused to accept this.”17 The above suggests the following: if the Caucasus was part of Turkey, Russia should have fought Turkey. Meanwhile, we all know that there was no such war in 1817-1827, which means that the Caucasian mountain dwellers were free both de jure and de facto.

The Caucasian War did not, and could not, end with a parade of Russian troops in 1864—it continued unfolding as individual uprisings in 1864, 1865, 1866, 1875, 1877, 1878, etc. The autochthonous population was evicted from its historical homeland to other places, the Ottoman Empire in particular.

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Why were the local people defeated? What were the war’s final results? The defeat was predetermined by the vast difference between Russia’s huge military and economic potential, its predominant technical might and numerical strength, and the mountain peoples’ individual heroism. We cannot but marvel at the Caucasian peoples’ determination and the fact that they withstood the blows for a long time and even snatched the initiative from the enemy to deliver crippling blows to the Russians.

The disunited local people could not win. No matter how hard he tried, Shamil failed to unite all the people in order to rebuff the aggressor. Even during the cruelest fighting against the Russians, the local tribes managed to wage internecine wars among themselves. The Caucasus never became a united fighting force; individual tribes, or even auls, put up resistance when the danger became imminent. Some of the mountain dwellers fought together with the Russian army. At the same time, Russian soldiers and Cossacks sometimes transferred to the side of the locals: a certain Atarshchikov, a sotnik (commander) of a Cossack unit, defected to the Abadzekhs, called on privates and officers of the czarist army to follow his example, and promised “freedom beyond the Laba.” Defection did not develop into a massive movement partly because the mountain peoples themselves succumbed to the temptation to sell the defectors back to the Russians (the “slave-trader” mentality obviously predominated). The Russian commanders stemmed the defection with harsh measures and even executions and not without the help of the local people.

In fact, the Russian soldiers, the Cossacks, and those against whom they fought were all “in the same boat.” Indeed, was a Russian soldier a conqueror? What did he gain from “subjugation” of the Caucasus? The hatred, however, was too intense: the mountain dwellers and Russia had been living in the shadow of war for far too long.

Russia’s Unrealizable Conditions and the Idea of “Rational” Use of the Muhajirs in Turkey

As the war moved toward its end, the future rulers started pondering over the fate of the still rebellious people. It was decided to deport them and put Cossacks and Russian settlers in their lands in the Northern Caucasus. This idea belonged to Chief of Staff of the Russian Army in the Caucasus and future reformer Dmitry Miliutin, who in 1857 wrote: “The subjugated mountain dwellers should be sent where we want them to go. They should be resettled on the Don. We should keep our plans secret until the time comes to carry them out.” Commander-in Chief of the Caucasian Army Prince Alexander Bariatinskiy fully agreed with Miliutin: “It is recognized that the only means of strengthening our position beyond the Kuban River is to settle Cossacks along the front line in order to gradually push the mountain people back and deprive them of their means of subsistence. There is no reason to spare the still hostile tribes, it is in the interests of the state to take their lands away from them.”

The Caucasian Committee also discussed the problem of colonization of the lands beyond the Kuban and resettlement of the mountain dwellers in the Don steppe. Gradually it dawned on the

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21 See: T. Lapinskiy (Iesik Bey), pp. 144-155.
23 Ibid., p. 117.
Russians that the local people were prepared to stand firm in the face of armed force and never intended moving to any kind of reservation, which brought the administration to the idea of deporting them to Turkey. This initiative belonged to Prince Bariatinskiy, who early in 1860 outlined it to Alexander II.

In 1858, the Russian and Turkish governments began discussing the issue of migration of the West Caucasian mountain people.24 Late in December 1863, A. Moshnin, Russian consul in Trabzon, informed his superiors: “The Porte welcomes the idea and is taking measures to make migration easier.”25 However, the rules of colonization of the Caucasian mountain people made public in 1859 suggested that the Turkish government was prepared to receive “small parties”26 and was not prepared to deal with mass migration.

The Ottoman rulers planned to settle the Muhajirs in strategically important areas in order to use them as a military force in the event of a war with Russia. The Odesskiy vestnik newspaper commented: “The Porte expected to use Circassians to cement the crumbling empire.”27 This could be done because the Caucasian migrants increased the share of the empire’s Muslim population, which balanced out the Christian minorities’ separatist sentiments.28 Sultan Dovlet Girey wrote in this connection: “The Turkish government welcomed the migrants; they were needed to settle the vast unpopulated areas in the empire’s European and Asian gubernias. The two centuries of struggle against the Balkan people and in Arabia undermined the numerical strength of Turkey’s population.

“While Turkey was busy formulating the idea of ‘rational’ use of the Muhajirs, the Russian government forced the mountain people to move away under unacceptable conditions. A delegation from the Abadzekhs approached Emperor Alexander II during his stay in the Northern Caucasus with a request to let them remain in their homes. The answer was categorical: ‘I will give you a month to change your mind. After that time, you should tell Count Vorontsov whether you wish to go to the places you have been allotted along the Kuban. Otherwise you should migrate to Turkey.’”29

In 1862, as soon as the Caucasian Committee adopted and the czar approved a corresponding decision, official deportation began. In fact, unofficial migration had already been going on for some time, long before the Caucasian War reached its final stage. The forced deportation of the Abkhaz proceeded in several waves. The first wave took place in the early 19th century during an acute crisis caused by the so-called voluntary joining of Abkhazia to Russia in 1810. Late in the 18th and early in the 19th centuries, Abkhazia pursued an independent policy thanks to the powerful personality of its ruler, Prince Keleshbey Chachba, who wanted complete freedom and independence for his country. To achieve this, he meandered between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, accepted reasonable compromises, and, while treading with caution, resorted to resolute foreign policy steps if they promised results. He tried to establish relations with France and even corresponded with its foreign minister, Talleyrand-Périgord. He counted on Russia to get rid of the Ottoman protectorate.

This ill suited St. Petersburg, from where Abkhazia looked like a foothold for continued expansion in the Western Caucasus.30 Keleshbey’s fate was sealed: he was to be replaced with a more pliable and not quite legitimate ruler who would sit on Russian bayonets. Keleshbey’s elder son, Aslanbey, was rejected as Russia’s inveterate foe. However, the second son, Safarbey, who could not claim

26 Ibid., p. 343.
27 Odesskiy vestnik, No. 140, 29 June, 1877.
29 Russian State Archives of Military History, rec. gr. 38, inv. 30/286, Pile 870, f. 19, sheets 9-11.
30 Ibid., sheets 32-33.
the throne because of his lowborn mother, was the perfect candidate. Together with the Russian military administration represented by General Rykhoff, he plotted against his father. On 2 May, 1808, Keleshbey died in a coup in the Sukhumi Fortress.\(^{31}\)

This political crisis proved to be the first in the long chain of military-political coups in the Caucasus carried out by Russia’s military leaders. Later General Ermolov applied the Abkhazian experience when fighting the Daghestanian khans. In his case, however, the results were hardly welcome: imams, a much mightier force, came to the scene to replace the khans, the natural allies of Russia’s monarchy.\(^{32}\)

The events that turned Abkhazia into an outpost of Russia in the Caucasus affected the future of all the people who lived in the Western Caucasus. Keleshbey, who was known among the Adighes and Abkhaz and very much respected, could have played a key role in gathering the forces of all the local people.

On 10 July, 1810, after shelling the Sukhumi Fortress from the sea and land, the Russians captured it and put their protégé Safarbey on the Abkhazian throne. The legal ruler, Aslanbey, who had been in power for two years and who enjoyed the support of all the social groups, and his closest relatives had to flee the country together with over 5,000 Abkhaz who emigrated to Turkey.\(^{33}\) This was the first wave of Muhajirs in the 19th century.

The 19th century saw several waves of deportation from Abkhazia to Turkey: 1821, 1824, 1829, 1830, 1837, 1840-1841, 1853-1856, 1864, 1867, and 1877 can be called the “Muhajir” years. It is impossible to guess how many people were involved. It is equally impossible to estimate the population losses Abkhazia sustained in the 19th century due to slave trade, famine, epidemics, and the military operations of Russian troops during the Caucasian War. In the 1860s-1870s alone, about 80,000 people left Abkhazia. K. Kudriavtsev wrote about the “Muhajirism” of 1877: “People who had direct knowledge of what was going on believe that in 1877-1878 Abkhazia lost up to 60 percent of its population.”\(^{34}\) There were 135,000 Muhajirs of Abkhazian-Abazin ethnic affiliation; together with the Ubykhs, there were 180,000 of them.\(^{35}\) According to information Sultan Dovlet Girey acquired in Constantinople, between 1816 and 1910, 339,345 Abkhaz and Abazins migrated to Turkey; together with the Ubykhs, there were 384,284.\(^{36}\)

The Number of People Deported from the Caucasus and Their Settlement Pattern in Turkey

A total of between 500,000 and 1,750,000 Adighes were evicted from their homeland.\(^{37}\) According to different sources, between 1,800,000 and 3,097,949 Caucasian highlanders (Adighes, Abkhaz, Abazins, Ubykhs, Chechens, Ingushes, Nogays, Karachais, Balkars, Avars, Lezghians, etc.)

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\(^{33}\) See: G.A. Dzidzaria, Bor’ba za Abkhazii v pervom desiatletii XIX v., Sukhumi, 1940, p. 34.

\(^{34}\) K. Kudriavtsev, Shornik materialov po istorii Abkhazii, Sukhumi, 1925, p. 184.


\(^{36}\) Quoted from: G.A. Dzidzaria, Makhadzhiirstvo i problemy istorii Abkhazii XIX stoletia, p. 370.

left the region. According to Sultan Dovlet Girey, by 1910, there were over 2,750,000 Circassians alone living on Turkish territory.

General A.L. Zisserman had the following to say about what went on: the dwellers of the Caucasian mountains were “gradually driven from the plains to the piedmont, from the piedmont to the mountains, from the mountains to the sea coast. The entire population of the mountains, half a million strong, lived through the horrors of a war of attrition, privations, famine, and epidemics. When they found themselves on the sea coast, they had to seek refuge in Turkey.” There, Prince Bariatinskiy said, they were abandoned “to the mercy of fate.” This was the sad finale of the Caucasian War, which created a saying on the eastern Black Sea coast: “Nowadays even a woman can safely walk from Sukhum-Kale to Anapa without meeting a single man.”

According to Jean Jacques Élisée Reclus, “there were no more than 15,000 people living in a vast depopulated expanse of 10,000 sq km. Four-fifths of them are Abkhaz, there are 600 Circassians, while the other migrants belong to different ethnic groups.”

Smaller Abkhazia lost its entire population; the mountainous and coastal Abkhazian communities, Tuakhy, the land of the Ubykhs, and the mountainous Abaza communities all disappeared. The Abkhazian ethnographic group of Sadzes all perished, according to eyewitnesses, in bitter fighting with czarist troops. They preferred death to imprisonment and committed suicide in great numbers. Not a single Abkhazian village could be found between the rivers Psyrtskha and Kudry; nearly all the Bzyb and Abzhu villages lost all of their inhabitants.

The suffering of the deported mountain dwellers defies description. A. Berge wrote: “I shall never forget the depressing impression produced by the highlanders in Novorossiisk Bay, where there were about 17,000 of them. The damp and cold weather, no means of subsistence, and epidemics of typhoid fever and smallpox made their situation desperate. Indeed, few could remain indifferent to the sight of a young Circassian woman in rags lying on the damp earth under the open sky with two small children, one of whom, in the throes of death, was fighting for its life, and the other seeking food from the breast of its long-dead mother.”

The sea crossing to Turkey claimed even more lives; not infrequently, Turks deliberately sank ships carrying migrants. The ailing and the sick were thrown overboard. N. Ladaria, one of the eyewitnesses, left this description: “The steamer was packed with people suffering from starvation and, even more, from lack of water. The adults drank salty seawater… All suffered from stomach pains, the children suffered more than the rest: they cried and pleaded for water… There was water around them, the children saw it and cried even more in anguish. Illnesses became deadly; babies died faster than the rest… Their bodies were thrown overboard despite the frantic resistance of their mothers. …I recall a mother who did not want her dead baby thrown overboard. She concealed his death for a long time. The Abkhaz knew this and never betrayed her. She held the dead body to her bosom and spoke to it as if it were alive when a Turk passed her. This went on for a fairly long time, until the smell of decomposition spread. A search produced the dead body. It was thrown overboard, the mother tried to follow it and was restrained by force.”

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40 Russkiy arkhiv, Book 2, Moscow, 1889, p. 428.
41 Ibid., p. 285.
The migrants mainly headed for Trabzon, Constantinople, Samsun, Varna, and other Turkish ports; their distribution was not organized, the process was a random one. Deprived of any information, immigrants camped in the places where they landed. Soon the camps became death camps: this happened in Achka-Kala, Sinop, Samsun, Varna, and elsewhere. Nineteen thousand out of the initial number of 247,000 died in Trabzon; 180–250 people died every day on average; in Samsun, where up to 110,000 Muhajirs were camping, over 200 died every day. According to Felix Kanitz, early in September 1864, there were 50,000 dead bodies and 60,000 still living migrants in Samsun.47

The Ottoman authorities deemed it wise to scatter the arriving Muhajirs; at the early stages, they were settled in European Turkey, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania under the supervision of General Nusret Pasha, himself a Circassian. They were squeezed between Slavic and Greek settlements, along main roads and mountain passes in long chains in order to effectively quench any possible unrest. The larger part of the newcomers, however, was distributed across the country’s Asian provinces.48

Under the project of Governor-General of the Danube Villayet Ahmed Midhat Pasha, “the Circassians were settled in the area between the Danube mouth and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where military colonies akin to Cossack villages were set up. The inhabitants served in the ‘Circassian militia’ that defended the state borders.”49

The Turkish Abkhaz were mainly placed on the Black Sea coast between Istanbul and Bolu; the largest compact settlements found in the Sakarya (in its center, the city of Adabazar) and Diuzdje villayets. The rest were scattered across the Bursa, Eskishehir, Samsun, and Bilecik villayets.50 According to Abkhazian enlightener Omar Beygua, there were about 200 Abkhazian villages in Turkey in the 1970s-1980s; the Abkhazian population of this country was over 100,000 strong. According to official statistics, however, there are no more than 10,000 Abkhaz living in the country. In 1926, K. Kudriavtsev quoted the figure supplied by the Cherkess parliament: there are about 300,000 Abkhaz living in Turkey.51

In the Middle East, the newly arrived groups of Muhajirs were settled with the intention of protecting the cities against the nomads, a force to be reckoned with at the time. Amman, for example, was encircled by Cherkess settlements; the same can be said about Syria. The Cherkesses formed a mounted unit that protected the Amman-Medina railway in Arabia. Military clashes between them and nomads were common; sometimes they developed into wars (the Balqa war of 1910 against the al-Balqawiyya tribe).52

Information about the settlement patterns of various ethnic Adighe groups who arrived after the main migration wave had subsided is fairly limited. In Turkey, the Abadzekhs settled in Samsun, Tokat, Sinop, and Balikesir; the Shapsugs, in Samsun, Balikesir, Bolu, Aydin, and Sakarya; Bzhedugs found themselves in Çanakkale and Biga; Khatukais in Kayseri; Makhoshis in Samsun; Kabardins in Kayseri, Tokat, and Sivas; and Besleneyevs in Kerum and Amasia. Members of all the ethnic groups could be found in Istanbul.53

The Chechens were settled along the borders of Kurdistan and Mesopotamia, as well as in the mountains of the Sivas pashalyk. Some of the Chechens, Ossets, and Lezghians found homes in the Khniscaia River valley and the Varto area.

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47 See: F. Kanitz, Dunayskaia Bolgaria i Balkanskiy poluoostrov, St. Petersburg, 1876, pp. 332-333.
48 See: R. Gozhba, op. cit., p. 11.
49 Ibid., p. 234.
50 See: G.A. Dzidzaria, Makhadzhirstvo i problemy istorii Abkhazii XIX stoletia, p. 487.
The Ubykhs first found themselves on the Sea of Marmara, where their leader Hajji Kerantuh-Berzek and 350 families that belonged to him settled. The larger part of the ethnic group was moved close to Samsun; to the Diuzdje and Adabazar areas, in the localities where Abkhaz and Cherkesses had already settled, and between Lake Sapanca, Izmit, and Bandirma, as well as at Marash.  

**Arduous Integration into the Ottoman Turkish Society**

Driven to despair by poverty in their new homeland, the migrants from the Caucasian mountains sold young girls to the harems of nobles and the sultan. "Amid the mass of human sorrows and suffering," wrote Felix Kanitz, "the magic and radiant beauty of the Circassian women shone even brighter, thrown into bolder relief by the men’s proud carriage and appearance and their dignity." The wives from the Caucasus soon achieved dominance in the sultan’s harem, which brought people of Caucasian origin to his court in great numbers.

On the other hand, in their desperation, the Muhajirs clashed with the locals over their means of subsistence. These clashes were caused, among other things, by the vague laws and lack of order in the empire, which placed the newcomers before a dilemma: either slipping to the very bottom of the social ladder, or protecting their dignity with daggers. Archimandrite Garegin Srvandztians had the following to say: "The Abazin and Circassian migrants are a heavy burden for the common people: there is no longer safety on the roads. Not only that: in the city itself, robbery, burglary, and murders became a common feature. Circassian villages are everywhere around the city. The caravans fear to cross them.

By way of a remedy, the government conscripted Caucasian youths into the army; there was a cavalry corps of Caucasian mountain dwellers. "Circassian regiments were on the firing line everywhere. They fought with courage and paid dearly for the victory," wrote J. Dumesille.

V. Aboltin, who worked in Turkey in the 1920s, supplied interesting details about the everyday life of the Caucasian highlanders: "Being very enterprising in general, the mountain dwellers never abandoned their old habits: they continue stealing cattle and horses, and resort to robbery at every opportune moment. Very brave, they even put fear into the daring Kurds.

Despite the more or less commonly accepted opinion of the mountain dwellers as people inclined toward robbery and plunder rather than toward work, there were people who positively assessed their social role. British Consul William Palgrave was one of them. He wrote: "The consistently spread rumors about the bad behavior, troublesome idleness, and highway robber habits of the Circassian and Abkhazian migrants are mainly false or are, at least, overstatements. These people can be described as the most diligent and decent part of the entire population. The country profited from their arrival: farming has spread and even improved in those places where the routine of the locals changed." Colonel Charles Wilson, another British consul, described the Caucasian mountain dwellers as a handsome tribe; according to him, they were stronger, braver,
and smarter than the local peasants and more inclined to learn. The Circassians introduced better carts; they built more comfortable houses and were better farmers; they could have done a lot for the area had the Turkish government looked after them better.\textsuperscript{60} K. Smirnov, the Russian consul, was of the same favorable opinion. He wrote in 1904: “Our Caucasian migrants, known here under the common name of Circassians, are the most cultured element. …The Turks, aware of the Circassians’ superiority in many things, hate but respect them and go out of their way to win their regard.”\textsuperscript{61}

These bits and pieces can be assembled into a mosaic portrait of a Cherkess in his new homeland. On the one hand, he was freedom-loving, energetic to a fault, and of an untamed nature, which repelled any sort of coercion from the state or society; prepared to go to extremes rejected by society as breaches of law. On the other, he was a highlander educated in the traditions of knighthood, who served his new homeland selflessly and with dedication; he was prepared to sacrifice everything to defend it and confirmed his readiness in the years when Greek intervention pushed the Turkish state to the brink of destruction.

“After moving to another state the Circassians became much closer; nearly all linguistic, ethnic, and national distinctions disappeared. A Circassian started using the Kabardin, Shapsug, and even Abazin and other languages and dialects,” wrote Shavhat Al-Mufti Habajoka.\textsuperscript{62} It was a defensive response: to survive and withstand aggressive Turkish assimilation, the newcomers had to keep together. They suffered not only under Abdul Hamid II, who condemned the members of the Cherkess mejlis to hanging, but also under the Young Turks who came after him. The latter formulated a great-power ideology of “Osmanism,” under which Turkey’s entire population, irrespective of nationality and faith, was a “united Osmanic nation” due to alleged equality.\textsuperscript{63}

Despite the social and economic hardships and the migrants’ political and legal inequality in the Ottoman Empire, many of them made significant contributions to its history and the history of some of the Middle Eastern countries. Many of the Abkhaz and Adighes filled top state and military posts; many of the former mountain dwellers joined the Young Turks; there were many of them among the Young Turks military commanders. According to Sultan Dovlet Girey, in 1910, Cherkesses comprised 30 percent of the Turkish officer corps.\textsuperscript{64} In the same year, Mohammed Echeruh wrote: “Everyone knows that the best and most gifted military commanders are found only among the Circassians.”\textsuperscript{65}

The former Caucasian highlanders were actively involved in the national-liberation movement. Soviet diplomat G. Astakhov, who served in Turkey in the 1920s, wrote: “The first patriotic units (chets) that started fighting against the Greeks consisted of Cherkesses. It was Cherkess boys who commanded the units.”\textsuperscript{66} He failed to understand why the Cherkesses fought for their new motherland and explained this by their “love of fighting.” Abkhaz Rauf Orbay Ashharua was one of the closest comrades-in-arms of Kemal Atatürk. Between July 1922 and August 1923, he filled the post of premier and foreign minister. This did not help the Caucasians: their units were disbanded, since the

\textsuperscript{60} See: IKOIRGO, Vol. VIII, No. 2, Tiflis, 1885, pp. 62-63.


\textsuperscript{62} Quoted from: F. Baderkhan, op. cit., p. 316.


government continued to treat them with great suspicion. Nearly all of those who started the movement had to leave the political scene.67

Not all the Muhajirs hailed the Kemalist revolution. The Caucasian aristocrats remained loyal to the monarchy, which allowed the Entente and the Greeks to exploit them in their own interests. In the spring of 1920, a large-scale mutiny enveloped most of the country. When it was suppressed, some of the Abkhaz and Cherkesses had to move to Greece. The Turkish government persecuted the Caucasians, many were executed or arrested; and their native tongues were banned in cities. It was planned to scatter the Cherkesses, two or three families in one place, across rural Eastern Anatolia. Only Rauf Orbay, Hunj Ali Sait Pasha, and Fetkeri Ashvanba, all of them prominent statesmen, saved the Caucasians. The government, however, began a more active policy of assimilation of the national minorities.68

**Conclusion**

Today, the Caucasian mountain people scattered across the world are subjected to swift assimilation. The diaspora’s larger part is found in Turkey, which offers no conditions for the preservation and development of national self-awareness, culture, and language. “In Turkey, there are no non-Turks, but there are people who were taught to think of themselves as Kurds, Cherkesses, Laz, etc.” This was what Recep Peker, a prominent supporter of pan-Turkism and former secretary-general of the Republican People’s Party of Turkey, thought about the issue.69 The Turkish government has been and is still devoted to the policy of assimilation. Art 88 of the 1924 Constitution said: “In Turkey, from the point of view of citizenship, everyone is a Turk, irrespective of race or religion.” The current Constitution of 1982 has gone as far as saying in Art 42 “Right and Duty of Training and Education”: “No language other than Turkish shall be taught as a mother tongue to Turkish citizens at any institutions of training and education.” Another article entitled “Freedom of Expression and Dissemination of Thought” says in part: “No language prohibited by law shall be used in the expression and dissemination of thought” (Art 26). Today, the Turkish authorities cut short any attempts to write ABC books, set up national schools, and start newspapers and journals or open theaters in other than the Turkish language.70

The problem of repatriation is the most acute and painful one for all the Caucasian peoples. This process should start with a U.N. resolution on the repatriates, which is expected to determine the repatriate status.

Until this problem is resolved and the divided peoples are reunited, neither the Abkhazian diaspora, which is being assimilated at a fast pace, nor the Abkhaz at home, who are facing basically the same problems, will have any prospects.

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70 [http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/tu00000_.html].
The Caucasus is an important geopolitical East/West and North/South link, which has served from time immemorial as a transit territory crisscrossed by caravan roads connecting the region with many nations, countries, and continents.

It was the “gateway to the East,” a cherished prize for all sorts of conquerors, and the battlefield where Alexander the Great, Roman legions, Parthians, Sassanian and Byzantine troops, Arabs, and the hordes of Genghis Khan met at different times in bloody clashes.

From the 16th to the 19th centuries, the Caucasus remained an apple of discord for the Ottoman and Russian empires, as well as for the Safavids.

In the 16th century, the Safavids and the Ottoman Turks clashed over the Central Caucasus. The long chain of wars between them ended in 1555 with the Peace Treaty of Amasia, under which the Safavids established their domination in Eastern Georgia and Azerbaijan. Later, in the last quarter of the 16th century, the Ottoman sultans used the domestic strife that was tearing Iran apart to push their weakened rival out of the region. Under the peace treaty signed in Istanbul in 1590, the Iranian rulers recognized their defeat and pulled back from the Central Caucasus, retaining a small part of the Southern Caucasus in their possession.

Russia and the Safavids were not overjoyed to see the Porte on the Daghestanian and Azeri Caspian coasts: its vantage point allowed the sultan to control the Volga-Caspian trade route. Shared...
concerns brought the two countries closer together: Shah Abbas I (1587-1629) was even prepared to fight the Ottoman Empire and promised to reward Russia with Derbend and Baku, along with the coast between them, if it joined the planned fight. However, enfeebled by the domestic crisis and the ruinous Livonian War, Moscow wanted no more military involvement.

Early in the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire and Iran resumed their former rivalry over the Central Caucasus. Shah Abbas I, who had radically reformed state administration and the army, launched military campaigns against the Turks. As a result of the war (1602-1612), the Safavids regained their previous foothold and restored their former domination in the east of the Central and the entire Southern Caucasus.

In the first third of the 18th century, the political map of the world changed once more. In 1721, Russia became an empire and entered into the “great-power” period of its history. In the first quarter of the 18th century, the country satisfied to strive for the burgeoning empire’s economic interests, which required comprehensive development of the Volga-Caspian trade route and extending the empire’s borders to the Black and Caspian seas: Russia badly needed an outlet to the warm seas and domination over them. To achieve this Russia had to become involved in the struggle already going on for the Caucasus. “The interests of three large states—Russia, Turkey, and Persia—clashed at the isthmus that separated the Black and Caspian seas.”1 The battle for the Caucasus began in earnest.

Azerbaijan, which covered the territory between Derbend and Zenjan, was one of Russia’s key foreign policy aims. Throughout the 17th and the first quarter of the 18th centuries, the country remained a Safavid possession of huge military-strategic importance. Iliia Berezin, a Russian scholar, described Azerbaijan as a “courageous region. …The best soldiers were conscripted there.”2 In some periods of its, and Iran’s, history, Azerbaijan supplied nearly half of soldiers in the Safavid armies; it also grew grain for Iran and served as a source of huge material value for the Iranian feudal lords.3

In the 1720s, Russia made its first attempt to conquer the Caspian shores. Aware of Azerbaijan’s immense riches, Russian Emperor Peter the Great (1682-1725) decided to turn it into a raw material appendage for Russian manufacturing industries. By that time, Russia had already been importing raw silk, cotton, oil, and other raw materials at low prices through Astrakhan. St. Petersburg was busy planning further economic exploitation of the Caspian areas. The Russian government issued a decree under which Russia should have moved to the Kura River to set up a large trading town at its mouth to serve as a busy trading center within the reach of Astrakhan.4 The document described Baku as an important port, which shortened the road to India compared with the sea route round the Cape of Good Hope.

“The Caucasus was the first stage on this great route of Russia’s developing interests in Asian countries.”5 Very soon the Russian emperor also acquired a pretext for paying more attention to the Caucasus.

It was late in the 17th century, in 1694 to be more exact, that the Russian emperor first thought about marching to the Caspian. He spent many years gathering information about Azerbaijan and Iran until he dispatched an embassy headed by Artemiy Volynskiy to Iran in 1715 to study the country’s economic and political situation, as well as its armed forces, firsthand and in detail.

Peter the Great planned to capture the western Caspian as the first stage of his much more impressive plan: he was not merely seeking domination over the Central Caucasus—he wanted to

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3 See: A. Bogdanov, Persia, Moscow, 1909, p. 17.
open India up to Russian merchants and gather complete information about all the trade routes and markets. In 1716-1717, a unit under Prince A. Bekovich-Cherkasskiy crossed the Caspian to Central Asia to persuade the Khiva khan to become a Russian subject and to find a road to India. Several documents, in particular the report of French Ambassador to St. Petersburg de Campredon to Cardinal Dubois of 20 March, 1722, confirm that Russia planned to organize deliveries of Indian and other Eastern commodities to Europe across its territory and to block the road across the Ottoman dominion.

Early in the 18th century, the crisis that developed in the Safavid state enfeebled the empire. In 1722, Afghan tribal leaders seized the opportunity to invade Iran; after several months of siege, Isfahan, the Safavid capital, fell. Shah Sultan Hussein abdicated; Mir Mahmud, the Afghan leader, proclaimed himself ruler of Iran.

In the spring of 1723, the Ottoman Empire seized the opportunity to invade the Central Caucasus, capture Tiflis and Shemakha, and occupy northwestern Iran. Russia’s position was undermined: on the one hand, its border with the Ottoman Empire became longer; while on the other, its interests in the Caucasus were badly hit. This explains why Russia behaved much more actively in the early 1720s in an attempt to prevent Turkish occupation of the entire Central Caucasus and the Turks’ appearance on the Caspian shores.

In 1721, after signing the Nystad Peace Treaty with Sweden, Russia could turn to the south. In pursuit of his ultimate goal—access to the Baltic—Peter the Great “never lost sight of the Orient. He knew only too well that Russia’s prosperity was possible only when it became a trade intermediary between Europe and Asia.”

Iran could no longer defend the Caspian shores against the Porte—Russia was left to its own devices. Peter the Great repeated all over again: “Russia must occupy the Caspian shores to keep the Turks away from them” and “the pasha is moving toward Shemakha, which threatens Baku.”

The Russian merchants robbed in Shemakha served as a pretext for the Russian march to the Caspian coast of Azerbaijan and Iran. In the summer of 1722, the Russian fleet left Astrakhan under imperial command and headed to the south. On 23 August, the Russians entered Derbend, which put up no resistance. Later, despite the fact that certain circumstances compelled the Russian emperor to return home, the Russian military leaders continued to win one victory after another. On 1 July, 1723, General Matiushkin attacked Baku. He suppressed the city guns with crippling bombardment and forced the city to surrender, without losses on the part of the Russian troops, after a four-day-long siege. The Russians moved fast—after a while they occupied nearly the entire stretch of the western and southwestern coasts, including Baku, Shirvan, Gilian, Mazandaran, and Astrabad. To show his appreciation of the military achievements, Peter the Great promoted General Matiushkin to lieutenant-general and wrote in his congratulatory letter that Baku, as “the key to our entire cause,” was a most precious acquisition; he ordered one thousand poods of oil [1 pood = 16.38 kg], “or more if possible” to be delivered to Russia. The Russians stopped there—to advance further would mean another armed conflict with the Ottoman Empire—something that the Russian Empire preferred to avoid.

Meanwhile Europe was busy inciting the Porte against Russia. The Ottoman ruling circles, which still hoped to achieve unbounded domination over the Central Caucasus, found it hard to accept Russia’s presence on the Caspian shores. They did their best to undermine the Russian

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8 S. Soloviev, op. cit., p. 345.
10 G. Abdullaev, op. cit., p. 12.
emperor’s plans in the region. In his talks with the sultan, the English ambassador in Istanbul insisted: “The Russian czar is clever, he is deceiving the Turks when he talks about peace. He will capture the Persian provinces and if the sultan does not go against him with arms in hand,” Russia will attack Turkey. The English diplomat promised the sultan financial support if the Porte went against Russia.

The relations between the two empires went from bad to worse, but Russian diplomacy managed to avoid a war. On 12 June, 1724, the two countries signed an agreement in the Turkish capital under which the Porte recognized Russia’s rights to the Caspian provinces. Russia, in turn, pledged not to oppose the sultan’s influence on the rest of the Central Caucasus. Azerbaijan’s Caspian coast, together with Baku, remained in Russia’s possession for nearly 14 years, from 1722 to 1735. According to V. Lystsov, Peter the Great pursued two interconnected, but never declared and never realized, goals: he wanted to move the Sunni Muslims who shared the faith of the Porte out and bring Christians in.

The chain of palace coups that shook Russia after the death of Peter the Great in 1725 negatively affected its foreign policy, among other things. Iran, meanwhile, acquired a talented statesman and military leader in the person of Nadir Khan Afshar (who became shah in 1736). Under two treaties—the Rasht of 1732 and Ganja of 1735—with Iran, Russia had to transfer the Caspian regions to Iran and pull out its troops. The latter half of the 18th century marked an important stage in the history of Azerbaijan. After the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, his empire fell apart; the territory of Azerbaijan became divided among twenty independent khanates and sultanates, the Baku Khanate being one of them.

Meanwhile the protracted war between the Zends and Qajars in Iran brought the latter to power. Acting under Agha Mohammad Khan (1794-1797), the Qajars spread their power across nearly the entire country. The new ruler, very much as his predecessor, dreamt of restoring the Safavid Empire within the borders registered by the 1735 Ganja Treaty with Russia and an agreement of 1746 with the Ottoman Empire. Under these documents the eastern part of the Central Caucasus and Daghestan (as far as the River Sulak) were in the Iranian sphere of influence; the Ottoman sultan dominated in the western part.

Agha Mohammad Khan sought to restore the Safavid Empire to its former grandeur. Russian historian Vladimir Degoev has justly pointed out that Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar resolved to restore what he believed to be “his own” when his attempts to find a common language with the Russians failed and when the sultan promised neutrality. In the summer of 1795, Iranian troops invaded the Central Caucasus and easily captured Ganja and Irevan, which put up no resistance; the fortress of Shusha, the capital of Karabakh, however, resisted for four months and was not captured. During the siege, Georgian Czar Irakly II headed a punitive expedition against Ganja; Agha Mohammad Khan responded: in September 1795, his troops captured and plundered Tiflis; 10,000 were driven into slavery.

**Russia’s Second Onslaught in the Caucasus**

Russia could not remain indifferent to the Caucasian developments and the military exploits of Agha Mohammad Khan (since 1796, Shah of Iran) in Azerbaijan and Eastern Georgia. In April 1796, Russian Empress Catherine the Great (1762-1796) ordered the Second Caspian campaign to begin. A

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13 See: Ibid., p. 401.
corps under Lieutenant-General V. Zubov was dispatched to the region allegedly to punish Agha Mohammad Khan for what he had done to Georgia. In actual fact, however, Russia was seeking a stronger foothold in the north of Azerbaijan, particularly in Baku. The imperial government wanted to complete what Peter the Great had left undone on the Caspian Caucasian coast.

The approaching Russian troops forced the Iranians to retreat beyond the Aras River, the Russians lost no time in capturing Derbend, Kuba, Shemakha, and Ganja. Simultaneously a unit of Major-General Rakhmanov captured Baku, and a Russian garrison was stationed there. In 1796-early 1797, Prince Tsitsianov was appointed commandant of Baku, where he befriended Huseingulu Khan. Ten years later the friends met again under different circumstances.

After taking Baku, an important trade and marine center of the Caspian, the Russian cabinet planned to improve and fortify the Baku harbor to use it as the main naval base and a trade port from where Russia would be able to develop its trade contacts in the region; money and specialists arrived from the capital of Russia. However the project scheduled for the spring of 1797 was never implemented. The sudden death of the Russian empress in 1796 radically changed the country’s foreign policy. In an effort to be as much unlike his mother as possible, Emperor Paul I (1796-1801) withdrew the Russian troops from the Caucasus. In December 1796, the first Russian units left Azerbaijan, and the last units pulled out of Baku in March 1797.

This ended another of Russia’s attempts to capture Baku and the Baku Khanate. However, Russia’s withdrawal did not mean that the empire had buried its expansionist plans in Azerbaijan. An imperial rescript of 16 April, 1799 addressed to Kovalevskiy, one of the ministers, said in particular: “Our interests in that region consist of never permitting any strong ruler, be it a shah or any other, to appear there, so as not to acquire a strong neighbor who may not be able to disturb us but who would be able to cause trouble for the proprietors loyal to us.” Another document of the same epoch pointed out that Iran “wanted to capture Baku because he (the shah.—A.A.) believed that it may produce income by paying tribute and by delivering oil and salt.”

In 1801, Alexander I (1801-1825) ascended the Russian throne. Under the new emperor Russia’s Caucasian policy became much more active and aggressive. The empire wanted to spread its political and economic influence far and wide, going as far as occupying other countries under the force of arms. This happened to the East Georgian Kingdom (Kartli-Kakhetia), which was liquidated as an independent state. The northern Azeri khanates, primarily the Baku Khanate, was on St. Petersburg’s agenda. One of the documents of the time said in particular: “We know that the Russian marine merchant fleet badly needs the Baku harbor; we have more plans for it than for the city itself. For the natural reason that the city and the harbor cannot be separated, we should occupy Baku at the first opportune moment; sooner or later this will become inevitable.”

Russia’s Triumph in the Caucasus

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17 See: Ibid., p. 423.
In 1802, Prince Tsitsianov was appointed commander-in-chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus. During the First Russo-Iranian War of 1804-1813, his troops defeated the large Iranian cavalry under Crown Prince Abbas Mirza at Elizavetpol and sent it fleeing. Many of the Azeri khanates hastened to become Russian subjects and signed corresponding agreements. General Tsitsianov, however, knew that without a single outpost on the Black Sea and Caspian shores it would be practically impossible to remain in the region separated from Russia by mountains that were non-passable for part of the year.

At first the Russians tried to entice Baku ruler Huseingulu Khan onto their side by peaceful means. Prince Tsitsianov decided to act through Allahverdi-bek of the khan’s retinue and managed to reach an agreement.

In his letter to Huseingulu Khan, the prince wrote: “I have the honor of congratulating Your High Dignity and am firmly convinced that your desire to live peacefully under the high and strong patronage of our Most Gracious Emperor will be confirmed by experience. I have issued all the necessary orders to the troops which will move into Baku and I hope that beginning from this fall you and the house of Your High Dignity will be protected by invincible Russian weapons.”

The letter was obviously premature: on 19 July, 1803, the Russian commander received a letter from the Baku khan saying that Allahverdi-bek “had gone further than his instructions and powers permitted...” The Russian general was infuriated. One of his reports said in part: “...had the Caspian fleet been ready to fight, I would have immediately ordered it to bombard Baku and use the force of arms to fulfill the signed agreement.”

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The Russian cabinet, however, advised the general to cool down and move first against the Shirvan Khanate. Here is what Chancellor Count Vorontsov had to say: “This is one of those things that cannot be predicted... From this it follows that the Shemakha Province should be subjugated as the first step toward occupation of Baku. To achieve this, you should convince Mustafa Khan either by force or by tempting promises.”

General Tsitsianov planned to exploit the war with Iran, which had started shortly before that, to capture Baku and strengthen Russia’s Caspian position. In 1805, the Russian commander trained a landing group under Major-General Zavalishin to be brought to the city walls by sea.

Three weeks before that, the city dwellers had taken to the mountains along with their possessions and families. Those who stayed behind plunged into frantic activities: they positioned guns, prepared ammunition, and gathered everything that might come in handy during the storm. Huseingulu Khan was resolved to fight to the end.

After capturing the port, General Zavalishin presented an ultimatum demanding unconditional surrender. Despite the threat of bombardment, the khan declined the ultimatum and refused to negotiate. On 15 August, 1805, the Russians opened fire on the city. The city responded in kind with even greater success: the Russian ships rolled and tossed, preventing accuracy of fire. Soon after that the two siege cannons at the fleet’s disposal exploded. Shelling from the sea proved useless—the general decided to lay siege on land, but the encircled city did not surrender. It seems that Russian Consul Skibinevskiy was quite right when he wrote to General Knorring in February 1802:

“In Baku and Shemakha, people live well enough on trade and farming made possible by the union between the local khans and their neighbors and enjoy moderate governance” to want to live under Russia.

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23 Ibidem.
Frequent sorties of the defenders showed that they remained as energetic and as convinced of their victory as ever, their courage being fed by the hope that their neighbors would come to the rescue. Pretty soon the defenders learned that Sheikh-Ali Khan of Kuba and Surkhay Khan of Kazikumukh and their large armies were not far away. The “unwanted guests” had to retreat: on 3 September, 1805, General Zavalishin moved away from the fortress; on 5 September, the allies moved on the city and entered it as victors.

The attempt to capture the fortress failed—the city people passed the test. Not knowing what to do next, the Russian general gathered a military council that decided to evacuate the harbor and move to Sara Island not far from Lenkoran.

Prince Tsitsianov could not conceal his disappointment. In a letter to General Zavalishin he wrote: “I should say, Your Excellency, that had I not been forced to move around my home on crutches because of my crippling illness, which undermines my strength, and had we not been separated by 400 versts [1 verst = 0.6629 miles], I would have hastened to uphold the glory of Russia and would have died at the walls rather than allowed Husein-Kuli-khan to brag that he had defeated the Russians who could not defeat him.”

The Russian commander tried to justify the defeat to Emperor Alexander I. He wrote in one of his reports: “The fleet has already moved away from Baku; it failed to capture it to the dishonor of Russia and its glorious arms. It is poor consolation to say that I am not to blame; I even dare to reveal to Your Majesty the true causes of the failure: the entire fleet had only two siege cannons; and the landing group had two howitzers. Only these guns were suitable for shelling. All the other guns, 120 in all, were ill-suited to bombardment. Indeed, how much damage can we expect from a 3-pound ball against a stone city with stone walls one sazhen [1 sazhen = 2.1336 meters] thick?”

In another report Prince Tsitsianov went into even more details: “I should say in all justice that the fleet commanders were responsible for our failure at Baku, the capture of which should have become the glorious result of the entire marine expedition: (1) the fleet was badly armed; (2) the ships were badly prepared for fighting: there were only two siege cannons and four 12-pound cast iron guns on the ships designed for bombardment; after five days of shelling, the former (the siege cannons) exploded, while no other country or army would use 12-pound guns against 3-arshin-thick [1 arshin = 28 inches] city walls.”

Used to victories and unquestioned submission, the Russian general found it hard to accept the defeat. The memory of the failure forced the prince to storm Baku once more with a unit of 1,600 men and ten guns under his personal command. In his report to Emperor Alexander I, he argued: “I shall hasten to the walls of this fortress. To justify my movement with the troops in this direction, I will say that (1) spring is ill-suited for fighting because the smaller rivers overflow and cattle is not fat enough; (2) the sazhen-deep snow that covers the area from Tabriz to Karadag will discourage the Persians from coming to the rescue. I think that Husein-Kuli-khan will be much more pliable without this.”

The troops moved across the Shirvan Khanate and annexed it to Russia “in passing.” On 25 December, 1805, Mustafa Khan of Shirvan signed the agreement. Baku remained the only unconquered spot on the Caspian coast.

he was resolved to take the city or die at its walls. There was what he wrote to the khan: “I write to you, Your High Dignity, not as a Russian general, but as the man who had the honor to know you as a major-general and the Baku commandant during the Persian campaign of 1796. I plead with you as your former acquaintance to spare yourself and your family, to avoid the fate of Jevad Khan; later everything could be rearranged.”

After a long and difficult march, the Russian troops under General Tsitsianov entered the Baku Khanate. Deprived of support from the Kuba and Shemakha khans, Huseingulu Khan, who no longer expected help from the Persians, asked Mustafa Khan of Shemakha to mediate. However General Tsitsianov declined the peace proposals.

On 30 January, 1806, the Russian troops stopped at the Nakhar-Bulag stow, from where the prince once more demanded that Baku should surrender. His letter said: “For the last time I propose that Your High Dignity give me a final answer to my main demand: are you prepared to submit the city to my conscience or not? Customs allow you to formulate your own proposals if you decline ours. In this case, I should warn you that, first, as a port, Baku will not be left without a Russian garrison; second, that we will not be able to allow you to receive customs dues since Baku is a port; third, Russia will not tolerate oppression of traders, and, finally, be sure that we shall need your eldest son as amanat [hostage]—this cannot be otherwise. Here are the four main points; if you disagree with them, we would be better to stop our correspondence. You should rely on your own bravery and the bravery of your subjects, while I shall do what I must and we shall see how God sees fit to dispose of the situation. I shall expect your answer by tomorrow morning.”

The Russian troops at the city walls and the obviously unequal forces convinced Huseingulu Khan that capitulation was the only alternative. Prince Tsitsianov rejoiced; his new letter to the Baku khan differed greatly from all the others in form and content: “Dear Husein-Kuli-khan! After writing to you as a Russian general, I deem it my duty to write to you as an old acquaintance, as to my brother and friend. …Let us forget the old and remain friends for all times; I remain devoted to you in heart and soul.”

On the morning of 8 February, 1806, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in the Caucasus Prince Tsitsianov in full regalia accompanied by a small unit, which was expected to occupy the fortress, approached the well half a verst away from the city. He was met there by the Baku elders prepared to hand him the keys to the city gates. The Russian general refused to accept them and demanded that Huseingulu Khan hand them to him in person. The khan immediately appeared and moved toward the general, who, after leaving his retinue behind, went with his adjutant (Lieutenant-Colonel Eristov) and a Cossack to meet the khan half-way. As soon as he came close enough, several shots sounded, killing the Russian general and his adjutant. The crowd on the city wall hailed the murder with a round of artillery fired at the group of Russians standing by the well. In the commotion that followed the khan’s bodyguards picked up the bodies and fled.

Military historian V. Potto wrote: “It was a critical moment, in which the honor, dignity, and glory of Russia was at stake. Major-General Zavalishin, the highest officer in the unit, proved unable..."
to meet the challenge. He cowardly retreated in haste from the fortress under the pretext of food shortages and a great number of ailing and sick. After putting his troops on the ships, he left the Transcaucasus for Dagestan, to the Shamhal dominions, from which he finally reached, with great difficulties, the [Russia manned Caucasian fortified] line.\textsuperscript{35}

The murder of General Tsitsianov at the walls of Baku did not change Russia’s plans in the region. Several months later, in the summer of 1806, Russian troops under General Glazenap moved from the Northern Caucasus toward Baku along the Caspian coast. On 22 June, they captured Derbend; on 3 October, 1806, the Russian forces under General Bulgakov (who had replaced General Glazenap) occupied the Baku Khanate, its capital, and the Kuba Khanate. The rulers were deposed, while their dominions became part of the Russian Empire.

Why did Russia persist in its efforts to capture the Baku Khanate, one of the small Azeri domains? What attracted it? Here is the answer found in one of the contemporary documents: “This khanate and its settlements occupy a small territory, yet it brings over 100,000 rubles into His Majesty’s treasury; it could generate even higher revenues since the city is fairly large, while its harbor is the best on the Caspian.”\textsuperscript{36}

After capturing Baku and the Baku Khanate, the Russian commanders ordered the people to put down their arms: the First Russo-Iranian War was still going on. In one of his orders dated 1807, new Commander-in-Chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus I. Gudovich said: “Be vigilant in the Baku fortress and preserve order; keep 1 or 2 guns at the main guardhouse. I especially recommend you to ensure that the local people do not carry arms; I order once more that they be removed from the ordinary people and left to important officials and to those who are absolutely reliable and of whose loyalty and devotion as well as diligence you are absolutely sure.”\textsuperscript{37}

The new authorities never let tax collection slacken. The Russian commanders of Baku kept the process under strict control and did not allow the amount of the money collected to be lower than the sums the khan gathered in his time. Everything was taxed: oil and salt production, as well as the sale of non-food commodities and foodstuffs. In some cases the commandant could raise prices to collect more taxes.

**Conclusion**

The Baku Khanate was abolished in 1806 when the Russian troops captured its capital. For more than a century, Baku remained a backwater city of the Russian Empire. After the administrative-juridical reform of 1840 in the Caucasus, the Baku Khanate became part of the Caspian Region as the Baku Uezd. In 1846, after more administrative reform, the Baku Uezd became part of the Shemakha Gubernia. After the earthquake of 1859, which destroyed Shemakha, the center was moved to Baku, while the Baku Gubernia became the administrative unit.

When the Empire fell apart after the February 1917 revolution in Russia, the Republic of Azerbaijan appeared (1918); Baku was restored to its former grandeur as the capital of an independent state. In April 1920, however, Baku and Northern Azerbaijan were occupied by the 11th Red Army and, for the next 70 years, became part of the Soviet empire. It was in October 1991 that Azerbaijan finally detached itself from the Soviet Union to become an independent republic.

\textsuperscript{35} V.A. Potto, op. cit., pp. 257-258.


Today, early in the 21st century, Baku and the entire country continue to play an important role in world politics. The transport corridor that connects Europe and Asia via the Caucasus has not lost its importance in the context of East-West relations. Baku plays the key role in extracting and transporting Caspian hydrocarbon resources, which means that the interests of the great powers and the key states of the Caucasian region still clash here. Baku remains the “golden apple,” the cherished prize for all those involved in the battle for the Caucasus.