THE RUSSIAN-SOVIET RESETTLEMENT POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ETHNO-TERRITORIAL CONFLICTS IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

By

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the Imperial Russian and Soviet resettlement policies in the South Caucasus with a focus on Azerbaijan, and their implications for the ethno-territorial conflicts in the region. The periods of 1817-1840 as well as from 1878-1914 during Russian Imperial rule are juxtaposed to the period of 1941-1953 of the Soviet administration in the South Caucasus. The selection of this time frame is based on the most active phases of the resettlement practices carried out by respective empires in the South Caucasian borderland. According to this time period, the most affected ethnic groups involved in the Russian-Soviet resettlement policies were Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Germans and Russians.

As a contribution to transhistorical studies, this dissertation seeks to find not only parallels and continuity between the resettlement policies of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, but also aims at analyzing the modalities and complexities of empire-building in the borderlands under investigation. Thus, the dissertation will focus on differences in methods and approaches employed by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union as they had different ideologies in empire- and state-building, which subsequently affected their resettlement practices. The research examines the imperial tools employed for refashioning the population in the borderland, such as Christianization and the "civilizing mission" and their connection to resettlement practices. I argue that one overarching theme of the resettlement policies was consistent throughout the Tsarist and Soviet administrations – the extension of imperial power in the borderland despite declared goals of economic development or religious refashioning of the region.

This study follows on the approaches of Western scholars of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union and employs the concepts of *Orientalism* and *colonial governmentality* in tackling the empire-building process. In this regard, the context of the Russian encounter with the Muslim world and the regional rivalry with Persia-Iran and Ottoman-Turkey will be also analyzed in the study. Further, the dissertation will focus on the relationship between the Russian-Soviet centers of power (St. Petersburg and Moscow) and local actors, especially the national and religious leadership of Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

The study advances a thesis that the Russian and Soviet resettlement policies emanated from similar geopolitical and security considerations in the South Caucasian borderland, and were aimed at changing the demographic composition of the region. In doing so, the Russian-Soviet administrations unevenly treated the ethnic groups involved in the resettlement projects and the local population which had inhabited the region prior to the Russian conquest in the beginning of the 19th century. The result of resettlement policies – coupled with Russian-Soviet rule – was one of the major factors causing the ethno-territorial conflict between Azerbaijanis and Armenians.

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My wife Ulker Shafiyeva made my life so easy by taking care of everything at home when I spent endless hours in the office or in front of the computer. She is the main encourager of my scientific adventure, while my daughter Selin is my infinite source of inspiration.

To the memory of my mother Kubra Huseynova and father Rauf Shafiyev
pay tribute to the memory of all those who perished during the forced resettlements deportations and exiles. I also pay personal tribute to the memory of my great grandfather, Novruz Shafiyev, who was arrested and exiled to Siberia in 1937 and die
somewhere in a place unknown to my family.

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Notes on Transliteration, Names and Dates

As this study deals heavily with Russian sources, I used a phonetic approach to the transliteration of names. The same method was employed to identify historical figures – I used, for example, the more common *Paskevich* rather than *Paskiewicz* to identify the Russian generals and commanders in the Caucasus. There is a quite wide range of transliterations of various Russian, Persian and Turkic historical figures; I tried to use those most commonly referred to and closest to the actual pronunciation in the native languages. Geographic names can have some variations too. I used *Erivan* to identify the Erivan khanate and the capital city during Medieval times and Russian imperial rule, while during Soviet times the city was transliterated into *Yerevan*. Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, was referred as *Tiflis* during the imperial administration.

With reference to pre-1917 events in the Russian Empire, I have used the original Orthodox (revised Julian) based calendar – which differs from the current standard Western or Gregorian calendar.

Abbreviations and Terms

CC CP – Central Committee of the Communist Party

GUZZ – Main Administration of Agriculture and State Domains in Imperial Russia

MRA – Main Resettlement Administration (*Glavnoye Preselencheskoye Upravleniye*)

NKAO – Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous *Oblast* (Province)

NKVD – Ministry of Interior in the USSR

VKP (b) – Russian Communist Party of the Bolsheviks

USSR and SSR – the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, and for national republics

i.e. the Azerbaijani or Armenian SSR

guberniya – governorate, territorial unit in Imperial Russia

inorodtsy – alien subjects of the Russian empire (the peculiarity of this term is discussed

in the thesis)

kolkhoz – a collective farm in the Soviet Union

kolkhoznik – a member of a kolkhoz

kulaks – wealthy peasants

namestnik – viceroy

namestnishestvo – viceroyalty

Narkom – Ministry in the Soviet Union during the 1920-1960s

oblast - province

rayon – region, territorial unit in the Soviet Union

sovkhoz – a state farm in the Soviet Union

uyezd – region, a territorial unit in Imperial Russia

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INTRODUCTION

In 1987, as other young men in the USSR who reached the age of 18, I was conscripted to the Soviet Army. I served as a private in a military unit located in the city of Khanlar (now Geygel) in Azerbaijan. When passing in a truck through the main street the first time (named Lenin street, naturally), I was puzzled by the city's "unusual" architecture for Azerbaijan. As I learned a few days later, this city grew out of a German populated settlement, Helenendorf. It was the first time I thought of the destiny of this resettled group of people. They were brought by the Russian tsar, Alexander I, from Württemberg to Azerbaijan, and then in 1941 were deported by Stalin to Kazakhstan. Both of these resettlements – amazing in terms of geography – were imperial projects.

Large empires attract scholarly attention with their ability to not only conquer but also control vast territories. However, military might is not always able to control lands stretched over various terrains, such as steppes, mountains, seas and swamps. Over centuries, many states have developed versatile policies and methods to contain ethnically different peoples in different geographic environments. Moving tribes and groups from one place to another is an ancient technique, traces of which can be found in the Bible and in Egyptian cuneiform. Many empires and states have used different methods of resettlement to further imperial designs, including: the resettlement of a predominant ethnic group to the periphery; transfer of a subjugated population from one territory to another within an empire; deportation and/or resettlement of indigenous populations; and repatriation.

Powers have used resettlement to balance demographic situations, remove nonloyal populations or bring in loyal settlers, extend state control or enlarge imperial space. The British Empire resorted to resettlement to move convicts from the metropolis to colonies, and to pursue commercial interests by bringing Indian servants and labourers to Eastern Africa¹. With the increasing sophistication of state machinery, the complexity and the purposes of resettlement were enhanced and branded in the twentieth century as "safety and security measures." In U.S. history, severe measures implemented in the name of national security have been directed against ethnic and racial groups. During the Second World War, the U.S. government branded Japanese Americans as "alien enemies" and sent them to internment camps. ² In the Soviet Union, Stalin ordered the expulsion of a number of North Caucasian ethnic groups, accusing them of collaboration with the Nazis.

The Tsarist Empire, and its successor, the Soviet Union, were the largest land-based, or so-called contiguous empires that extensively resorted to resettlement in order to manipulate regional demographics or to reposition "non-loyal" populations. In carrying out resettlement policies, the Tsarist Empire followed the example of other colonial powers. Both the Tsarist and British Empires resettled convicts and military personnel in colonial territories. Their approach in moving religious sectarians and other settlers to the frontiers possessed marked similarities as well.³ As a result, the

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¹ Peter Cain and Tony Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 1688—2000, (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2002); Simon Smith, *British Imperialism* 1750–1970, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: a History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia* 1787-1868, (London: Pan Books, 1988); Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: the Export of Indian Labour Overseas* 1820-1920, (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Interesting perspective on the identity driven resettlement policy in Timothy Forest, "Kith But Not Kin: The Highland Scots, Imperial Resettlement, and the Negotiating of Identity on the Frontiers of the British Empire in the Interwar Years," (PhD diss., the University of Texas at Austin, 2008).

² Wendy Ng, *Japanese American Internment during World War II: A History and Reference Guide*, (London: Greenwood, 2001); Roger Daniels and Eric Foner, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II*, (New-York: Hill and Wang, 2004).

³ Nicholas Breyfogle, Abby Schrader and Willard Sunderland, introduction to *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. by Nicholas Breyfogle, Abby Schrader, Willard Sunderland. (London: Routledge, 2007), 8.

demographic landscape has changed tremendously. Contemporary European domination in Australia or Russian control over Siberia is exactly the result of the implementation of resettlement policies. Such ethnic redesign of the landscapes could not be implemented without an impact on local people and cultures. Moreover, it had long-term implications for economic and social situations in the affected regions, and in certain cases stirred inter-ethnic conflicts, which continue ravaging modern states today.

This study explores Tsarist and Soviet resettlement policies in the South Caucasus, with a view of studying their implications for inter-ethnic and inter-state conflicts in the region, focusing on Azerbaijan. The term "resettlement policy" in my research embraces many types of directly or indirectly state-initiated population movement, such as forced resettlement, deportation, repatriation, and state-encouraged settlement. All types of population movement in this study have an important common denominator: the role of the state in either encouraging or forcing people to resettle.

This dissertation is set to manifest and analyze the Tsarist–Soviet nexus within broader imperial and transnational contexts. I argue that Russian imperial policy was specifically designed to change the demographic landscape in the South Caucasus. Further, I believe the Soviet policy was in essence the continuation of patterns employed by Tsarist Russia. At the same time, my research will also focus on differences in methods and approaches employed by the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union. Imperial Russia and the Soviets had different ideologies in state/nation building, which subsequently affected their resettlement practices. One overarching theme of resettlement policy remained consistent throughout: the extension of imperial power, i.e. empire-building.

Empires employ three basic means of control: military, economic and ideological. All three forms were present in the Russian (and later Soviet) administration of the Caucasus. Ideological control includes religious and cultural dimensions, and for this reason St. Petersburg focused on Christianization and the "civilizing mission". The result of the implementations of the three modes of control of the South Caucasus was not always successful. As a means to achieve stronger imperial control, the Russian empire resorted to the resettlement policy. Militarily, it helped to create the pool of loyal population and oust "suspicious" and hostile people. Economically, St. Petersburg hoped that settlers would introduce new agricultural technology. Culturally, the Russian empire, first of all, expected the increase in the Christian population to refashion the Muslim borderland in the right direction – to make it resemble the Russian core.

The South Caucasus represents a vivid example of the imperial "laboratory" in which the Tsarist and Soviet authorities applied and tested various scenarios of population removal, exchange and settlement. Alfred Rieber mentioned both "utopian projects" and "political experimentation" aimed "at perfecting the existing structures of state and society by settling colonists either by force or by concessions in sparsely inhabited regions outside the metropolitan area in order to maximize the conditions for experimentation." I will examine such an experiment and laboratory in the South Caucasus from the perspective of the empire-building process; namely, with a view for expansionism and geopolitical benefits. It was Peter the Great who initiated the largest ever resettlement project in a place that later became the new capital of the empire – St. Petersburg – because of geopolitical interests. The prevalence of geopolitical

⁴ Alfred Rieber, "Colonizing Eurasia," in *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. by Nicholas Breyfogle, Abby Schrader, Willard Sunderland, (London: Routledge, 2007), 268.

considerations remained in force throughout the existence of the Russian empire and transferred to the Soviet Union, especially during the Stalinist era. In the meantime, whether it was an imperial "civilizing mission" or Soviet social engineering, the transformation of frontier societies also played a considerable role.

The conquest of the South Caucasus (or *Transcaucasia*, according to the Russian term) transformed the region. Russia acquired the territory of present-day Azerbaijan and Armenia in the course of several wars with Persian and Ottoman empires between 1804 and 1829. As De Waal notes, the history of Russia in the South Caucasus is more than just that of an outside power: "After 1810, the region was absorbed into the Russian state and reshaped with a Russian character." The strengthening of the Russian "character" meant increasing the Christian population versus that of the Muslims. One priority was to Christianize the region, alongside the goal of creating "loyal" space in the borderland. Russian General Ivan Paskevich noted, "Let us not forget our sublime and blessed goals: that the inhabitants be graced with the light of the Orthodox Christian Church." As a consequence of this policy, the Tsarist authorities' massive resettlements brought Russians, Germans and Armenians to the region, which caused local resentment. The demographic balance shifted towards a non-Muslim population, particularly in urban centres such as Baku and Elizavetpol (today Ganja) as well as in some other regions – Karabakh and Erivan. The Tsarist resettlement measures were mainly implemented between the 1820s and the 1850s. After this period, another type of migration was spurred by industrial development, particularly around the Baku oil fields. However, this phenomenon remains outside the scope of this research, except in cases when such

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⁵ Thomas De Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 37.

⁶ Firouzeh Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier: Tsarist Russia and Islam in the Caucasus*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 32.

migration was conducted under state control and with direct state encouragement – be it administrative or financial.

Tsarist Russia and the USSR surpassed other empires in population movement. As Alfred Rieber emphasizes, "few governments have been so determined to keep people in one place and vet so active in displacing them." Peter Holquist argues that in the early twentieth century "[t]he Russian imperial state's total-war regime had thus elaborated a whole repertoire of practices for operating upon the population in its entirety, practices that were to be carried across the revolutionary divide." This can be explained in part by the typology of the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union. While maritime empires were selective in the incorporation of overseas territories, for contiguous empires like Russia it was an immediate and vital task to ensure safety along its frontier. However, LeDonne opines that rather than simply expanding to ensure "frontier safety," Russia had an internal desire for expansion, and by the beginning of the 18th century was no longer threatened by "the objects of ambitions" – external powers. ⁹ This view coincides with my findings at the edge of the Caucasus, where Peter the Great launched the first imperial project in 1722. In the second part of 19th century Russia had a firm grip over the Caucasus and was not threatened externally, but nevertheless continued resettlement practices which now focused more on the Russification of the borderland. The absorption of the peripheries was an essential element in the empire-building process. Ronald Suny remarks that for contiguous empires it was difficult to pursue different policies in the core

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⁷ Rieber, "Colonizing Eurasia", 265.

⁸ Peter Holquist, "To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia", in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, (New-York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 125. ⁹ John P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire*, 1650–1831, (New-York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4; See also John LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917: The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

and in the periphery; as such, they tried to unify the territories. ¹⁰ Tania Rasaff argues that Russia, unlike overseas empires, was predisposed by the adjacency of the periphery to see it as an integral part of the state; therefore, the distinction between the national settlement and imperial colonies was minimized. ¹¹ Anatoly Remnev also stresses that the Russian imperial project envisioned the gradual absorption of colonial territories, such as Siberia, the Far East and the steppe region, by the imperial core. ¹²

Alexei Miller, on the other hand, argues that the Russian nation-building project did distinguish between the Empire and Russian national territory. ¹³ "The nationalisation of imperial space meant that various peripheries were now claimed and 'marked' by core nationalisms as parts of an integral 'national territory,' while some other peripheral regions were not, and had to remain (or were happy to remain) in their status of imperial periphery." ¹⁴ In Central Asia, the Tsarist regime modelled rule on that of overseas British or French colonies, and did not seek to remake the region. ¹⁵ The Caucasus combined elements that could have led to homogenization or differentiation; in urban centers like Tbilisi and Baku there were clear attempts to recreate "Russia," while mostly rural regions were left to be ruled as the "pure" periphery (although St. Petersburg greatly

¹⁰ Ronald Suny, "Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, "National" Identity, and Theories of Empire", in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, (New-York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 29-30.

¹¹ Tania Raffass, *The Soviet Union - Federation or Empire?* (London: Routledge, 2012).

¹² Anatoly Remnev, "Siberia and the Russian Far East in the Imperial Geography of Power", in *Russian Empire. Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, ed. by Jane Burbank, Mark Von Hagen and Anatolyi Remnev, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 425-255.

¹³ Alexei Miller, "The Value and the Limits of a Comparative Approach to the History of Contiguous Empires, in *Imperiology: From Empirical Knowledge to Discussing the Russian Empire*, ed. by Kimitaka Matsuzato, (Sapparo, 2007), 24.

¹⁴ Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller, "Nation-building and Regional Integration, c. 1800–1914: the Role of Empires", *European Review of History*, vol. 15, no. 3, (2008): 319.

¹⁵ Adeeb Khalid argues that "colonial conquest transformed colonized societies, but colonial empires seldom used state power to transform societies, cultures, or individuals". See Adeeb Khalid, "Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective", *Slavic Review*, vol. 65, no. 2, (2006): 231-251.

infused in all areas "loyal elements" – Christians and later specifically Russians). The imperial projects in some peripheries embraced the ideas of nationalism and the "civilizing mission"; in others economic benefits and military superiority, or religious sentiments. Alfred Rieber noted in this regard that "a tangled web of secular and religious motives linked utopian projects to various versions of a civilizing mission. The latter included spreading Christianity, more specifically Orthodoxy, replacing nomadic patterns of life with agricultural settlements, introducing western technology, and creating rationally planned urban spaces." ¹⁶

The second half of the 19th century in the Caucasus was characterised by the attempts to greatly Russify the region, which was partly due to two events: the anti-Russian movement led by Sheikh Shamil in the North Caucasus from 1834 until 1859 and the Polish revolt of 1863. They strengthened suspicions among the Russian establishment about the unreliability of the local nobility and the urgency of increasing Russian ethnic "elements" in the borderlands of the empire – not only by resettlement, but also by the expulsion and deportation of unreliable ethnic groups. Willard Sunderland and Alexei Miller emphasize that Russification and colonization were closely intertwined and accompanied the transition of Russia into a modern colonial empire. ¹⁷ By the 1870-1880s, "resettlement started to become a 'cause,' a systematic policy." However, as I try to show in this dissertation, the roots of Russian colonization and resettlement practices evolved over two centuries, and prior to the 1870s, St. Petersburg exercised and experimented in the South Caucasus.

¹⁶ Rieber, "Colonizing Eurasia", 273.

¹⁷ Willard Sunderland, "The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was but Might Have", *Slavic Review*, vol. 69, no. 1, (2010): 124; Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism*. *Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008). ¹⁸ Masoero, "Territorial Colonization", 89.

One of the important features of Russian colonization was the major role of the state. For this reason, I focus on the resettlement, as the whole history of the Russian and Soviet empires manifests the "visible hand" of the country's leaders and state apparatus in the population movement. John Weaver, in his comparative works on imperial colonization, notes that "where there was Russian colonization, it involved state planning." In general, Weaver sees colonization as "a messy convergence of private impertinence and the coercive might of the state." Willard Sunderland, contrarily, opines that Russian peasants had been moving to the borderlands for centuries without state endorsement and control. I believe that in the Russian Empire, the state apparatus closely supervised the population movement. For this reason, the role of the state in the resettlement process and its interplay with other factors – such as geopolitical considerations, economic factors, religion, and the civilizing mission – are highlights of this dissertation.

This thesis deals with empires and is inevitably grounded with the previous conceptual literature. The well-known work of Michael Doyle highlights the "intimate" relationship between the centre and periphery. ²² Doyle proposes that an accurate analysis of an empire must include both the metro-centric and periphery-centric perspectives ²³. To the dimension of the metropole-periphery relationship, we should add two elements:

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¹⁹ John C. Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650–1900, (*Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 42.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 5.

²¹ Willard Sunderland, "An Empire of Peasants: Empire-Building, Interethnic Interaction, and Ethnic Stereotyping in the Rural World of the Russian Empire, 1800–1850s", in *Imperial Russia. New Histories for the Empire*, ed. by Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 177.

²² Michael Doyle, *Empires*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

²³ Ariel Cohen in *Russian Imperialism* argues also for a greater periphery-centric view, following British scholars: "As a reaction to the prevailing views of the metrocentrists, British historian John A. Gallagher, along with a number of pupils and collaborators (including Ronald Robinson and Anil Seal) developed a theory of imperialism that is concerned primarily with events in the imperial periphery". (Ariel Cohen, *Russian Imperialism: Development and Crisis*, (Westport: Praeger, 1996), 15-16.)

coercion and inequality. Without coercion, the units of the empire either secede or form voluntary federations. The second aspect, inequality, identifies the nature of the relationship between the strong metropole and weak peripheries.²⁴ The collapse of the Soviet Union opened up scholarly interest in the "peripheral world" of the Russian empire and the Soviet Union.

Territorially, the present research deals with the land the Russian Empire acquired as a result of wars with Qajar Persia in 1804-1813, 1826-1828 and the Ottoman Empire in 1828-1829, which nowadays represents the independent Republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Most of these territories were inhabited by ethnic groups known today as Azerbaijanis, but called erroneously "Caucasian Tatars" by Russians. Before the Russian conquest, this land hosted several Turkic populated semi-independent khanates in vassal relationships with Persia and partly the Porte. This was an important borderland region, and control over it had geostrategic significance for Russia and the USSR. The several massive resettlement projects carried out by both Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union should be first of all understood in the context of foreign policy of these entities.

The point of departure is 1817 and the study finishes in 1953, focusing on three critical periods: 1817-1850, 1878-1914 and 1941-1953. These periods were characterized by the active implementation of the resettlement policies in the South Caucasus. In 1817-1823 St. Petersburg initiated the resettlement of Germans, which was followed in 1828-1831 by Armenians and the Russian sectarians in 1830-1840. At the end of the 19th

²⁴ On the concept of "empire" I benefited (besides Doyle and among vast scholarly bibliography) from Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Mark Beissinger, "Rethinking Empire in the Wake of Soviet Collapse", in *Ethnic Politics and Post-Communism: Theories and Practice*, edited by Zoltan Barany and Robert Moser, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 14-45.

century, St. Petersburg, disappointed by the resettlement of so-called foreigners (i.e. Germans and Armenians) and on the wave of Russian nationalism, launched another campaign for the resettlement of Russian peasants in Azerbaijan. The Soviet resettlement policy was caused by the beginning of the Second World War and resulted, first of all, in the deportation of Germans and other "enemy elements" from the region in 1941. In 1946, after the end of the war, Moscow – in pursuit of a territorial claim toward Turkey – launched the repatriation of Armenians from abroad to Soviet Armenia in 1946-1949. Having failed to gain territories from Turkey, the Kremlin decided to soothe the Armenian claims, and under the pretext of making "space" for Armenian repatriates and the development of cotton industry, ordered the resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia to Azerbaijan from 1948-1953. As I elaborate in the thesis, these population movement projects had common denominator: the imperial design to expand territories and control the borderland.

The Tsarist period investigated in this thesis is important background for understanding the resettlement projects carried out by the Soviet authorities in the South Caucasus. This era sets up the stage for arguments I advance in my dissertation, especially with regard to the Stalinist era. The second part of the research, which focused on the Soviet period, is the highlight of my study in terms of new archival data and intellectual discussion. Dealing with two – Tsarist and Soviet – empires in action, I left the period of 1914-1921 out of the scope of major analysis. Briefly mentioning some important events of that period such as Russian-German relations during the First World War, the Armenian resettlement of 1915 and the Armenian-Azerbaijani war in 1918-1920, I maintain that the focus of the dissertation should be periods which I would term

"imperial normalcy". The break from the empire in 1918-1921, a significant event in terms of national identity of Armenians and Azerbaijanis, requires additional in-depth research but within a different theoretical framework.

Some scholars argue that it is very hard to highlight one or two theories or postulates related to the Russian resettlement and colonization policies and practices.²⁵ Similarly, I believe it is wrong to single out a unifying description of the Russian frontiers or borderlands. Dietrich Geyer points out "that in various regions and at various times imperial policy was influenced by a very different combination of factors."²⁶ As Rieber noted, there were various frontier zones (military, extractive, settlement) and different types of settlers.²⁷ Colonies emerged as a result of the resettlement policy conducted, controlled or encouraged by the central authorities, and were also seen as an agricultural endeavour or as trade hubs. Others highlighted the civilizing mission of the new settlements in the Empire's peripheries. I would argue that in some regions, like the South Caucasus, the above-mentioned features of the frontiers and colonies combined and varied depending on time periods, albeit serving ultimately the imperial territorial design to control the population. The overarching assumption in this study is related to the empire-building drive in deconstructing the reasons and procedures of the Russian-Soviet resettlement policies. This is in contrast to other explanations such as religious motives e.g. Christianization, social transformation, the "civilizing mission" or economic benefits; for example, in agriculture.

²⁵ An excellent review of historiography of Russian colonization and resettlement can be found in: Breyfogle, Schrader, Sunderland, introduction, 1-19, and Alberto Masoero, "Territorial Colonization in Late Imperial Russia: Stages in the Development of a Concept," Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History, vol. 14, no. 1, (2013): 59-91.

²⁶ Dietrich Geyer, Russian Imperialism. The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1860-1914. (Translated by Bruce Little), (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 10. ²⁷ Rieber, "Colonizing Eurasia," 267.

When it comes to the study of colonization and the resettlement policies in Tsarist Russia, there has been too much focus on the movement of Russian people relative to the regrouping of other ethnic groups, especially foreign subjects. Geographically, when it comes to the study of the Caucasus, there is a strong emphasis on its northern part, and the English language bibliography is still short for the study of the South Caucasus. Periodically, the bibliography about Russian resettlement and colonization policy is mostly concentrated on the second half of the 20th century and later. Breyfogle and others clearly summarized the gaps in this field at the end of the Soviet era:

[M]uch of the scholarship on colonization prior to the mid-1990s – Western as well as Russian/Soviet – stressed the late imperial period at the expense of other eras, both earlier and later... Even state policy, the most scrutinized aspect of colonization, tended to be approached almost exclusively in terms of discrete settlement initiatives in particular periods, with a heavy emphasis on juxtaposing intentions and outcomes rather than exploring what state plans revealed about deeper issues of governance and ideology. In other words, colonization scholarship in the Cold War decades was at once rich in information yet restricted in its scope and methodology. It tended to be empirical rather than conceptual, insular rather than comparative.²⁹

Since the 1990s, we have observed the outburst of regional studies of the former Soviet Union, but still, certain zones and periods remain available for more in-depth scholarly research. As I mentioned earlier, this study focuses on the resettlement policies beginning in 1817 with non-Russian ethnic groups in the southern part of the Caucasus. I

²⁹ Breyfogle, Schrader, Sunderland, introduction, 5.

²⁸ Some important works on North Caucasus: Austin Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845-1917*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002); Thomas Barrett, *At the Edge of Empire: The Terek Cossacks and the North Caucasus Frontier, 1700-1860*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999); Michael Khodarkovsky, "Of Christianity, Enlightenment and Colonialism: Russia in the North Caucasus, 1550-1800," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 71, no. 2, (1999): 394-430; *The North Caucasus Barrier, The Russian Advance Towards the Muslim World*, ed. by Marie Bennigsen Broxup, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*. (New-York, Oxford Press, 2008).

intend, simultaneously, to concentrate on the actions of the state and local actors, as well as show other circumstances and motives, for example economic and religious. Since the state is the main subject of the analysis, I use more frequently the term "resettlement" (rather than "colonization") to underline the role of the state. Even Russian migration did indeed have distinguishing characteristics such as heavy state involvement in managing the movement's people.

A second argument I advance is connected with the relationship between the metropole and periphery – namely the South Caucasus – and whether the periphery was a powerless subject of Russian imperial policy, or what role it played within the Russian empire and the Soviet Union. In my research on the imperial periphery, I follow in the footsteps of many studies – especially those emerging in the last two decades, which in one way or another influenced my study. The importance of a peripheral perspective on the study of imperial Russia is underscored by Andreas Kappeler, who believes in its innovative prospect.

Overcoming the ethnocentrism of the nation-state tradition, it will permit the investigation of the polyethnic character of the empire over various spatial terrains. In distinction from national history, here ethnic and national factors will not be absolutized, [sic] and alongside ethnic conflicts the more or less peaceful coexistence of different religious and ethnic groups will be examined. Above all, this shift in perspective will break the centuries-long tradition of the centralized gaze at Russian history, which has outlived its time.³¹

My interest in the topic came out of the history of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan is the main territorial

Jeff Sahadeo, Audrey Alstadt, Tadeusz Swietochowski, Austin Jersild, Nicholas Breyfogle, Willard

Sunderland, Mark Bassin, Michael Khodarkovsky, etc...

31 Andreas Kappeler, "Rossiya – mnogonatsionalnoye gosudarstvo: vosem' let spustya posle publikatsiyi knigi," *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2000): 21.

dispute between the two countries engaged in the conflict since 1988. While reasons for the whole conflict between the two countries are diverse and disputed among experts, the Nagorno-Karabakh region is at the heart of the problem. One issue surrounding the conflict is a "historical" claim and the ethnic composition of the region. I intentionally put the word "historical" in quotation marks because territorial claims justified on the basis of history are a shaky and even dangerous exercise and, as a matter of fact, the root of many conflicts, especially in the post-Cold War and post-Soviet periods. The Nagorno-Karabakh (in Russian, *Mountainous Karabakh*) region was formed in 1923 as an autonomous *oblast* (region) of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic, and was largely populated by Armenians. In 1988, when the conflict erupted, Armenian nationalists claimed that the region had historical roots in ancient Armenian statehood, and was economically and socially discriminated against during the Soviet era under Azerbaijan's rule. The Azerbaijani side responded that Karabakh, in turn, had strong historical and cultural ties with Azerbaijan, and the Armenian population appeared there mainly after the Russian conquest of the region in the first quarter of the 19th century, as a result of the massive resettlement program supported by Imperial Russia in the entire South Caucasus. Thus, the issue surrounding the Tsarist resettlement in the South Caucasus in the 19th century became a hotbed of dispute for politicians and academicians alike in the two countries, extended to respective diasporas and even the Western scholarly community.

The importance of my research lies not only in the investigation of the history of Russian-Soviet resettlement practices but also in the analysis of their impact on the ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus – especially between Azerbaijanis and Armenians –

during the Tsarist and Soviet periods as well as the post-Soviet period. This linkage between history and ethnic conflict studies is another cornerstone of my research.

The study of the Russian resettlement practices opened up for me more intricate issues surrounding imperial designs for the South Caucasus. Resettlement practices affected not only Armenians and Azerbaijanis, but a wide range of other people: Germans, Russians (sectarians, Cossacks), Georgians, Chechens, etc. In the South Caucasus however, the most affected subjects of the Russian resettlement were Muslims. 32 Inevitably, my idea was to analyze the degree of influence the religious factor had on the decision of the Russian administration to move people into or out of the region.

In a broader framework of two state formations (the Russian Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union) academicians dispute the continuity across 1917. Meanwhile, a significant school of scholarly thought opines that Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union resembled each other in a number of ways. 33 Alexei Miller emphasizes that one of the great achievements of recent Western historiography is that 1917 ceased to be a watershed in the history of Russia.³⁴ Theodore Weeks' work on several overarching problems (politics, modernization, religion, culture) dealt with by Tsarist Russia and the

³² While during the Soviet period it is easy to distinguish national groups belonging to the Islamic faith, during imperial period it is hard to identify ethnic affiliation, as archival documents are not always specific on this issue.

³³ The most articulate examples: Lieven, *Empire*; Ronald Grigor Suny, "The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia: National Identity, and Theories of Empire", in A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin, ed. by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, (New-York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23-67; Holquist, "To Count, to Extract," 111-144; Robert D. Crews, For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia, (Cambridge: Harvard, University Press, 2006); Vilyam Pochlebkin, Vneshniya politika Rusi, Rossii i SSSR za 1000 let v imenax, dataxi factax: spravochnik, vol. 1-2, (Moscow: Mezhdunarodniyi otnosheniya, 1992-1995).

³⁴ Alexei Miller, "Istoriya imperiy i politika ppamyati". *Rossiya v global'noy politike*. 8, (2008); Alexei

Miller, Naslediye imperiy i budusheye Rossii, (Moscow: Novoye obozreniye, 2008).

USSR set up a good precedent for me to make a similar attempt with regard to resettlement policy.³⁵

I intend to study the goals and design of the imperial Tsarist and Soviet resettlement policies in the South Caucasus, with a focus on Azerbaijan and (partly) Armenia, to identify the parallels between the resettlement practices of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, and to analyze the impact of resettlement on the regional demographic, political, economic and social environments as well as on ethnic conflicts. I will also review other important questions, including the role of religion and ethnic bias in the Russian-Soviet approach to resettlement practices. I would argue that one of the important goals of the Tsarist resettlement policy was the Christianization of the South Caucasus, and the Soviet Union preserved certain biases toward religious and ethnic groups. However, the Christianization was an intermediate tool in the empire-building process in this strategic and sensitive periphery. The ultimate design was to change the demographic and social landscapes of the region and to create a loyal zone in the hostile Muslim borderland.

The novelty of this study lies in both its historical data and geography. As I mentioned, the South Caucasus remains a weak link in Western historiography as compared to other regions of the Russian empire and the Soviet Union. While some studies conducted on Russian resettlement projects in the 19th century and Stalin's deportation in the Caucasus (Chechens, Meskhetian Turks), the issue of the resettlement of the Azerbaijanis from Armenia in 1948-1953 is for the first time addressed in the Western scholarly field, and Western historiography has not dedicated enough attention

³⁵ Theodore R. Weeks, *Across the Revolutionary Divide: Russia and the USSR, 1861 –1945,* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2011).

to the inter-ethnic clashes in 1905-1906 in the South Caucasus — especially in the context of the relationship between the locals and settlers.

In this regard, I would like to touch upon some academic literature dedicated to the South Caucasus. The "discovery" of the South Caucasus began in the 1980s, and the outpouring of Western academic literature should be linked to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The South Caucasus, the region that became free from Soviet rule, is of particular interest to a wide range of people, such as policy makers, social workers, academicians and others because of its geostrategic location, rich mineral resources and the existence of violent ethnic conflicts. Outstanding contributions to the study of Azerbaijan under Russian and Soviet rule in Western scholarship were made by Audrey Altstadt and Tadeusz Swietochowski. In chapters 2 and 3 of her profound work, *The Azerbaijani* Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule, ³⁶ Altstadt investigates the impact of the establishment of the Russian colonial administration on the region's demographic and social change. Swietochowski also studies the regional socio-economic shift after the Russian conquest in his book Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition. 37 Both authors briefly discuss resettlement policy while focusing on the influence of the Russian Empire and the USSR on the formation of the Azerbaijani national identity and culture. These two works are important for my dissertation in terms of understanding the political and socio-economic transformation of the region under Russian rule. The resettlement measures were designed to fit the imperial Russian design and subsequently to follow larger transformations affected by the state machinery.

³⁶ Audrey L. Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule,* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1992).

³⁷ Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

For an understanding of the dynamics of the political, national and social development in Armenia, there are several books, among them the most notable is written by Ronald Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*. ³⁸ In general, the Western bibliography on Armenia is much lengthier than on Azerbaijan, although scholars – especially those researching the 19th and 20th centuries – should be aware of the highly politicized nature of many monographs and articles written about Armenia and Azerbaijan, which will be discussed later.

A much more specific study of the resettlement policy is seen in Firouzeh Mostashari's book *On the Religious Frontier: Tsarist Russia and Islam in the Caucasus.*In the chapter titled "Tsarist Colonization Policy and Christianizing the Caucasus," Mostashari investigates the process of the resettlement of the Armenians from Iran and the Ottoman Empire as well as the Germans and Russians to the South Caucasus. She argues that various reasons were behind such policies. For example, Germans were settled because of the ideas from the Enlightenment – to bring better agricultural practices to the region; later, "state concerns focused on increasing the number of Christians in order to secure Russia's hold over the newly conquered Caucasian borderland." Mostashari also briefly examines the resettlement issue by turning her attention to Russian rule and relations with Islam and the Muslim population. Nicholas Breyfogle, in *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia's Empire in the South Caucasus*, 40 focuses on the experiences of various Russian sectarian colonizers in the South Caucasus,

³⁸ Ronald Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

³⁹ Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier*, 38. Mostashari also published separately chapter "Russian Colonization of Caucasian Azerbaijan, 1830-1905", in *Extending the Borders of Russian History. Essays in Honor of Alfred J. Rieber*, ed. by Marsha Siefert, (Budapest – New-York: Central University Press, 2003), 167-182.

⁴⁰ Nicholas Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia's Empire in the South Caucasus, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005).*

primarily the Dukhobors and the Molokans. Among several important postulates, Breyfogle advances the idea that the resettlement of Russian sectarians to the region provided the opportunity for Tsarist administrators to forge the empire in the Muslim borderland. Furthermore, the Russian ethnicity of sectarians was analyzed in the framework of relations with indigenous populations, Muslims (including Azerbaijanis), Armenians and Georgians.

Two important studies came out relatively recently which contributed greatly to the study of the Russian imperial policy in the Caucasus. Directly dealing with the resettlement practices is Dana Lynn Sherry's dissertation titled "Imperial Alchemy: Resettlement, Ethnicity, and Governance in the Russian Caucasus, 1828-1865."41 Sherry focuses on the resettlement of Armenians and Greeks and the exodus of the so-called Circassian population from the Empire. She argues that

resettlement opened avenues for increased intervention, and their [Russian authorities] experiments sought to achieve a two-fold transformation. First, closer supervision of indigenous ethnic groups would eradicate their undesirable qualities. Second, good administration would harness the virtues of each ethnic group by joining them into a cosmopolitan population united by loyalty to the tsar. 42

A very important and interesting perspective is brought by Sean Pollock in his dissertation Empire by Invitation? Russian Political Patronage, Frontier Diplomacy and *Imperial Rivalries in the Caucasus*, 1774-1825. 43 He argues that Russian expansion to the Caucasus was encouraged by local rulers such as Georgian kings and nobles. Moreover, Pollock stands against the emphasis on the civilizational divide between the Russians and

⁴¹ Dana Lyn Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy: Resettlement, Ethnicity, and Governance in the Russian Caucasus, 1828-1865," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Davis, 2007).

⁴² Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 1.

⁴³ Sean Pollock, "Empire by Invitation: Russian Political Patronage, Frontier Diplomacy and Imperial Rivalries in the Caucasus, 1774-1825," (Ph.D diss., Harvard University, 2006).

Muslims of the Caucasus. He believes that the interactions between the metropolis and Caucasian periphery were often characterized by cooperation and cross-cultural rapprochement. Even more important is Pollock's study of the non-Russian contribution (by local actors) in the process of the formulation of Russian imperial policy towards the Caucasus. My dissertation will focus on the role of the Armenian nobility and clergy in inviting the Russian Empire to the South Caucasus.

The history of deportation in the South Caucasus during the Soviet period in the framework of Stalinist repression is briefly addressed in Pavel Polian's book *Against Their Will: the History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*. ⁴⁴ Polian discusses the deportation of Meskhetian Turks, Kurds and some other ethnic groups from the South Caucasus to Kazakhstan and Siberia during the Second World War. The deportation of Azerbaijanis is left out of the scope of Polian's study.

In sum, there are four elements of my investigation: power, space, people and conflict. The first three were suggested to me by reading the edited volume of *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930* by Jane Burbank, Mark Von Hagen and Anatolyi Remnev. ⁴⁵ Studying the history of the South Caucasus, especially of the post-Soviet period, I decided to introduce the fourth element – conflict – to understand the unity and continuity of the past and present.

As I approached the construction of the edifice of this dissertation, both chronologically and methodologically, I realized that a reader might confront some occasional repetitions which are unavoidable when one tries to trace the path of the

⁴⁴ Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004).

⁴⁵ Jane Burbank, Mark Von Hagen and Anatolyi Remnev, eds, *Russian Empire. Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

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Russian conquest of the South Caucasus and analyze the various resettlement projects separately. As this study explores the development around the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict – the historiography of which is replete with competing narratives – it warrants a more in-depth investigation of the geography and history of the region and various related issues. All chapters deal with certain controversial historiographic questions: the boundaries of historic Armenia, the term "Azerbaijan," the demographic composition of the region, as well as some methodological issues such as Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

In Chapter 1, I consider chronologically the gradual Russian penetration and the conquest of the Caucasus from 1700-1820, highlighting the aspects of foreign, economic and social policy – including resettlement. I focus on Peter the Great, Catherine II and the last stage of Russian subjugation of the Caucasus under Alexander I. Chapter 2 revolves around two resettlement projects involving the foreigners: Germans and Armenians. The last section of the Chapter traces the demographic changes of the region as a result of the above-mentioned resettlement projects. Chapter 3 is about the resettlement of Russians, and investigates military, sectarian and peasant colonisation. In the Russian case, emphasis is placed on the last two types of population movement, since military settlers were only marginally present in the South Caucasus (unlike the North Caucasus).

Chapter 4 deals with the conflicts between the locals and settlers as well as the locals and the Tsarist administration. These conflicts, *inter alia*, were caused by the resettlement policies implemented by St. Petersburg, which raised tensions over land ownership and wealth distribution. In the course of the 19th century, the imperial policy of Russification added another dimension to the already complicated relationship among ethnic groups in the region. A section in the chapter is devoted to the inter-ethnic clashes

between the Armenians and Muslims (or more precisely Azerbaijanis) in 1905-1906, which is often seen as the first violent episode between the two peoples – laying the foundation of the current conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. ⁴⁶

Chapter 5 and 6 investigate the Soviet period and deal primarily with the resettlement policies carried out in 1941-1953. This Stalinist era was heavily influenced by the Second World War and geopolitical factors shaping the post-war period. In the fifth chapter, I analyze the Soviet approach to the question of nationalities and territorial management as well as pre-war resettlement practices. Within the context of the borderland management, I study the period of deportations; namely, Germans during the war with Nazi Germany. The last chapter of the thesis deals with post-war resettlement projects: the repatriation of Armenians from abroad (1946-1949) and resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia (1948-1953). The last section is almost exclusively researched using archival sources.

In the Conclusion, I explain the Russian-Soviet resettlement policy (or more precisely, *policies*) within theoretical frameworks as well as draw on the parallels between the Tsarist and Soviet approaches to the population movement, management and control. Further, I elaborate on the impact of the Russian-Soviet resettlement policy on the ethno-territorial conflict, and give some insight on the post-Soviet situation in the South Caucasus.

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⁴⁶ This section of the chapter is partially based on my previously published research on the Armenian-Azerbaijani massacres of 1905-1906 (Farid Shafiyev, "Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict. Roots: Massacres of 1905-1906," *World of Diplomacy*, 18-19 (2008): 14-29), but I have significantly revised and improved it, as the original article was written in response to the study by Pavel Shekhtman, *Plamya davnikh pozharov*, Moscow: "Pro Armenia", 1992-1993, accessed on September 21, 2013, http://www.armenianhouse.org/shekhtman/docs-ru/reason.html and contained, as I feel now, counteraccusations. Moreover, my study was enlarged by a number of archival sources, especially imperial government reports.

This thesis culminates not only my doctoral study, but also a research interest that I pursued for many years, prior to admission to Carleton University. The bulk of the materials used in this thesis were obtained in the network of Azerbaijani archives – first of all, the Azerbaijani Historical and State Archives. I used my last three trips to Azerbaijan – in Summer 2012, 2013 and 2014 – to sharpen my focus on some gaps related mostly to the Soviet resettlement policies. Overall, the data was collected over many years, beginning in 1994 when I worked in the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. Documents from Russian archives were also cited, which became available through academic connections and various visits to Russia.

For the imperial period, documents of the Caucasus Administration and Baku governorate were very useful and cited thoroughly. One of the invaluable sources for this period is the *Acts of the Caucasian Archaeological Commission*, ⁴⁷ which embraces the period of 17-19th centuries and was published at the beginning of 1866 under the supervision of the Russian academician Adolf Petrovich Berzhe. It contains various documents related to the Russian administration, wars with Persia and the Ottoman Empire, and decrees and regulations issued by imperial viceroys and governors.

Many documents related to the Soviet period are here cited for the first time in Western academic literature, especially materials related to the resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia in 1948-1953. These are primary letters and instructions of the Azerbaijani Communist Party and state apparatus. As the resettlement of Armenians and Germans in the Caucasus has been partly covered in academic literature (especially in the Russian language), I focused my reference on the archival and primary sources of the 19th century firstly with connection to the geography of Azerbaijan, and secondly

⁴⁷ Referred as AKAK (see Bibliography)

with the demographic changes and conflicts. My analysis evolves around the state actions (St. Petersburg and Moscow) and responses from local actors in the region.

Occasionally I cite archival sources as they appeared in other secondary sources, especially in the sections related to the Russian sectarian resettlements (e.g. Breyfogle) and Armenians (Dana Sherry) in the Caucasus, as I have not had the opportunity to visit archives in Georgia and some archives in Russia. My evidence stands primarily on documents found in Azerbaijani archives and the primary literature of the 19th century.

CHAPTER 1

RUSSIAN CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

Tsarist resettlement policy evolved over the course of the 18th century, as Russia embarked on expansionist campaign in its south-eastern borders. In order to understand why and how St. Petersburg began the population movement into the South Caucasus in 1817, it is imperative to look how Russian sovereigns approached the conquest of the region and which tools they had available at the outset. In this regard, the most important periods were the reign of the Peter the Great (1682-1725) and Catherine the Great (1762-1796). Peter's Caspian campaign of 1722 was the first footstep to the South Caucasus and this chapter examines how Peter's vision later influenced the resettlement approach. Catherine II and her favorite Prince Grigoriy Potemkin designed the "master plan" on how to conquer the Caucasus; this plan envisaged the active participation of local actors such as Armenians who would be involved later in the resettlement campaign in 1828. Furthermore, the analysis of the imperial administration of the Caucasus facilitates us to comprehend the role of the resettlement in the imperial redesigning the region.

1.1 Historiography and Controversy

Multiple questions related to the historic boundaries of the groups that inhabited the South Caucasus – their ethnic names, territorial affiliation, religious peculiarities, etc. – are entangled in the web of modern conflict and competing narratives. Their complexity and the importance of understanding these groups and boundaries warrant a

separate, preliminary discussion. Scholars studying the history of the Caucasus are inevitably faced with numerous highly politicized issues surrounding current and past discourse on important regional milestones. Such debates influenced for some time all scholarship; first of all, in Russia and the post-Soviet countries, as well as the Western ones.

The first theoretical and methodological issue is related to what renowned Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said defined as "Orientalism" – which he describes as an imperial Western tradition shaped by bias towards Asia and the Muslim world, and European desire for hegemony and control. ⁴⁸ Said, following Michel Foucault's concept on the relationship between power and knowledge, asserted that in the colonial context it was imperial politics that moulded knowledge; the latter, in turn, influenced actions. Though Said's influential work did not analyze Russian Orientalism, the ethnographic, historical and literary works created in the Imperial Russian period are replete with text *Orientale*. ⁴⁹ A scholar exploring books written by Vasiliy Potto, Nikolay Dubrovin and many other Russian imperial historians should be aware of Orientalist perception and relevant limitations of primary sources in the study of the Caucasus. "Barbarism of

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⁴⁸ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New-York: Vintage, 1978).

⁴⁹ Despite criticism and deficiencies pointed out by a number of scholars to Edward Said's concept of Orientalism (for example, Susan Layton, "Nineteenth-Century Russian Mythologies of Caucasian Savagery", in *Russia's Orient. Imperial Borderlands and Peoples*, 1700-1917, ed. by Daniel Brower and Edward Lazzerini, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 82), in my opinion, this concept remains quite relevant in the study of Imperial Russia. For some works in this area: David Schimmelpenninck, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from the Peter the Great to the Emigration*, (New Haven. Yale University Press, 2010); Adeeb Khalid, "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 1, no. 4, (2000): 691-699; Kalpana Sahni, *Crucifying the Orient: Russian Orientalism and the Colonization of Caucasus and Central Asia*, (Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 2002); for uniqueness of Russian Orientalism – different from Said's approach but still existing on its own terms – see Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Asians" was at the core of the depiction of above-mentioned historians. ⁵⁰ From the Orientalist prism, both Russian imperial and Soviet scholars have promoted the idea of the "civilizing mission" of Tsarist Russia in the Caucasus. Even Friedrich Engels in a letter to Karl Marx, highlighted the "progressive" nature of Russian Empire with regard to the East. ⁵¹ Soviet scholars guided by Marxist doctrine, while acknowledging "the exploiting nature of tsarism," at the same time maintained that for the local population tsarism represented a better option than Asiatic despotism. ⁵² Today's events surrounding Chechnya and the terrorist attacks committed by Chechens in Russia and the U.S., shifted the perception of Russian-Caucasian relations. The Caucasus is presented frequently as a criminal hub, which was historically prone to extremism and religious fanaticism. However, some modern scholars rightfully argue about the many instances of the destructive impact of Russian colonialism in the region:

The general record of these years strongly suggests that the consolidation of the empire in the Northeast Caucasus was a devastating process for many of Russia's newest subjects. In light of Russia's bloody conquest of the Caucasus region, we should think twice before agreeing with those historians who claim that the Russian empire "was not a colonial power in the European sense of the term," and that its rule "was positive not only for the Russian ruling elite, but for the entire Russian state and the peoples within it." We should also perhaps be wary of those scholars who invite us to shift our attention from the conquest of peoples to the "constructive" aspects of Russian colonization, for such an invitation may imply that understanding the dynamics of "frontier exchanges" and the creation of "new social identities" on the "mixed ground of ethnic frontiers" should take

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⁵⁰ Vasiliy Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna v otdel'nykh ocherkakh, epizodakh, legendakh I biografiyakh,* vol. 1-5, (St. Petersburg: Izdaniye knizhnogo sklada Berezovskogo,1887-1889); Nikolay Dubrovin, *Istoriya voyny i vladychestva russkikh na Kavkaze,* vol. 1-6, (St. Petersburg. Tip. Departamenta udelov liteynikh del, 1871-1888).

⁵¹ Karl Marx and Fridrikh Engels, *Sochineniya*, vol. 27. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1962), 241.

⁵² For example, Nikolay A. Smirnov, *Politika Rossii na Kavkaze v XVI - XIX vv.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsialno-ekonomicheskoy literatury, 1958). For evolution of such views see Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship. Soviet Historians on the non-Russian Nationalities*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

precedence in our minds over the military and cultural destruction that constituted the central acts in the Caucasus in the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵³

Dominic Lieven in his epochal study of empires also maintains that Tsarist Russia ruthlessly conquered the Caucasus, and was engaged in the imperial tradition of mass deportations, ethnic cleansing and massacres. 54 I place the resettlement practices of Tsarist Russia and further on, the Soviet Union, within the destructive refashioning of the imperial borderland.

1.2. Setting the Stage: Peter the Great's Vision and Catherine the Great's Project

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Russia approached the North Caucasus and had borders along the Terek river. Numerous so-called mountain peoples – Chechens, Ingush, Lezgins, Abkhazians, Ossetians – were on the other side of the border. Those areas had no permanent and stable statehood, unlike the South Caucasus, which consisted of small Turkic khanates and Georgian kingdoms, dominated by two powers – the Persian Empire, ruled by declining Safavid dynasty, which was later replaced by Afshars and Qajars, and the Ottoman Empire. The eastern and central parts of the South Caucasus (modern day Azerbaijan and Armenia, and part of Georgia) were under Persia, while the western part was under the Porte, which was in the process of ousting Persians to gain more control of the region.

⁵³ Gary Hamburg, "War of Worlds: A Commentary on the Two Texts in Their Historical Context," in Russian—Muslim Confrontation in the Caucasus. Alternative visions of the conflict between Imam Shamil and the Russians, 1830–1859, ed. and trans. by Thomas Sanders, Ernest Tucker and Gary Hamburg. (London: Routledge, 2004), 167. ⁵⁴ Lieven, *The Russian Empire*, 213-217.

The roots of the Russian expansion towards the South Caucasus can be traced to the Petrine era. Michael Khodarkovsky remarked, "the Russian expansion to the south was anything but hazardous, spontaneous and uncontrolled"; rather, "it was a deliberate process with varying motives and policies." An opposing opinion is expressed by Brian Boeck, who argues that the major concern of the Muscovite government on its southern frontier was not to colonize but to contain the nomads and to prevent the hemorrhage of the Russian population through flight. Boeck underlines that imperial policy toward the Don region had no "master plan" but acted by "a complex series of ad hoc decisions," thus inherently defying the existence of a grand strategy or the colonial paradigm for Russia. He also emphasizes that important policy changes took place, referring to seventeenth-century Russia as a "reluctant empire" but describing it under Peter a few decades later as a violent and aggressive empire subordinating its periphery at all costs. ⁵⁶

My analysis of the long-term policies implemented by St. Petersburg in the South Caucasus in the 18-19th centuries supports Khodarkovsky's view. Tsarist Russia, even with some pullbacks and modifications, was steadily moving toward the South Caucasus, and after gaining control, sought further expansion at the expense of the Ottoman Empire and Iran. What Peter the Great envisaged and implemented was further continued by Catherine II in the end of 18th century and other rulers in the 19th century. The enlargement to the Caucasus was a deliberate process, and the resettlement was part of this design.

Alfred Rieber analyses one of such motives for the Russian push towards the Caucasus and explains it within the framework of contiguous empire; that Russia in the

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⁵⁵ Khodarkovsky, *Russian Steppe's Frontier*, 2.

⁵⁶ Brian J. Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2-3.

eighteenth century approached the region in question and decided to secure further its border, especially facing threat from the Persian and Ottoman empires.⁵⁷ According to this approach, it was a continuous center-driven expansionism, where the previous one dictated in its turn a new enlargement. Geography and geopolitical factors played a dominant role.⁵⁸ Dominic Lieven notes that "geography almost dictated expansion into the fertile black earth steppe and down the rivers to the coastal regions."⁵⁹

Another explanation can be found in Russia's mercantile interests. ⁶⁰ Peter the Great was interested in fostering trade ties with India and China. He was concerned with constant disruption of trade links by Caucasian mountaineers and Persian agents. Russian merchants complained about discrimination and robbery they faced en route to Asia through the Western shore of the Caspian Sea and in Persia itself. Peter was considering the construction of a new city on Kura river and connecting it with Tbilisi, the capital of the Georgian kingdom of Kartli. Another trade centre was supposed to develop in Shemakha. Peter wanted to divert the European trade route to China, which was going mainly through the Middle East, and push it via Russia. The Caucasus, according to his plan, set to be an important element of this new channel. ⁶¹ Moreover, Peter explicitly expressed desire to possess resources of the region, such as silk. ⁶²

⁵⁷ Rieber, "Colonizing Eurasia", 266-267.

⁵⁸ John LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917: The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); For Russian nationalist historians it was external threat which "compelled" St. Petersburg to act in defence; for Soviet historiography the decisive factor was the nature of an imperial state and its lust for new territory along with economic exploitation. (For example M. Pokrovskiy, *Zavoyevaniye Kavkaza. Diplomatiya i voyny tsarskoy Rossii v XIX stoletii,* (Moscow, 1923); N. Smirnov, *Politika Rossii na Kavkaze v XVI-XIX vv,* (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Sotsialno-Ekonomicheskoy Litearatury, 1958).

⁵⁹ Lieven, *The Russian Empire*, 228

⁶⁰ Nikolay Pokrovskiy, *Russkaya istoriya v samom szhatom ocherke*, (Moscow: Partiynoye izdatel'stvo, 1933).

⁶¹ Vikemtiy Lystsov, *Persidskiy pokhod Petra I: 1722—1723*, (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1951).

⁶² *Ibid*, 31.

A third element of Peter's interest was connected to a religious factor: the desire to free the Christian population of the region – Armenians and Georgians – from Persian and Ottoman domination. The Russian empire, as it grew after the Mongol domination, developed a sense of noble messianic task – to be the "Third Rome," to proliferate Orthodox Christendom, and generally, to protect Christians against injustices and sufferings⁶³.

Armenia lost its independence in 5 AD, while Georgian kingdoms managed to survive, though they were vassals of Persia and the Porte. Both groups solicited the protection of Christian powers. Armenians in the 1670s decided to send emissars to Europe – a mission assigned to Israel Ori, a nobleman from the Syunik region in the South Caucasus (modern day Armenia). Having failed to gain substantial attention from European powers, Armenians turned their hope to the Russian empire. Israel Ori delivered a letter from Armenian nobles (the *meliks* of Karabakh) to Peter the Great in 1701 in which they solicited the Russian military campaign and pledged to render necessary assistance. ⁶⁴ This letter played an important role in drawing the attention of St. Petersburg to the South Caucasus. Moreover, the appeal of Karabakhi Armenians even today continues to hold significance in terms of its geopolitical implication for the post-Soviet politics in the region. ⁶⁵ The letter, written in Armenian and translated into Russian, was similar to one Armenian *meliks* sent to a Roman Pope and the Elector

⁶³ Peter J.S. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After,* (London: Routledge, 2000).

 ⁶⁴ Gerasim A. Ezov, Snosheniya Petra Velikago s armyanskim narodom: Dokumenty, izvlechennyye iz Moskovskago Glavnago i St.-Peterburgskago arkhivov Ministerstva inostrannykh del, Avstriyskago pridvornago i Gosudarstvennago arkhiva, Korolevsko-Bavarskago taynago gosudarstvennago arkhiva i drugikh uchrezhdeniy. (Dolozheno v zasedanii Istoriko-filologicheskago otdeleniya Imperatorskoy Akademii nauk 8 yanvarya 1897 g.), (St. Petersburg: Tip. Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk, 1898), 25-27.
 ⁶⁵ This matter will be discussed in the Conclusion.

Palatine Johan Wilhelm in 1699, full of complaints about the pressure of Muslim rulers and threat of total extermination of Christian Armenians.

It should be noted that while certainly Armenians felt underprivileged versus

Muslims in Persia, on the other hand they enjoyed certain advantages. For example,

Armenian merchants received from Persian shahs exclusive rights to trade silk – a very
lucrative business. 66 Among Persian rulers notably distinguished Shah Abbas I, who

"gave them considerable opportunities for trade and business." 7 The Armenian status in

Turkey was similar – underprivileged as compared to Muslims but far from being
oppressed. The Porte regarded the Armenians as a loyal ethnic group – *sadik millet*, a

status that is disputed by modern Armenian scholars as not having been powerful enough
to avoid suffering. 68 In both Persia and the Ottoman empire Armenians faced
discrimination but also enjoyed certain privileges and protection. 69

A fourth factor behind the Russian expansion, stemming from the previous one, is what Sean Pollack calls "invitation" – the appeal of local rulers, not necessarily Christians, to take their tribes or kingdoms under protection. For example, some Kabardins asked for patronage and permission to settle in the Tsarist empire, and various North Caucasian tribes and rulers, as well as Azerbaijani Turkic khans, were at different times in contact with Russian tsars to gain assistance to fight rivals. According to this

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⁶⁶ Fyodor Soymonov, Opisaniye Kaspiyskogo morya i chinennykh na onom Rossiyskikh zavoyevaniy, yako chast' istorii gosudarya imperatora Petra Velikogo, trudami Taynogo Sovetnika, Gubernatora Sibiri i Ordena svyatogo Aleksandra Kavalera Fedora Ivanovicha Soymonova, vybrannoye iz zhurnala Yego Prevoskhoditel'stva, v bytnost' yego sluzhby morskim Ofitserom, i s vnesennymi, gde potrebno bylo, dopolneniyami Akademii Nauk Konferents-Sekretarya, Professora Istorii i Istoriografii, G. F. Millera, (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaya akademiya nauk, 1763), 330.

⁶⁷ Ehsan Yarshater, foreword in *The Khanate of Erevan under Qajar Rule* by Geogre Bournoutian, (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publisher, 1992), xi.

⁶⁸ Armen Ayvazian, "The Armenian Rebellion of the 1720s and the Threat of Genocidal Reprisal". Centre for Policy Analysis, American University of Armenia, Yerevan, 1997; Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars*, (London: Hurst & Co, 2006).

⁶⁹ Anne Redgate, *The Armenians*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 263-269.

view, Russian penetration into the Caucasus was "a negotiated process at every stage". and "dependent on the myriads of contributions" from local rulers and entrepreneurs. 70 Some of Azerbaijani Turkic khans of the South Caucasus, as Fatali Khan of Kuba, were seeking Russian patronage in order to stretch his influence over other khanates. Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh was forced to accept it to preserve his limited sovereignty. In the meantime, Armenian local nobles and clergy were seeking the creation of independent Armenia and solicited Russian intervention in the region.

Peter gave a positive response to the Armenian appeal delivered by Israel Ori and expressed an intention to render assistance in the fight against Muslim rulers. However, as the Russian tsar was busy with the Northern War (1700-1721) against Sweden, he postponed military action in the Caucasus. Instead, he ordered to engage with local supporters to create a common ground for future campaign. Peter gave Armenian merchants from Persia exclusive privileges within the empire in return for their commitment to trade all silk with Europe through Russia (not Turkey – a commitment which Armenians breached occasionally). Peter had rendered privileges to other foreign merchants in the attempts to solicit trade through Russia. 71 Further, Peter pressed the Persian shah to give similar privileges to Russian merchants in Persia; however, while the privileges were granted, their safety was not ensured. Peter's plan to develop the silk trade was reinforced by the fact that the Armenian merchants of Persia had a monopoly in this sphere. Israel Ori highlighted to Peter the advantages of Armenian linkages in growing the silk trade from Asia to Europe through Russia.⁷²

Pollack, "Empire by Invitation," 16.
 Lystsov, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 58-59.
 Ezov, *Snosheniya Petra Velikago s armyanskim narodom*, p. LXXIII

As imperial historian Vasiliy Potto emphasized: "It was Peter the Great who first looked at Armenians from a political point of view, envisaging a Russian role in the fate of Armenia. From this moment the active policy of Russian rulers with regard to Armenia began." Israel Ori had also influenced the strategic vision of Peter I with regard to penetration of the Caucasus. The plan he offered to Peter I was quite prophetic. Sergei Soloviev wrote in this regard: "In the autumn of 1703 Ori brought Peter a map of Armenia. 'From this sketch' – he wrote – 'it can be seen that there is no fortress in the country except Erivan. God help your troops to conquer it, and then you conquer all Armenia and Georgia; there are many Greeks and Armenians in Anatolia, and then Turks shall see that it is a direct way to Constantinople'."

Georgian rulers (Georgia was divided into several small kingdoms among which Kartli dominated) were also seeking the protection of Christian powers, but, like the Armenians, failed to get assistance from Europe. Vakhtang VI, the king of the East Georgian Kingdom of Kartli and a Persian vassal, contacted Peter secretly and expressed his support for Russia's advancement to the Caucasus. In 1722 after securing Vakhtang's support, Peter decided to start the campaign from Astrakhan – a city at the northern Caspian shore. He used as a pretext an assault on Russian merchants by Lezgins, a strong North Caucasus tribe that controlled adjacent areas in the eastern Caspian shore. A Russian flotilla captured Derbent, the main city of Dagestan, in August 1722. In September, Georgian king Vakhtang VI advanced to Karabakh while fighting Lezgins, and eventually captured the important city Ganja – where he met Armenian troops led by Karabakh Catholicos Isaia. They hoped to meet the Russian army, which was supposed to

⁷³ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 3, issue 6, 714.

⁷⁴ Sergei Soloviev, *Istoriya Rossii*, kniga 4, tom 18, (St. Petersburg: Izdaniye Tovarishestva Obshestvennaya Pol'za, 1896), 687.

advance towards them. However, due to bad weather, Peter retreated – resuming the campaign only in December 1722. The Russian army and navy seized Rasht, a city on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, and then later captured Baku. The Ottoman Empire also advanced, fearing that Russia might capture too much. Facing two strong enemies – Russia and the Porte – the Persian shah Tahmasp II signed a peace treaty with the former in St. Petersburg in September 1723, surrendering Derbent and Baku as well as the provinces of Shirvan, Gilan and Mazandaran.

After the conquest, Peter had ordered the settlement of occupied territories with Christian populations (especially Armenians), and at the same time encouraged the deportation of Muslims (especially Sunnis) into the Ottoman Empire. Peter emphasized that Sunni Muslims should be deported because of their linkage with Turkey. 75 Imperial historian Sergei Soloviev wrote in this regard, "Peter believed that the best way to strengthen provinces occupied by Russia was to increase the Christian population and to decrease the Muslim population. We saw that the Emperor straightforwardly pointed to Armenians." Peter also welcomed the desire of Karabakh Armenians to accept Russian citizenship (poddanstvo), and encouraged them to resettle in Russian-controlled Gilan, Mazandaran and Baku. 77 Peter concluded that "we cannot refuse protection to Christians." ⁷⁸ He also ordered a study of how many Russian settlers could be dispatched to the region. 79

Peter's conquest did not last. After his death, on the threshold of the war with the Ottoman Empire in 1732, Russian Empress Anna Ioannovna abandoned Peter's gains in

⁷⁵ Soloviev, *Istoriya Rossii*, kniga 4, tom 18, 683. ⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 684-685.

⁷⁷ Ezov, Snosheniya Petra Velikago s armyanskim narodom, 392.

⁷⁸ Soloviev, *Istoriya Rossii*, kniga 4, tom 18, 683.

⁷⁹ Lystsov, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 151.

Armenians faced repressions from both Persian and Ottoman rulers for the assistance they rendered to Russia. Vakhtang VI was expelled after the Persian shah ordered the Georgian kingdom to be taken by Kakhetian ruler Constantine II, to whom he sent troops to fight against Kartli. At the same time, the Ottomans dispatched troops to conquer Kartli. Vakhtang defended his possession for a certain time, but he eventually escaped to Russia, and Kartli was taken by the Ottomans.

Despite its abbreviated nature, the Petrine occupation was important not only as a military advancement in the Caucasus, but also in terms of administrative patterns. Instructions, which told Peter how to control the newly-occupied territories, laid the groundwork for the future reorganization of the region, though none were actually implemented during his reign. The Russian imperial design for the South Caucasus "owes" much to Peter. First of all, Peter gave instructions to secure the support of local Christian populations. Secondly, it was his vision to change the demographic landscape of the region by resettling the Christian population from foreign territories (Persia and the Ottoman Empire) within newly-established Russian borders. Peter was also thinking of encouraging Russian settlers to move to the South Caucasus, and at the same time forcing local Muslims to seek a new home in the Ottoman Empire or Persia.

As we will see from future administrative and demographic changes implemented by St. Petersburg in the Caucasus in the 19th century, these patterns were repeated with slight modifications. The Petrine period was an important milestone in terms of managing space and boundaries in the Russian empire. Under Peter, the new system of territoriality came into effect – three tiers of administration (*gubernii*, *provintsii*, *uezdy*), which

"created a new domestic space for the operations of state governance, while more precisely defined foreign borders unified this space and enclosed it by setting it off from other surrounding spaces." As Willard Sunderland further points out, "all of this spatial redefinition and reorganization helped to create an operational terrain in which the cameralist state could seek to do what it was supposed to do best: maximize the exploitation of its territory." Russia embarked upon both the reorganization of internal "historical" space and the designing of methods for future imperial acquisition. The resettlement policy grew out of this spatial redefinition of the empire – to enforce control over the population and advance the economic benefits of settlers.

After the 1732 withdrawal, the Russian empire had a long hiatus before engaging in the Caucasus during the reign of Catherine II. With the arrival of Catherine, tolerance towards Muslims became one of the main policy objectives to win hearts, primarily of Crimean as well as Caucasian Muslims. In 1773, Catherine issued an edict of Tolerance of All Faiths, declaring the protection of all confessions practiced in the Russian empire and the prohibition of all forms of religious prosecution as well as the protection of Muslim rituals. ⁸¹ This edict was issued in the context of the active foreign policy aimed at the conquest of Crimea and the Caucasus.

The return to the Caucasus began after Catherine's victory over the Ottoman Empire in 1774 with the acquisition of Kabarda, which formally was a Russian protectorate since the sixteenth century but enjoyed a great deal of independence. In 1739, after a peace treaty between Saint Petersburg and the Porte, Kabarda became a

⁸⁰ Willard Sunderland, "Imperial Space: Territorial Thought and Practice in the Eighteenth Century." In *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, ed. by Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remney, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 44.

⁸¹ Alan W. Fisher, "Enlightened Despotism and Islam under Catherine II", *Slavic Review*, vol. 27, no. 4, (1968): 542-553.

neutral buffer zone. In 1779, Russia conquered Kabarda. In the 1770-1780s, St. Petersburg installed numerous military fortifications and built cities in the North Caucasus. At the same time, it began massive campaigns to resettle Cossacks in the region to seal their footprint. Russia also encouraged Christians in the Caucasus – Kabardins, Ossetians ⁸² and others – to settle within the empire. This was the first resettlement project in the Caucasus, focusing on military and religious motives. ⁸³

The Catherine era coincided with very turbulent geopolitical situations along Russian western and southern borders, which allowed the Empire to expand significantly. A beneficial factor for Russian expansion into the Caucasus was also the turmoil in Persia. This expansion also brought many non-Orthodox peoples under the Russian throne, which certainly caused the emergence of the above-mentioned 1773 edict. With the partition of Poland, St. Petersburg embraced large Catholic as well as Jewish populations. More importantly for the subject of this study was the conquest of Crimea and the defeat of the Porte in the war of 1768-1774. Russia took vast territories from the Ottomans and sealed control in the North Caucasus and the Crimea. The latter (according the Kuchuk-Kaynarja Treaty of 1774) remained formally independent, but became a Russian protectorate in 1783.⁸⁴

The most important element for Russian colonial expansion in the Caucasus during Catherine's reign was the idea of the "Eastern system" developed by Prince Potemkin. Potemkin's "Eastern system" was not the first Catherinian exercise to create a

⁸² Some groups of those ethnic groups confessed Christianity, others – Islam.

⁸³ Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 55-96; Alfred Rieber, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 56-58.

⁸⁴ Alan W. Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea, 1772-1883*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

kind of patronage network and allied states. It followed the so-called "Northern system" developed by powerful Count Nikita Panin to establish Russian influence on northern and western borders. The "Northern system" was aimed at creating alliances against French influence, installing loyal kings on the frontier states, such as Poland. However, Panin had not envisioned any territorial expansion, and believed that it is sufficient to control what Russia already had. 85 In contrast, the "Eastern system" was aimed at expansion, and since Russia lacked friendly states to the south, Potemkin considered how to create friendly Russian satellites. The "Eastern system" planned the annexation of Crimea, building towns and forts in the south (Crimea and North Caucasus), encouraging Christian revolt in the Ottoman Empire, and some other elements. It was Potemkin's idea to build a fortified line in the North Caucasus from Mozdok to Azov, and have Cossacks and retired soldiers settle there. This proposal radically changed "the region's social and political landscape."86 Potemkin believed that a strong Russian foothold in the North Caucasus would open a road deep into the Caucasus for Russia, especially in the view of an "invitation" sent by Ossetians and Georgians. Potemkin also encouraged Kabardins beyond Russian borders to settle within the empire. He hoped this would undermine the human capital of North Caucasian lords, and eventually subjugate them easily to the Russian throne. The same strategy was employed by Potemkin in Crimea where he ordered Alexander Suvorov to supervise the resettlement of 30,000 Armenians, Georgians and Greeks to Russia. 87 Potemkin also pressed Catherine to build a navy in the

⁸⁵ Hamish M. Scott, *The Emergence of the Eastern Powers, 1756-177,5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 122-123.

⁸⁶ Pollock, "Empire by Invitations", 168.

⁸⁷ Mkrtch Nersisian, ed., *A.Suvorov i russko-armyanskiyi otnosheniya v 1770-1780 godakh,* (Yerevan: Ayastan, 1981), 116-119.

Caspian Sea. In 1782 Potemkin prepared a plan to conquer Crimea as well as to occupy Derbent.

Peter's plan to establish Russian presence in the South Caucasus was revived. Part of this plan was to extend a Russian protectorate over the Christian populations of the region – Armenians and Georgians. In order to achieve this goal, Catherine II gave clear instruction, inter alia, to reinforce the Armenians in establishing independence of their provinces from Persia and the Turks and making them a solid barrier for Russia. Resian Potemkin wanted to create three client Christian states in the Caucasus: Georgia, "Persian Armenia" and Albania. Russian historian Potto wrote that Potemkin intended to become the king of a restored Armenian kingdom. Push acquiring Crimea and making Georgian kingdoms Russian vassals, Potemkin could achieve his vision of a continuous Black Sea border and then stretch it to the Caspian Sea. On 9 February 1783 Potemkin sent to the empress a memorandum about the Caucasus which was based on information supplied by the reconnaissance mission of Reinegg, a German adventurer, and Armenian archbishop Iosef Argutinskiy. Potemkin pointed out that Armenians would extend the necessary support if Russia sent troops there.

The Russian College of Foreign Affairs formulated the empire's Caucasian policy as "the possession of the Caspian Sea and alliance with Georgians and Armenians." General Piotr Potemkin (a relative of Grigoriy Potemkin) was instructed to occupy Derbent and Karabakh and to establish an Armenian protectorate to attract Armenians to

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⁸⁸ SIRIO, vol. 27, 1880, 241-243.

⁸⁹ Caucasian Albania should not be confused with the European Albania. This ancient state existed on the territory of modern Azerbaijan in 2-8 AD.

⁹⁰ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 3, 720.

⁹¹ Armyano-Russkiye otnosheniya v XVIII veke. 1760—1800 gg. Sbornik dokumentov, vol. 4 (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR, 1990), 215-217.

⁹² Abgar R. Ioanissian, *Rossiya i armanskoe osvoboditelnoe dvizheniye v 80-kh godakh XVIII stoletiya*, (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR, 1947), 68.

join and move there in "great numbers." General Potemkin sent a letter to Armenian Catholicos Luke, assuring him of Russian determination to put an end to the Muslim yoke over Armenians. Having learned about the plan of the creation of an Armenian state, Karabakh ruler Ibrahim Khan entered into negotiations with the Russians about a "loyalty" agreement. Catherine, however, abandoned the idea to create an Armenian state by military means, preferring diplomatic advances. When Ali Murad – a pretender to the Persian throne – approached the Russians with a proposal to help him gain power, St. Petersburg asked for Derbent and a commitment to respect the creation of independent Armenia and Albania. Soon thereafter, Ali Murad died and this plan did not go ahead.

A big role in Caucasian affairs was played by two Armenians who reached a high level in St. Petersburg's circles. Iosef Argutinskiy was archbishop and prelate of the Russian-Armenian community and Count Ivan Lazarev (Ovanes Lazarian) was one of the richest men in the empire. They met with Potemkin and advocated for the establishment of an independent Armenian state with the capital in Erivan. Armenian linkages with the Russian court intensified, and wealthy Armenian merchants and the priesthood established a strong relationship with the Russian nobility. As one token of such bonds, Ivan Lazarev sold one of the biggest diamonds in the world – "Amsterdam" – to count Orlov, and Catherine's favorite presented the diamond to the Empress. ⁹⁷ Lazarev and Argutinskiy had great access to the Russian elite and influence on Potemkin and General

⁹³ Letter from G.A Potemkin to P.S. Potemkin, April 6, 1783. In *Armyano-Russkiye otnosheniya v XVIII veke*, vol. 4, 239; See also Ol'ga Markova, *Rossiya*, *Zakavkaz'ye i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya v XVIII veke*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 184.

⁹⁴ Ioanissian, Rossiya i armanskoe osvoboditelnoe dvizheniye, 80

⁹⁵ Markova, Rossiya, Zakavkaz'ye i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya v XVIII veke, 189.

⁹⁶ Ioanissian, Rossiya i armanskoe osvoboditelnoe dvizheniye, 279-280.

⁹⁷ Arutyun Amirkhanyan, *Tayny doma Lazarevykh: Fragment istorii moskovskoy armyanskoy obshchiny XIV-XX vv.*, (Moscow: "Vse dlya Vas", 1992). By another version count Orlov did not buy the diamond and used the state money – Ashot Baziyants, *Nad arkhivom Lazarevykh*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), 108-120.

Alexander Suvorov. On 10 January 1780, Ivan Lazarev presented to Suvorov a program for the liberation of Armenia, in which he noted: "Several centuries ago Armenia lost both its sovereign and independent rule, and many of its places were taken by Turks and Persians. A small part, i.e. Karabakh, still remains independent, but if they get someone from their nation as a chief, Armenia might be easily restored and in a short time many Armenians will flow in." In 1783, Archbishop Iosef Argutinskiy presented to General Piotr Potemkin a memo about Armenians who appealed on numerous occasions to Russia to liberate them. On 19 May 1783, Prince Grigoriy Potemkin wrote to the Empress Catherine II:

I have given instruction to General [Piotr] Potemkin about Ibrahim Khan of Shusha [ruler of Karabakh khanate], to bring him into submission. We have to consider at the convenient moment that his region, which is composed of the Armenian people, to be governed nationally [by Armenians] and thus to resume a Christian state in Asia, according to promises which you have given through me to Armenian meliks. ⁹⁹

Potto wrote that Potemkin wished to be a king of an Armenian state and the restoration of the Armenian kingdom was planned to be implemented in the Karabakh khanate. 100

Lazarev and Argutinskiy's influence and connections helped to create support for a "Great Armenia," the necessity of its recreation in the Caucasus, and the resettlement of Armenians there from Persia and Ottoman Empire. 101

Lazarev noted: "We kindly asked

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⁹⁸ SAOKOIAN - *Sobraniye aktov, otnosyashchikhsya k obozreniyu istorii Armyanskogo naroda*, vol. 2, (Moscow: Tip. Lazarevykh Inst. Vostochnykh yazykov, 1838), 68; See also Nersisian, *A.Suvorov*, 120. ⁹⁹ Ioanissian, *Rossiya i armanskoe osvoboditelnoe dvizheniye*, 238.

¹⁰⁰ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 3, 719-720.

¹⁰¹ For discussion and archival sources on the relationship between St. Petersburg and Armenians, see: Abgar Ioanissian, *Rossiya i armyanskoye osvoboditel'noye dvizheniye v 80-kh godakh XVIII stoletiya*, (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 1947); Tsatur. P. Agayan, *Rol' Rossii v istoricheskih sudbakh armyanskogo naroda*, (Moscow, 1978); P. A. Chobanyan and M.M. Karapetyan, "Iz istorii armyano-russkikh otnosheniy (Ob istoricheskikh svyazyakh Karabakha s Rossiyey)", in *K*

him [Potemkin] to restore Great Armenia in Erivan; he replied that it was possible, but that this would require that the patriarch and some of the local rulers request assistance with liberation, which we can use a pretext for come to their aid." ¹⁰²

Moreover, Lazarev and Argutisnkiy's version of history of the region and Armenia made inroads into Russian academia, and various scholars and ethnographers were essentially repeating it in later publications. ¹⁰³ A map, which depicted "historic" Armenia and included the territories of modern Eastern Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, was presented to Suvorov and gained a wide circulation among the Russian elite and imperial academia. As Gerasim Ezov summarized in 1901:

Thus, moral connection and trust established between Russia and the Armenian nation since the time of Peter the Great was quite deliberately strengthened in the wise reign of Catherine; selfless devotion and services of Armenians from all countries to Russia attested from the height of the throne through numerous decrees were addressed to the Armenian people, and its clergy were a natural consequence of these relations. 104

St. Petersburg viewed such satellite states as Armenia as tools for undermining the Ottoman and Persian empires and strengthening Russian presence in the region. Ezov wrote that "Peter the Great's idea about the destruction of the Muslim world and calling for an independent life of enslaved Christian nations found in Empress Catherine a fervent performer." 105 Luigi Villari, a contemporary observer of the Armenian-Azerbaijani massacres of 1905-1906, noted:

Osveshcheniyu Problem Istorii i Kul'tury Kaykazskoy Albanii I Vostochnykh Provintsiy Armenii, ed. by L. A. Khurshudian, (Yerevan, Izdatel'stvo Yerevanskogo Universiteta, 1991), 94-107.

¹⁰² Gerasim A. Ezov, "Nachalo snosheniy Echmiadzinskogo patriarshego prestola s russkim pravitel'stvom. Istoricheskoye issledovaniye po neizdannym dokumentam," Kavkazskiy vestnik, 10 (1901): 28.

¹⁰³ Modern Armenian scholars abundantly cite and refer to Russian imperial scholars to justify their claim on the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

Ezov, "Nachalo snosheniy", 53.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 27.

The wily Romanoffs saw in the Armenian people a most useful instrument for the advancement of his Middle and Near Eastern policy, a race widely scattered over the dominions of Turkey and Persia who might be employed against those powers at the opportune moment. Armenians were granted many exemptions and privileges and admitted into the ranks of the Russian army and public service, while Armenian commercial colonies were established in all the chief towns of the Empire. Peter's successors followed a similar policy and the immigration of Armenians continued and increased. ¹⁰⁶

A military campaign in the 1780s was planned following the basic path of Peter – to conquer Derbent and advance to Shemakha and Ganja. Karabakh Armenians would meet Russian soldiers and then to occupy Erivan. However, military campaigns in the Caucasus during Catherine's period were unsuccessful. In the first one, in July 1781, a Russian flotilla led by Count Mark Voinovich reached Astarabad and upon permission of Persian shah Aga Mohammad Khan established a military battery – but was soon dismantled by order of the shah. The second one (mentioned above) dispatched for revenge on a Persian attack on Georgia in 1796, was recalled after the empress' death.

Despite these failures, an important achievement of Catherinian policy, formulated and implemented by Grigoriy Potemkin, was the creation of a strong foothold in the North Caucasus and the legal engagement with Georgia. Territorial acquisitions in Crimea and the Caucasus in the second half of the 18th century coincided with the reformation of imperial domestic administration. As Sunderland notes, "the end result, by the time this second phase concluded, was the consolidation of a highly territorial state presided over by a highly space conscious elite, whose ways of seeing and ambitions for shaping territory were distinctly different from those that had prevailed a century earlier

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¹⁰⁶ Luigi Villari, Fire and Sword in the Caucasus, (London: T. F. Unwin, 1906), 145.

¹⁰⁷ Ioanissian, Rossiya i armanskoe osvoboditelnoe dvizheniye, 22.

and whose territorial values set the terms for a modern Russian territoriality." ¹⁰⁸ The acquisition of new territories was paralleled with more advanced administration stemming from Tsarist imperial ambitions. It had direct implications for the Caucasus, as Russia established their presence and ruling patterns.

Catherine's reign was also the beginning of an active resettlement policy, especially of foreigners from Europe. Catherine opined that due to vast land resources and scarce population, the Russian empire needed human resources. She "regarded population increase essentially as a means to increase the wealth and power of the state – and with them her own 'glory'." An invitation aimed towards Europeans was not new; Peter the Great sponsored and encouraged the settlement of Germans, Dutch and other European people in Russian cities. Russian rulers attracted technocrats and specialists to serve for imperial bureaucracy. However, Catherine's manifestos were aimed at larger resettlements in Russian regions. This was a new policy set in terms of size and objectives; it increased the Empire's human resources as well as having political implications. Robert Bartlett sees "the overriding concern" for Catherine's resettlement policy of foreigners in an economic domain – to populate south-eastern regions of the empire and reap economic benefits, especially in agriculture. 110 The importance of this policy can be seen later, in the 19th century – especially in borderland regions, as mostly political and civilizational. This had long-term implications for peripheries like the

¹⁰⁸ Willard Sunderland, "Imperial Space: Territorial Thought and Practice in the Eighteenth Century", in Russian Empire. Space, People, Power, 1700–1930, ed. by Jane Burbank, Mark Von Hagen and Anatolyi Remney, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 53.

¹⁰⁹ Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital: The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia*, 1762–1804, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 31. ¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 32

Caucasus. Thus, Russia was moving loyal and 'civilized' elements (as perceived by Catherine) to the newly acquired territories.

In 1762 and 1763 Catherine II issued two Manifestos, which served to guide foreign settlement within the Russian empire – especially along the Volga River and into southern Ukraine. The Manifestos offered generous material incentives – tax exemption, freedom of religion and other perks – to attract human capital from Europe. It targeted certain skilled settlers, such as entrepreneurs, artisans and husbandmen. The invitation was accepted by large groups of Germans, and to a lesser extent by the Dutch, Swiss, Swedes and other Europeans. The first wave of emigration brought about 30,000 Germans into the empire before 1775, and the second wave brought tens of thousands of European settlers into steppes along the Volga, Don and Dnepr until 1804. 111 In October 1778, Catherine II approved a plan of resettlement of Germans from Volga to the North Caucasus to strengthen the Mozdok-Azov line. 112 Catherine also invited sectarian fugitives such as Old Believers, who left Russia for Poland, to return and settle in the southern Russian provinces. Ultimately, Catherine's invitation was utilized by other groups of people, besides Europeans; "Asians" such as Armenians and Greeks 113 residing in Persia and the Ottoman Empire, were particularly targeted by St. Petersburg. Here, the reasoning was mixed with economic and political considerations. For example, inviting Armenians to settle in Astrakhan, Russia was motivated by a desire to boost trade through Armenian merchants. In resettling Armenians from Crimea and Persia in Don or Mozdok, St. Petersburg was predominantly thinking about political advantages – to

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¹¹¹ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: Multiethnic History,* (Harlow: Pearson Education Press, 2001), 50-51

¹¹² Tatyana N. Plokhotnyuk, *Rossiyskiyi nemtsy na Severnom Kavkaze*, (Moscow: Obshestvennaya Akademiya Nauk Rossiyskikh Nemtsev, 2006), 6.

¹¹³ Both ethnic groups residing in Asia were considered by St. Petersburg "Asian".

depopulate the borderland territories of adversary states and fill them with the loyal and skilled labour of its own periphery. As Bartlett notes, "in Russian relations with the latter – peoples of Asian and Balkan countries – religious and commercial factors were paramount, both intertwined with the politics of the 'Eastern Ouestion'." ¹¹⁴ As noted, the Eastern Question was ultimately aimed at the weakening and even destruction of the Ottoman Empire. Related to this policy was the "Greek project," which envisaged the restoration of the Byzantine Empire and made two ethnic groups politically significant for the Russian Empire – the Armenians and Greeks. 115 Their resettlement in the southern region of the empire stemmed from the idea that in the future they could help to advance Russian expansion. The Crimean Christians – predominantly Greeks and Armenians – founded the towns of Mariupol and New Nakhichevan respectively. The Armenian community also settled in large numbers 116 in Astrakhan and Mozdok, and founded another city – Grigoriopol. 117 Astrakhan was turned into a main mercantile and political hub for Armenians, where Armenian archbishop Iosef Argutinskiy tried to advance the political independence of Armenians in Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Catherine specifically granted many privileges to Armenians of Astrakhan. 118 One of her decrees stipulated: "We give permission to people from the Caucasus Mountains to settle and recognize the establishment of a city for Armenians as useful."119

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¹¹⁴ Bartlett, *Human Capital*, 17

About political significance see: Bartlett, *Human Capital*, 117-118, 131; Zh. Ananian. "K voprosu o zaseleniyi yuga Rossii armyanami vo vtoroy polovine XVIII stoletiya," *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SS: obshchestvenniye nauki*, 5 (1963): 45-54.

¹¹⁶ There is no reliable and precise number. Aleksandra Ilyasova estimates the number of Armenians settlers 14,906. Aleksandra Ilyasova. "K voprosu o roli gosudarstvennoy politiki Rossii v vozniknovenii i roste armyanskikh poseleniy na Severnom Kavkaze v XVIII-XIX vv.," *Ekonomicheskiye i gumanitarnyye issledovaniya regionov*, Rostov-na-Donu, 3 (2010) 11-25.

¹¹⁷ Ioanissian, Rossiya i armanskoe osvoboditelnoe dvizheniye, 189-194.

¹¹⁸ Khachaturyan, "Naseleniye armyanskoy kolonii Astrakhani," 86-87.

¹¹⁹ Quoted from Ilyasova, "K voprosu o roli", 15.

This policy – the invitation of Armenian settlers and granting of certain privileges – was later continued on a larger scale in the 19th century, which will be the subject of thorough further discussion. The creation of a pocket of a reliable Christian population in the borderland was the essential part of the Tsarist strategy, which emerged in the course of the 18th century and was further developed during the next century.

1.3. The Conquest of the South Caucasus, 1804-1829

The 19th century ushered in the two hundred years of Russian presence in the South Caucasus. By 1801 St. Petersburg completed the annexation of eastern Georgia, which was put under military governorship. Despite the objection and resistance of the Georgian royal establishment to the annulment of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom, Russia proceeded with strong determination to abandon the idea of a Georgian protectorate in favour of direct rule. This transformation had an impact on other imperial projects, such as the creation of an independent Armenian state. As St. Petersburg advanced to the South Caucasus in the first three decades of the 19th century and conquered the territory of modern day Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russia opted for complete incorporation of new territories into the imperial space and direct rule. The emperor Alexander I, following the acquisition of eastern Georgia, decided to accomplish further enlargement by advancing into the Eastern Caucasus – a territory which was divided between several small Turkic (Azerbaijani) khanates under Persian vassalage. Some of the khanate rulers – for example, Ibrahim of Karabakh, already in the 1780-1790s – were seeking Russian protection. Such efforts towards patronage can be explained by three factors: first of all,

rulers wanted to secure limited sovereignty in the face of Russian invasion; secondly, some preferred Russian protection over Persian vassalage; and thirdly, they wished to enlarge their territories at the expense of their neighbours.

As mentioned earlier, the fight between Ottoman and Persian empires over the influence in the South Caucasus, as well as internal wars and raids of North Caucasian tribes, ravaged the resources and the populations of most South Caucasus khanates. For local nobles, sometimes economic and financial advantages prevailed over religious differences. Caucasus political actors were exploring benefits that could be gained from the Russian approach to the Caucasus. Each tried to justify the enlargement of their territories, which gave birth to different interpretations of history as early as the end of the XVIII century. Georgian King Erekle II, besides the Russian confirmation of his possession of Kartli and Kakhetia, wanted to extend his rule over Ganja, Erivan and Kars. Armenians were looking for the re-creation of "ancient Great Armenia" and partly succeeded in persuading the Russians to establish borders that would encompass almost the whole South Caucasus, except Georgia. The Khan of Kuba Fatali, looking for Russian protectorate, wished to enlarge to the south and west.

In this regard, Christians had advantageous treatment from Russia. Michael Khodarkovsky remarks that the "overwhelming sense of the imperial mission" was "to bring Civilization and Christianity." Alexander I was especially prone to various

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¹²⁰ See Map with Suvorov signature in Pollock, "Empire by Invitation", 223-224. Argutinskiy wrote in his diary: "On the Armenian map we showed him regions of Armenia and its famous cities". Mkrtch Nersisian, ed., *Iz istorii russko-armyanskikh otnosheniy*, vol. 1, (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR, 1956).

Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800*, (Bloomington: Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2002), 189.

Christian mystic and messianic teachings. 122 This facilitated the implementation of policies discussed further, such as the resettlement of German so-called religious separatists and others in the Caucasus. However, in terms of practical steps in the region, Alexander I relied on local imperial representatives such as Pavel Tsitsianov and Alexei Ermolov to deal with strategic and tactical problems.

In 1804, war erupted between Russia and Persia because of the latter's discontent over the Russian acquisition of eastern Georgia. Russian General Pavel Tsitsianov was instructed to march from Georgia, to the east, then up to the Caspian Sea. He defeated Persian shah's and the Azerbaijani khans' troops. Some of the khans decided voluntarily to accept Russian rule – the Karabakh, Sheki and Shirvan khanates opted for peaceful accession; others were subjugated. Despite a difficult geopolitical situation and war with Napoleon, Russia achieved significant territorial gains in the war with Persia from 1804-1813. The Gulistan Treaty, signed on October 24, 1813, gave Russia the khanates of Karabakh, Ganja, Sheki, Shirvan, Baku, Guba and Derbent as well as part of Talysh with the fortress of Lenkoran. Persia renounced all pretensions to Dagestan and Georgia.

In conquering present-day Azerbaijan, Russian generals used brute force and intimidation, believing that "treacherous" and "Asiatic" Muslims should be subjugated by fear. ¹²³ After its defeat, the khanate of Ganja was abolished, and renamed Elizavetpol as a territorial unit of the Russian empire. As Firouzeh Mostashari points out, "The Russians had first used diplomacy and amicable gestures to win over the khans, and after exhausting peaceful means of coercion had opted for violent ones. Now they meant not

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¹²³ Muriel Atkin, Russia and Iran, 1780–1828, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 75-76.

¹²² Alan Palmer, *Alexander I: Tsar of War and Peace*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Kazimir Valishevskiy, *Aleksandr I. Istoriya tsarstvovaniya*, (St. Petesrburg: Vita Nova, 2011); Vsevolod Glukhovtsev, *Alexander I – imperator, khristianin, chelovek*, (Moscow: Litres, 2013).

only to triumph through the use of force, but also set an example." ¹²⁴ Despite treaties concluded between Russia and several khanates (such as Karabakh, which stipulated the preservation of limited sovereignty of local rulers) St. Petersburg did not honour these agreements, and all khanates became later the territorial units of the Empire. Especially significant was the Treaty of Kurukchay – the first legal instrument signed between Tsarist Russia and an Azerbaijani khan – which was supposed to set an example for other Muslim rulers of the region. Signed on 14 May 1805, it stipulated that the Karabakh khanate became the protectorate of Russia and refused an independent foreign policy. The ruler of Karabakh was obliged to pay an annual contribution and host Russian troops in the region. At the same time, article II of the treaty preserved the limited sovereignty of the khanate and ensured that the ruler of Karabakh would stay in power. ¹²⁵

The management of newly-acquired territories was assigned to General Alexei Ermolov, who became the commander-in-chief of Georgia and the whole Caucasian Corps as well as ambassador to Persia. Having experience in Napoleonic wars, Ermolov gained notoriety in the Caucasus for his fierce rule and excessive use of force, who "carved his name by bayonets" in the history of the Russian conquest of the Caucasus. Many Russians, including liberal-minded Alexander Pushkin, praised Ermolov for establishing Russian rule in the Caucasus. Paradoxically, Ermolov himself was inclined to liberalism, and was dismissed in 1827 by Tsar Nicholas II on the suspicion of Ermolov's links with Decembrists.

Another renowned Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky advocated a messianic Russian role to free Christians in the Ottoman Empire and the whole Orient, and

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¹²⁶ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol 2, 1.

¹²⁴ Mostashari, On the Religious Frontier, 15

AKAK (Akty, sobrannyve Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey), vol. 2, doc 1436, 705.

subsequently justified expansionist policy. ¹²⁷ Such dualism can be observed in the attitude of other liberal-minded Russians, which can be partially explained by the notion of the "civilizing mission" popular among all European colonial powers. Dipash Chakrabarty, speaking about British imperialism, highlighted that "it is, in fact, one of the ironies of British history that the British became political liberals at home at the same time as they became imperialists abroad." ¹²⁸ Western liberalism in the 19th century denied equal rights for many so-called backward societies, proceeding from reasoning voiced by philosophers like John Stuart Mill:

[Liberalism] is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children, or of young persons below the age which the law may fix as that of manhood or womanhood... For the same reason, we may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its non age. 129

Russian liberals echoed similar views and legitimized the Russian acquisition of the Caucasus. Such stance justified Ermolov's approach not only to subjugate Caucasian people but also to deny them any form of self-rule. Over his tenure, he demolished all legal mantles of Azerbaijani khanates, and joined them as "ordinary Russian provinces." Russian imperial historians such as Potto and Velichko used extensively the notion of the "civilizing mission" to advance and entrench Russian rule in the Caucasus – especially in opposition to Persian and Ottoman influences.

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¹²⁷ For detailed analysis of Dostoyevsky's views on the messianic role of Russia as well as his anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish stance see Sahni, *Crucifying the Orient*, 71-90.

¹²⁸ Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Government Roots of Modern Ethnicity", in *Habitations of Modernity*: *Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 85.

¹²⁹ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, (London: Floating Press, 2009 (reprint of 1859)) 19.

¹³⁰ Mostahsari, On the Religious Frontier, 8.

Russian gains in the Caucasus were facilitated by local actors. In the Russian-Persian and Russian-Ottoman wars during the first quarter of the 19th century,

Armenians contributed significantly to the success of the Russian army. Russian General Rtishev noted in this regard that Armenians rendered considerable assistance, manifesting support and loyalty to the Russian empire. ¹³¹ In the Russian military campaigns in the Caucasus, two military figures of Armenian origin – generals Vasiliy Bebutov (1791-1858) and Valery Madatov (1782-1829) – rose to prominence and Madatov later became the military chief of the Sheki, Shirvan and Karabakh khanates, after the Russian conquest. He enjoyed the full confidence of the Russian commander-in-chief of the Caucasus Ermolov until the appointment of Paskevich. ¹³² The liquidation of the Azerbaijani khanates was credited to the efforts of Madatov. ¹³³

First, Sheki khanate was liquidated after the sudden death of its young ruler Ismayil khan in 1819. ¹³⁴ In 1820 Mustafa, khan of Shirvan, fled to Persia and his khanate was annulled as well. Afterwards, pressure was exerted on Karabakh khan Mehdi Gulukhan. General Madatov, supported by Ermolov, demanded that Mehdi Gulukhan "return" a large swath of lands that he claimed belonged to his ancestors, though he had no noble roots in the region. ¹³⁵ In 1822 Karabakh's khan also fled to Persia and a special military governorship was established over the three former khanates.

The final touch in the South Caucasus came as a result of the Russian-Persian war of 1826-1828 and the Russian-Turkish war of 1829. Persia, ruled by Fath Ali, shah of

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¹³¹ AKAK, vol. 5, doc. 289, 231.

¹³² S. A Madatova, "Knyaz V.G. Madatov, general-leytenant", *Russkaya starina*, vol. 7, no. 1, (1873), 85-102.

¹³³ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 2, 692.

¹³⁴ Azerbaijani historian Mehman Abdullayev opines that his death was not accidental, but was plotted by Russians. See: Mehman Abdullayev, "Aspekty kolonial'noy politiki Rossiyskoy Imperii v Severnom Azerbaydzhane, (pervyye desyatiletiya XIX veka)," accessed on October 27, 2013, http://gisap.eu/node/952 ¹³⁵ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 2, 692.

Qajar, did not reconcile with the result of the Gulistan Treaty of 1813 and desired to recover the lost territories. In July 1826 the Persian army, supported by local populations, marched into Karabakh and Talysh khanates. The initial period of the war marked the success of the Persian army, and General Ermolov was replaced by Ivan Paskevich – who managed to turn the tide of the war in favour of Russia. In the fall of 1827 the Russian army occupied Erivan khanate and Tebriz, which forced Persia to seek peace with St. Petersburg. On 21 February 1828 Persia and Russia signed the Turkmenchay Treaty, which passed the khanates of Erivan and Nakhichevan to Russia. As a result of a war with the Porte in 1828-1829, Russia sealed its presence in the Eastern Caucasus along the Black Sea shore, and thus finalized the expansion into the South Caucasus.

CHAPTER 2

FIRST IMPERIAL PROJECTS: FOREIGN SETTLERS – GERMANS AND ARMENIANS

This chapter focuses on the Tsarist resettlement policy of foreigners or subjects of other states and empires, namely Germans from Württemberg and Armenians from Persia and the Ottoman Empire to the Russian Caucasus in the 19th century. I examine these population movements from the imperial perspective – what Russia wished to gain by settling these particular ethnic groups; whether there was continuity between previous resettlement of Germans and Armenians to Russia in the 18th century and that of the 19th century and how the resettlement project was shaped, evolved and affected the local Muslim population in the region. I will argue that the Christianization of the Caucasus was at the core of the resettlement policy. However, this pursuit was not only driven by a religious motive; it also helped to consolidate the Russian imperial power in the region. I believe that the resettlement and Christianization was part of population management which served other interests such as the empire-building process. The resettlement project was born out of geopolitical considerations and was advanced due to imperial design. The whole empire-building process in the South Caucasus should be understood in the context of the geopolitical situation in this borderland. Therefore, the present chapter concerns also Russia's encounter with Iran and Turkey and, as a whole, with Islamic civilizations.

The two distinct projects that occurred in the early nineteenth century were the German resettlement of 1817-1821 and the Armenian of 1828-1831. The further evolution and attitude of the imperial authorities toward German and Armenian settlers helps us understand both the initial motives of the resettlement projects and the Tsarist

policy in the region, as well as ultimately the design St. Petersburg advanced in the South Caucasus borderland. The rationale for such design was primarily political – to have a loyal Christian population belt in the Muslim borderland, which Russia had used and intended to use against Persia and the Ottoman Empire. In addition, St. Petersburg considered economic benefits and trade connections which they hoped German peasants and Armenian merchants would enforce in the region. Thirdly, the Russian Caucasus administration also hoped that the Christian population would play a role in the "civilizing mission." Armenians in turn expected that St. Petersburg would allow them to create an Armenian state, a plan which Russia had considered since the Peter the Great.

The historiography on German and Armenian resettlement in the English language literature is scarce. The life of German settlers in Azerbaijan has been thoroughly studied in the Azerbaijani literature but these are mostly ethnographic studies centering on their economic and cultural activities. ¹³⁶ Some studies are conducted on the movement of the Armenian population, such as Dana Sherry's dissertation in which she also focuses on the deportation of Circassians in the 1860s. ¹³⁷ As I have discussed in the introduction, Sherry sees the population movement as attempts by Russia to reshape the Caucasus. Dana Sherry opined that St. Petersburg had two goals of resettlement: firstly, the supervision of indigenous ethnic groups in order to eradicate their undesirable qualities, and secondly, to merge targeted people into a "cosmopolitan population united".

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¹³⁶ Several Russian language works cover the life of German colonies in the Caucasus extensively and in detail: Tamara Chernova-Deke, *Nemetskiye poseleniya na periferii Rossiyskoy imperii. Kavkaz: vzglyad skvoz' stoletiye (1818-1917)*, (Moscow: MSNK-press, 2008); Sudaba Zeynalova, *Nemtsy na Kavkaze*. (Baku: Mutarjim, 2009); Sudaba Zeynalova, *Nemetskiyi koloniyi v Azerbaydzhane (1819-1941)*, (Baku: Araz, 2002); Turan Akhundova, *Nemtsy-kolonisty Azerbaydzhana XIX - nachala XX vekov*, (Baku: Izdatel'stvo Shusha, 1999); Nazim Ibragimov, *Nemetskiye stranitsy istorii Azerbaydzhana*, (Baku: Izdatel'stvo Azerbaydzhan, 1995); Khajar Veridyeva, *Nemtsy v Severnom Azerbaydzhane*, (Baku: Elm, 2009)

Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy".

by loyalty to the tsar." ¹³⁸ Since education and high culture, Russian officials believed, would have a limited impact on the Caucasian population, the Russian administration used resettlement "as a cruder mechanism" to reshape the region in a radical fashion. Sherry believes that the Russian administration's objective was a transformation of the region in line with the imperial order, and therefore utilized the human elements under control. She rejects the notion that St. Petersburg considered Muslims as undesirable subjects and wanted to replace them with Russians, Armenians and other Christian groups. While I support the idea that Russian empire wanted to accommodate its subjects and transform the region, St. Petersburg nevertheless ideally wished to increase the Christian population in the South Caucasus, which would ease the problem with undesirable Muslim subjects.

Other Western scholars expressed views on the Tsarist resettlement in the South Caucasus. Firouzeh Mostashari points out that due to Russian "contiguous colonialism," instead of relying on military control, Russia decided to dilute the composition of native peoples by introducing massive numbers of settlers and incorporating the newly-acquired territories into the imperial administrative system. ¹³⁹ At the same time, the Caucasus administration promoted a "civilizing mission" to make the local population culturally closer to the Russian core. Orlando Figes stresses that in order to "consolidate imperial control in these unsettled borderlands [...] the Russians launched a new part of their southern strategy in the early decades of the nineteenth century: clearing Muslim populations and encouraging Christian settlers to colonize the newly conquered lands." ¹⁴⁰ Azerbaijani historiography focuses on purported motives of Armenian nationalists to

¹³⁸ Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 1

Mostashari, On the Religious Frontier, 39.

¹⁴⁰ Orlando Figes, *The Crimean War: a History*, (New-York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 18.

Create and enlarge the Armenian statehood. Many Azerbaijani scholars, including Khajar Verdiyeva in her study of the Russian resettlement policy, maintain that Russia carried out Christianization and Russification in the South Caucasus and that the resettlement was part of this policy. ¹⁴¹

My approach is more in line with Sherry's focus – to explore the relationship between the resettlement and Russian control over the region; however, in the meantime I analyze whether and how this resettlement project became a factor in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. While Sherry's study is based on Georgian archives, I compiled my data mainly from the Azerbaijani archives. In general, the imperial archival sources are similar (for example, AKAK (*Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey*), documents of Caucasus administration, etc...), but my focus territorially is on Azerbaijan and Armenia. During my study I focused on the documents of the Caucasus administration, Baku and Elizavetpol governorates as well as numerous dispatches between the local administrators and St. Petersburg. Periodicals, such as *Caucasus Calendar* are also valuable sources of information with regard to development of the region.

2.1 Resettlement of Germans, 1817-1821 and Beyond

The resettlement process began with Germans in 1817, and therefore the study of their movement to the Caucasus is essential for understanding the motives and evolution of the Russian approach to the resettlement goals and modalities. German resettlement is

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¹⁴¹ Khajar Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika Rossiyskoy imperii v Severnom Azerbaydzhane (XIX – nachale XX veka)*, (Baku: Altay, 1999).

also a helpful "contrast" to the migration of Armenians – "contrast" in the sense of understanding whether and how the religious and ethnic factors were present or absent in the Tsarist policy in the South Caucasus. The brief answer is that St. Petersburg had an individual approach to each ethnic group, which it decided to move to the region. The motives had also changed over time and were greatly interlinked with the geopolitical situation in the borderland.

As Russia acquired control of the land located to the north of Araz (Arax) river according to the Treaty of Gulistan (1813), St. Petersburg considered territorial rearrangement to enforce Russian rule in the South Caucasus. The resettlement policy was a priority for imperial design and was launched relatively soon after the treaty, in 1817. The legal basis for the settlement of Germans in the Caucasus was a decree issued by the Committee of Ministers on 7 September 1818 "On the Settlement of Württemberg People in Georgia". 142 Some settlements were established in former Ganja khanate, on the territory of modern Azerbaijan. It should be mentioned that early, in 1804, Alexander I issued a manifesto inviting Germans to Russia. As compared to Catherine's invitation (the edicts of 1762 and 1673), this document demanded a certain property minimum for those who wished to migrate to Russia and prioritized those settlers "who could serve as a model in the peasant business, craft and be a good landlord." The emperor Alexander himself took an apparent personal interest in the resettlement of Germans in the Caucasus following the Treaty of Gulistan. After reviewing the tenets of the sectarian beliefs of Germans, the tsar agreed to a settlement. Russian scholar Tamara Chernova-Deke believes that there was a mixture of mystic-religious and economic motives behind the

PSZ, Compendium 1 (1649-1825), vol. 36, doc. 75, (St. Petersburg, 1830), 213-214.
 Quoted from Gerbert Vins, *Nemtsy v Rossii i SNG*, *1763-1997*, (Moscow – Stuttgart: MSNK, 1998), 5.

migration of German colonists from Württemberg (Swabia) to the Caucasus. 144 Many German sectarians believed that the Apocalypse was approaching and the Caucasus, especially Mount Ararat, would be an appropriate place to meet the end of the world. A favorable circumstance was the fact that a sister of Tsar Alexander I, Catherine, was the wife of King Friedrich Wilhelm of Württemberg, and the wife of Alexander I was Princess Elizabeth of Baden.

However, the most important aspect in the Russian consideration of German resettlement was economic; since the seventeenth century, Russia had invited foreign settlers, including Germans, as skilled workers, craftsmen and engineers. As I mentioned earlier, Catherine II elevated the policy of the resettlement of foreigners to a new level in order to populate Russian peripheries for both political (Crimea, North Caucasus) and economic (Volga, Ural) reasons.

Tamara Chernova-Deke points out that the Caucasus was not initially a place for German resettlement. She opines that Russian authorities prioritized the resettlement of Armenians, Greeks, Russian sectarians and Cossacks. The German resettlement of 1817-1818 was a short-term and time-limited plan. 145

In 1816 a group of German sectarians from Württemberg appealed to Alexander I to issue a permit for them to settle in the Caucasus. Already by that time the Germans of Württemberg had begun migrating to Russia. The economic situation in Germany was difficult and local authorities did not impede the exodus. The resettlement campaign on the German end was organized well; migrants applied to local authorities and upon consent, the applications were submitted to the Russian consulate in Stuttgart. However,

¹⁴⁴ Chernova-Deke, *Nemetskiye poseleniya*, 18-19. ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 28.

on the Russian end in the Caucasus the resettlement process turned chaotic, despite the fact that the Caucasus administration itself had solicited the arrival of German settlers. A chief advocate of the resettlement of Germans in the Caucasus was the commander-in-chief of the Caucasian Army, General Ermolov. After reviewing the economic situation of the Caucasus, in a letter dated 31 December 1816 he described the idea of the establishment of a German colony as a model for local people in order to set an example in promoting agricultural technology. ¹⁴⁶ He requested that St. Petersburg send about 30 families to promote new agricultural practices in the region.

Initially, the government was reluctant to allocate money to settlers, having ceased such practices in 1810, but later blessed Ermolov's plan. St. Petersburg dispensed 697,428 silver rubles for the resettlement of German colonists. Each family was given 145 rubles for transportation, 11.5 kopeks for daily allowances and 57 kopeks for maintaining carriages and horses. ¹⁴⁷ The state treasury also allocated 3,000 rubles per family to build houses and purchase household necessities in the Caucasus and 35 desyatin (1 desyatin = 2.7 acres) land plots (the first group of settlers in 1817 received 60 desyatin given by Ermolov). ¹⁴⁸ As with all foreign colonists in Russia, Germans also received a 10-year delay for credit return, which by the decree of 1831 was extended to 20 years. ¹⁴⁹

On the road to the Caucasus, the Germans faced hardship and many died from epidemics; about 1,000 colonists died in Ismail¹⁵⁰ during quarantine, imposed by the

¹⁴⁶ AKAK, vol. 6, part 1, doc. 302, 248-249.

¹⁴⁷ Fred Tsimmer, "Koloniya Yelenendorf Elizavetpol'skoy guberniyi i uyezda," SMOMPK, issue 29, (Tiflis, 1901), 12.

¹⁴⁸ AKAK, vol. 6, part 1, doc. 425, 316

¹⁴⁹ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 188, 240.

¹⁵⁰ Historic city on the Danube river in south-western Ukraine.

Tsarist government due to the spread of cholera. ¹⁵¹ In the Caucasus they also suffered from lack of food and logistical support. The first settlement, Marienfeld near Tbilisi, was established in 1817 by 31 families (170 people). The next year, 1818, marked the massive arrival of Germans, and another five colonies were established in today's Georgia (Elisabethtal, New Tiflis, Alexandersdorf, Petersdorf and Katharinenfeld) and two in Azerbaijan (Annenfeld and Helenendorf) in 1819. However, Ermolov was caught by surprise as he was not prepared to accept Germans settlers in large numbers. He recalled in his memoir that he wanted 30 colonists for promoting agriculture but "so many colonists who arrived, I never desired." ¹⁵²

On 20 February 1818, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Karl Nesselrode wrote to Ermolov that about 500 German colonists (who arrived in the Kherson region of Russia, despite the hardship they had already faced) expressed a strong desire to proceed further to the Caucasus. See Nesselrode emphasized that this issue should be resolved positively and instructed that the colonists should enjoy the same rights and privileges granted to all foreign colonists in Russia. Ermolov was instructed to find appropriate land plots for the settlers. The chief of the Caucasus administration was concerned with the safety of settlers, had difficulty in allocating territories for German colonists and reported back that "it is impossible to settle a large number of colonists this [1818] year." The main problem was with the lack of proper planning and resources. Ermolov in his numerous dispatches warned about the impossibility of accommodating 500 settlers due

¹⁵¹ Chernova-Deke, Nemetskiyi poseleniya, 24.

¹⁵² Alexei Ermolov, *Zapiski*, part 2 (1816-1827), (Moscow, 1868), 68.

¹⁵³ AKAK, vol. 6, part 1, doc. 426, 316.

¹⁵⁴ AKAK, vol. 6, part 1, doc. 428, 318-319.

to the problems with safety and lack of state lands, but his appeals were in vain. In November 1818 all groups of settlers arrived in Georgia.

The figures on the total number of settlers differ in studies. Sources reported in 1817-1818 that about 7,000 Germans moved to the Caucasus and formed seven compact colonies there. ¹⁵⁵ While some Germans settled in Russian internal governorates, about 1,000 died on the way, and approximately 486 families arrived to their destination. ¹⁵⁶ In 1818 General Ermolov in his correspondence mentioned 500 families which the Russian administration needed to resettle ¹⁵⁷ and 2,500 who needed funds. ¹⁵⁸ Sudaba Zeynalova estimates that out of 1,400 families, only 500 actually settled in the region. ¹⁵⁹

Over Spring and Summer 1819, St. Petersburg and the Russian administration of the Caucasus were exchanging letters; feverishly trying to resolve outstanding issues related to allocating plots for settlers, financing and ensuring their safety. The Caucasus administration allocated 100,000 rubles for the needs of settlers, but German colonists nevertheless went through a hard adaptation process. ¹⁶⁰ The climate, terrain, diseases, lack of equipment and tools, financing and housing – all these factors complicated the settlement. Germans not only greatly suffered from illness, but also had a difficult adaptation to the local climate. ¹⁶¹

Despite the fact that the Russian administration had allocated funds to help the German settlers and had ensured their safety from mountaineers' raids, the adaptation

¹⁵⁵ Piotr Basikhin, "Nemetskiyi kolonii na Kavkaze". Kavkazskiy vestnik, no. 1 (Tiflis, 1900), 15.

¹⁵⁶ N.K. Nikifirov, "Ekonomisheskiy byt nemetskikh kolonistov v zakavkazskom kraye", MIEBGKZK, vol. 1, ch. 2 (Tiflis, 1886), 104;

¹⁵⁷ AKAK. vol. 6, part 1, doc. 431, 324.

¹⁵⁸ AKAK. vol. 6, part 1, doc. 460, 340

¹⁵⁹ Zeynalova, Nemetskiyi koloniyi, 19.

AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 188, 240-241; more on adaptation process: Chernova-Deke, *Nemetskiye poseleniya*, 36, 42

¹⁶¹ AKAK, vol. 6, part 1, doc. 460, 343-344 and 349.

took longer than expected and garnered less than positive results for the Russian administration. Disappointed by such developments, on 12 February 1819 Ermolov wrote that he had hoped that the Germans' attitude to labour and agriculture would be exemplary for local people, but that "most Germans were idle and did not care about husbandry". ¹⁶² However, apparently the problem was related to the poverty of colonists who lacked the tools and funds to develop agriculture. Moreover, the safety of new colonies was also undermined by wars and raids. Two German colonies in Azerbaijan – Helenendorf and Annenfeld – suffered as a result of the Russian-Iranian war of 1826-1828. On 29 May 1826, Helenendorf was almost completely destroyed by the Persian army and its residents fled to Ganja. In September of 1826, the residents returned back and received 100 silver rubles per family in aid. In 1829-1830 Helenendorf succumbed to cholera and plague. Especially miserable conditions were in Annenfeld, which lost almost its entire population – with only 48 families surviving. Even these families had earlier fled to other colonies, but with the support of the government had returned. 163

Ermolov's successor Ivan Paskevich advised the continuation of aid to German colonists. He communicated to St. Petersburg on 29 January 1831 about various environmental factors behind high mortality rates, diseases, and war with Persia – all of which had resulted in the loss of labour. Paskevich related that this in turn had hindered the development of the colonies, and he expressed his belief that "the bad condition of the colonists occurred due to causes beyond their control, and therefore they require the indulgence of the government." ¹⁶⁴ Upon his recommendation, the government enacted

AKAK, vol. 6, part 1, doc. 460, 340.
 AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 190, 243
 AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 188, 241.

tax and debt relief to many colonists and adopted other measures to alleviate their conditions

The next wave of German inflow to the Caucasus began in the 1840s. A few hundred families moved to the South Caucasus and this trend continued in the following decades. Both Caucasian viceroys – Mikhail Vorontsov and Alexander Baryatinskiy – issued small numbers of invitations/permits to Germans to settle in the Caucasus. The German migration faded away as the Russian administration was disappointed with the result of their resettlement

The 1860s was marked by the end of the Caucasian war – a three decade long war between the Russian administration and the mountaineers led by Sheikh Shamil. After Shamil's defeat in 1859, the Russian administration deported North Caucasian people on a massive scale to the Ottoman Empire. St. Petersburg considered ways to fill emptied lands, but despite the urgency of the question decided that Germans were a poor choice. By that time (as mentioned earlier) disappointment with German colonization reached fruition, and St. Petersburg expressed a preference to settle Russians in the Caucasus. The reasons behind the disappointment were mostly economic in nature; despite growing local agriculture such as vineries, German colonies continued their isolated existence and had little effect on the local population – including the agricultural practices of Muslims 165

Later, in the 1870s, geopolitics also played a role in "cooling down" Russian sentiments towards the Germans. After the German unification of 1871, the new imperial power became threatening to the Russian interests in the West. Suspicion against the Germans was rising among the Russian elite. Against this background, Russian

¹⁶⁵ Chernova-Deke, Nemetskiye poseleniya, 53, 78.

bureaucrat and supervisor (*revizor*) Alexander Paltov, having inspected 250 German colonies in Russia, concluded that isolated German colonies lived a "German life" with no adaptation to Russian culture and language. He published a book under the penname "Velitsyn," which underlined the German threat within Russia. According to the author, Germans might conquer Russia "without the roar of guns and bloody battlefields." The *Caucasus Calendar* in 1899 described Germans in the South Caucasus as living an isolated life, without learning Russian or local languages, with "all good qualities and bad prejudices." The above-mentioned document characterized "the good qualities" of Germans: physical fitness, modesty, honesty as features which cannot overcome "bad prejudices" such as their isolation, inability to learn Russian and local languages, and inability to adopt new agricultural techniques. ¹⁶⁸

It should be noted that the complaints of Russian officials about the limited positive impact of Germans on neighboring people was also due to demography.

Demographic changes caused by the inflow of German settlers had a minimal impact on the region, and it was very limited in terms of space and number. Initially about 2,600 Germans settled in the South Caucasus in 1817-1818. The sources indicate that in 1817 31 families (170 people)¹⁶⁹ and in 1818 486 families¹⁷⁰ (about 2,500 people)¹⁷¹ settled in Georgia and Azerbaijan. In 1826 some Germans perished during the Russian-Persian war, and at the end of the 1820s and in the 1830s German colonists suffered greatly from

¹⁶⁶ Aleksandr Velitsyn, *Nemtsy v Rossii. Ocherki istoricheskogo razvitiya i nastoyashchego polozheniya nemetskikh koloniy na yuge i vostoke Rossii*, (St. Petersburg: Tip. Obshchestvennaya pol'za, 1893), 1. ¹⁶⁷ KK (*Kavkazskiv Kalendar*), 1899, otd. 2, 65.

¹⁶⁸ KK, 1899, otd. 2, 66.

¹⁶⁹ AKAK. vol. 6, part 1, doc. 425, 316.

¹⁷⁰ Nikifirov, "Ekonomisheskiy byt nemetskikh kolonistov", 104.

General Ermolov in one of his letters mentions 2,500 people: AKAK. vol. 6, part 1, doc. 460, 340.

illnesses and lost almost half of its initial population. ¹⁷² St. Petersburg essentially did not carry out any organized resettlement campaign after 1817-1819, but Germans continued to move to the Caucasus in small numbers. In 1835 Russian ethnographer Orest Yevetskiy counted 2,650 Germans living in the South Caucasus. ¹⁷³ In 1855 there were 2742 German colonists in the South Caucasus (Tiflis and Elizavetpol governorates). ¹⁷⁴ By 1886, 5,271 Germans lived in the South Caucasus ¹⁷⁵ and the growth was mostly the result of the natural birth rate; however, some German migrants were moving to the region, especially to urban centers like Baku. Thus, the initial plan of Ermolov with regard to German settlers as promoters of agriculture failed to be implemented at necessary scale. Germans were turning from rural to urban migrants.

The 1897 Imperial Census identified 6,249 Germans in Baku (3,430), Elizavetpol (3,194) and Erivan (210) governorates. 8,340 Germans lived in Tiflis, 1,065 in Kutayis and 430 in Kars governorates. ¹⁷⁶ Over the course of almost a century the number of Germans in the South Caucasus increased, but their ratio to the whole population of the region remained modest at 0,25 percent. Russian scholar Chernova-Deke believes that imperial statistics refute any assumption related to the infringement of Germans upon the land and faith of the local people in terms of attempts on Christianization; however, this

¹⁷² Veliyeva, *Pereselencheskata politika*, 224.

¹⁷³ Orest Yevetskiy, *Statisticheskoye opisaniye Zakavkazskogo kraya, s prisovokupleniyem stat'yi* "Politicheskoye sostoyaniye Zakavkazskogo kraya v XVII veka i yego sravneniye onogo s nyneshnim, (St. Petersburg, 1835), 34.

¹⁷⁴ AKAK, vol. 10, doc. 82, 109

¹⁷⁵ Svod statisticheskix dannix o naseleniyi Zakavkaskogo kraya, izvlechennix iz posemeynix spiskov (Tiflis, 1893), 13.

^{Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiyskoy Imperii, 1897 g. Tsentral'nyy statisticheskiy komitet MVD, ed. by N.A.Troynitskiy, (St. Petersburg, 1899-1905): for the South Caucasus see vol. 61: Bakinskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905; vol. 63: Yelizavetopol'skaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1904; vol. 64 - kn.1 Karskaya oblast'. St. Petersburg, 1900; vol. 64 - kn.02: Karskaya oblast'. St. Petersburg, 1904; vol. .66: Kutaisskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905; vol. 69: Tiflisskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905; vol. 71: Erivanskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905.}

does not exclude agrarian conflicts with neighbors. ¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, such a small number of Germans living remotely from one another did not pose a significant threat to the land ownership of local people – namely Azerbaijanis. For this reason they did not appear to exert any religious influence either. St. Petersburg already by the 1830s no longer counted on the Germans for political and economic leverage in the region.

The culminating moment of Russian animosity against the Germans arrived with the First World War. 178 The first act against German colonies, in October 1914, involved the retitling of all settlements to Russian names. In January 1915 St. Petersburg decided to remove all ethnic Germans from the front units of the Russian Army to the rearguard. As the Caucasus became one of the main battlefields with the Ottoman Empire – Germany's ally – the Caucasus administration enacted several measures of control and restriction against the German population. The Caucasus administration also introduced surveillance over the German population, and brought in legislative measures concerning the property and rights of Germans in Russia. On 2 February 1915, the Russian government adopted a law on the expropriation of land holdings of German nationals, and later implemented this legislation in other provinces and regions of the country. On 13 December 1915, St. Petersburg prepared a decree according to which the entire German population of the Volga region ought to be evicted to Siberia. Eviction was scheduled to start in the spring of 1917, but by that time Nicholas II was deposed and a new revolutionary government had suspended the implementation of all regulations against ethnic Germans – including in the Caucasus.

¹⁷⁷ Chernova-Deke, Nemetskiye poseleniya, 79.

Detailed studies about Germans as "enemies" see Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire. The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Thus, Germans who were brought to the Caucasus primary for agricultural purposes, and expected by Russian officials to be a useful – loyal – element in the Muslim borderland, were near the brink of total deportation hundred years later. The whole development with the German resettlement and colonization emphasizes the importance for St. Petersburg of geopolitical factors in the movement of people to the South Caucasus. Otherwise, the economic successes of German colonies internally – such as the development of vineries – would have been more important than their social influence – or more precisely, the lack of social influence on the neighboring people.

2.2. Resettlement of Armenians – Disputation Among Scholars

The issue of the Armenian resettlement in the South Caucasus requires some preliminary discussion of historiography, some aspects of which I touched upon in the previous chapter. The inflow of the Armenian population to the region after the Russian conquest, historical borders of ancient and medieval kingdoms, the impact of settlers on the local demographics – these are highly contentious issues in the modern historiography of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The resettlement policy carried out by Russia and the USSR is linked with the current conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In these countries, as well as in the Western scholarly community (e.g. George Bournoutian, Robert Hewsen), there is an ongoing fight for the history and legacy of Karabakh and the relevancy of this region either to Armenia or Caucasian Albania (a medieval state which existed on the territory of modern Azerbaijan). 179 Thomas de Waal, the author of thorough research

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 $^{^{179}}$ As mentioned earlier, Caucasian Albania or Agvank (this is how most historical medieval chroniclers referred to it) has no relevancy to European Albania.

work on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, argues that the complicated and competing narratives from both sides helped propel "ancient history into frontline politics." ¹⁸⁰

Firstly, a highly politicized historical dispute evolved around the geographical term "Azerbaijan" and the ethnic term "Azerbaijanis." Armenian scholars (and modern Iranian ones) claim that it is not appropriate to call modern day Azerbaijan by such a name, because "historical Azerbaijan" was located south of the Araz River. ¹⁸¹ They believe that the founders of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic in 1918 deliberately chose this term to advance a future claim on Iranian Azerbaijan. It is true that what is known today as Azerbaijan was identified in many historical chronicles as "Albania" or "Arran," not "Azerbaijan." However, by the 19th century, some regions of modern day Azerbaijan were called "Azerbaijan" by some travelers, and more historical sources referred to the area as "Azerbaijan" as well as identified its Turkic affiliation. For example, in 1863, the British Consul in Tebriz described Azerbaijan as a country divided between Russia and Persia, with the boundaries close to modern Azerbaijan. ¹⁸² In the review of Russian territories published in Tbilisi in 1836, the author points out that the

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¹⁸⁰ Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden. Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New-York – London: New-York University Press, 2003), 155.

Typically such views are expressed in: Rouben Galichian, *The Invention of History. Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Showcasing of Imagination*, (Yerevan: Printinfo, 2000); Garnik Asatryan, "Ot «Ariyskogo prostora» do Azerbaydzhanskogo mifa. Chast' 3. «Azerbaydzhantsy» i prochiye," accessed on October 16, 2013, http://dezaz.info/azerbajanci-i-prochie/ (Armenian nationalist historians such as Garnik Asatrian made successfully inroads into Western academia and published *Iran and the Caucasus*, peer-reviewed journal printed by Brill in the Netherlands); Arsen Melik-Shakhnazarov, *Nagornyy Karabakh: fakty protiv lzhi: informatsionno-ideologicheskiye aspekty nagorno-karabakhskogo konflikta*, (Moscow: Volshebnyy fonar', 2009); See also: "Strany pod nazvaniyem Azerbaydzhanskaya respublika ne sushchestvuyet v prirode. Interv'yu politologa Levona Melik-Shakhnazaryana portalu Voskanapat.info", accessed on October 16, 2013, http://www.voskanapat.info/?p=2612; "Interview: Arrân; The Real Name of the Republic of Azerbaijan", Interview with Dr. Enayatollah Reza, accessed on October 16, 2013, http://www.caissoas.com/CAIS/Geography/arran_or_azerbaijan.htm or "Iranskiy deputat: v istorii ne bylo gosudarstva pod nazvaniyem "Azerbaydzhan", accessed on October 17, 2013, http://k4500.com/history/3068-iranskij-deputat-v-istorii-ne-bylo-gosudarstva-po.html

¹⁸² "Extracts from a Memorandum on the Country of Azerbaijan by Keith E. Abbott, Esq., H.M. Consul-General in Persia. [Communicated by the Foreign Office.]," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, vol. 8, no. 6. (1863 - 1864): 275-279.

"*Turkoman* language is the dominant language in Shirvan and all of Azerbaijan." This list of references goes on. ¹⁸⁴ In this dissertation, with regard to the geographical names I tried to follow a trend of identifying a region either by a modern day reference (to encircle the territory of modern day states) or by terms used by historians/politicians of the period in question. For example, when I write "Azerbaijan" I imply modern day Azerbaijan. When I discuss the Caspian campaign of Peter the Great, I refer to Iran as Persia to identify the way that the emperor referred to it. Therefore, my reference to a geographical name does not imply any political meaning.

As for the ethnic name "Azerbaijani" (*Azerbaycanlilar* in the Azerbaijani language and *Azerbaidzhantsy* in Russian), which was assigned by Josef Stalin in 1936, Russian imperial scholars in the 19th century called the population in modern day Azerbaijan "Tatars." The local population of Caucasian (Northern) Azerbaijan identified themselves as either Muslims or Turks. In Armenia and Iran this fact is used to deny the ethnic identity of today's Azerbaijanis. ¹⁸⁶ The problem with the use of ethnonyms in academic works has been raised by well-established scholars; for example, Andreas Kappeler, who emphasized the difficulty in being consistent in this regard, as ethnonyms

¹⁸³ Obozreniye Rossiyskikh vladeniy za Kavkazom v statisticheskom, etnograficheskom, topograficheskom i finansovom otnosheniyakh. vol. 3, (Tiflis, 1836), 78.

¹⁸⁴ For extensive list of sources referring to "Azerbaijan" and dispute with Armenian scholars see: Adil Baguirov, "Yeshcho raz pro nazvaniye Azerbaydzhan", *Zerkalo*, May 26, 2007 and Rizvan Guseynov, "Bol'shoy Azerbaydzhan v rossiyskikh, yevropeyskikh i inykh istochnikakh XIX veka", accessed on October 17, 2013, http://www.erevangala500.com/?direct=news_page&id=71 ¹⁸⁵ See for example, Pollock, "Empire by Invitation".

¹⁸⁶ For example, Kaveh Farrokh, "Pan Turanianism Takes Aim at Azerbaijan," *Rozaneh*, vol. 6, no. 32, (2005): 1-73; Fatema Soudavar Farmanfarmaian, "On Azaris and Azarbaijan." *The Iranian*, October 2, 2002; Garnik Asatrian. "Sushcestvuyet li narod Azeri?" accessed on November 21, 2013, http://www.bvahan.com/armenianway/AW/Ashot_Egiazarian/Asatrian/azari/main.html; Artsrun Hovannisyan, "Psychological complex of Azerbaijan or the project of "Azeri," accessed on December 12, 2013, http://m.lurer.com/?p=68051&l=en.

over time have changed. ¹⁸⁷ For the purposes of this dissertation, when it is possible to identify the ethnic affinity by a modern name, I refer to it appropriately (for example, "Azerbaijanis" or "Chechens"). When it is not possible (here historians deal with Russian documents of the imperial period) I identify them as "Muslims" or "Cherkess."

While Armenian (and Iranian) scholars try to dispute the applicability of the geographic and political term "Azerbaijan," the very term "Armenia" is also challenged in terms of its appropriateness to modern day Armenia. What constitutes today's Armenia was hardly identified as such during medieval times. After the conquest of the South Caucasus by Russian Empire in 1830, St. Petersburg created the "Armenian Province" on the territory of the Erivan khanate. Later, in the 20th century, Armenian and Soviet scholars advanced the term "Eastern Armenia" to identify Russian or Caucasian Armenia. 188 This term was occasionally wrongfully used, apparently for political purposes, especially after the Second World War when the USSR put forward territorial claims against Turkey. Stalin demanded that Turkey give "Western Armenia" to the Armenian Soviet Republic, and thus the term "Eastern Armenia" was promoted to identify Russian-Soviet Armenia.

The history of the Caucasus is replete with disputes about borders of respective national territories. 189 Local scholars try to trace historical boundaries back to ancient and medieval times, and frequently refer to past political units at their maximum expansions. For example, Georgians point to the "Georgian" kingdom of David IV the Builder (1073–

¹⁸⁷ Andreas Kappeler. *The Russian Empire: Multiethnic History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Press, 2001),

¹⁸⁸ Zaven Grigorian, *Prisovedineniye Vostochnoy Armenii k Rosii v nachale XIX v*. Moscow, 1959; Vardan Parsamian. Prisovedineniye Vostochnov Armeniyi k Rossii i yego istoricheskoye znacheniye (k 150-letiyu). (Yerevan, 1978).

¹⁸⁹ A good overview of the national histories and scholarly disputes is given in De Waal, *Black Garden*, 150-158, though some of the author's conclusion on historical claims in Armenia and Azerbaijan needs, in my opinion, serious further research.

1125), when it reached its zenith. For Armenians it is definitely Great Armenia's borders, which extended partly to modern day Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia at Great Armenia's peak. Such periods of "greatness," even short-lived, serve as justification for territorial disputes. In view of Armenian scholars, Azerbaijan's regions of Karabakh and Nakhichevan were a part of Great Armenia. Other regional histories are fiercely disputed by scholars. The Javakh or regions of Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki in modern Georgia are also argued to be "historical" Armenian land. 190 In 1829-1830, about 40,000 Armenians were settled in Akhalkalaki from the Ottoman Empire. Modern Armenian scholars also promote the idea that this region was a part of Great Armenia, and the settlement of 1830 saw the return of the indigenous Armenian population. ¹⁹¹ In many historical claims Armenian scholars refer to medieval Armenian chroniclers, such as Moses of Chorene's (Movses Khorenatsi) work *History of Armenia*. ¹⁹² Western scholar Robert Thomson opines that this work is rife with inaccuracies and classical myths. ¹⁹³ Austrian-American scholar Otto Maenchen-Helfen stressed that Armenian medieval sources, especially Moses of Chorene and Faustus Buzond, are unreliable due to various distortions and compilations and modifications made later, and "abounds with wild exaggerations of Armenian victories." 194

Imperial Russian scholars, in general, somewhat reconfirm the Armenian claims on the historic frontiers of the Armenian homeland, but many Russian historians and

¹⁹⁰ "Javakh" in *Armenian Short Encyclopedia*, vol. 4 (Yerevan, 2003), 226; Artak Gabriyelyan, "Javakh – iskonno armyanskaya territoriya", accessed on January 7, 2013,

http://www.yerkramas.org/2008/11/23/dzhavaxk-%E2%80%93-iskonno-armyanskaya-territoriya/
¹⁹¹ For example: Ashot Melkonian, *Javakh v XIX veke I pervoy chetverti XX veka* (Yerevan: Institut Istorii Natsionalnoy Akademii Nauk, 2003), 88.

¹⁹² Moses Khorenatsi. *History of the Armenians*. New and revised edition of the 1978 Harvard University Press edition. (Ann Arbor: Caravan Books, 2006).

¹⁹³ Robert Thomson, introduction in Khorenatsi, *History of the Armenians* – see above.

¹⁹⁴ Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns: Studies in Their History and Culture*, ed. by Max Knight, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 457-458.

experts used Armenian sources only. For example, Ivan Shopen, in his well-known work on Armenia, noted that the geography and boundaries of Great Armenia were compiled from Armenian sources. ¹⁹⁵ Prior to that, in the 18th century, several notable Armenians (Israel Ori, Ivan Lazarev, Iosef Argutinskiy) supplied the Russian court with maps and documents on Armenia, and advised Prince Grigoriy Potemknin and General Alexander Suvorov on regional perspectives (discussed in Chapters 1 of the dissertation).

Regional history in the case of Armenia and Azerbaijan is entangled in the complicated web of religious affiliation and colonial legacy. The presence of churches, monasteries, mosques and other ancient shrines is used for furthering historic and territorial claims. Interesting research has been published recently by Gerard Toal and John Loughlin on "multiple geographies" in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The authors remark:

Those modern nationalisms that have used a religious identity as the basis for their definition and demarcation of community tend to also use religious monuments and sites as markers of their claim to homeland territories. The problems with such strategies are well known to scholars of nationalism. Ecclesiastical space and spatiality has historically been very different from the exclusivist spatiality associated with modern nationalism. Religious communities and dominions overlapped and co-existed with other communities that themselves became the basis for subsequent nationalist movements and projects. Furthermore, religious monuments are never simply religious but entangled with dynastic power structures and patrimonies. As one of the oldest Christian creeds, the Armenian Church has a long and complicated geographical footprint across the Middle East, Anatolia and Caucasus... churches, graveyards and religious stones are taken as evidence of original ownership of territories under dispute and the basis for making claims to territories that may not otherwise be under dispute. Such discourses seek to imagine

¹⁹⁵ Ivan Shopen, *Istoricheskiy pamyatnik sostoyaniya Armyanskoy oblasti v epokhu yeya prisoyedineniya k Rossiyskoy Imperii*, (St. Petersburg: Tip. Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk, 1852), iii.

territory as sacred space, sacred not simply for its religious meaning but more broadly as the ancient patrimony of the modern nation. ¹⁹⁶

Overall, I view these "historical" disputes linked with political claims as irrelevant to the science of history and as a great obstacle to conflict resolution. 197 Historical claims cannot justify either the violation of state sovereignty and territorial borders by force, or the political and religious rights of any ethnic group. Unfortunately, historical studies became a hostage of politicized disputes, and post-Soviet politicians view history (or precisely, the interpretation of history) as a great tool for territorial expansions. The question of state resettlement and broader migration policy is used to put forward politically charged historical claims. David Laitin and Ronald Suny write that in the Caucasus, "where much of its history has been one of migration, intermingling of different religious and linguistic groups, not to mention overlapping polities and contested sovereignties from ancient to modern times, nationalists persistently draw harder and clearer boundaries between their own people and those living closest to them (who share much of each other's culture)." Laitin and Suny stress further that it is an erroneous approach to reproduce the continuous and interrupted cultural geographies of nationalists, "while it is distinguishing ethno-religious communities of the past from nations in modern times." The conflict, in their opinion, is the product of the 20th century and, especially, the 70-year experience of Soviet rule. 198

¹⁹⁶ Gerard Toal and John O'Loughlin, "Land for Peace in Nagorny Karabakh? Political Geographies and Public Attitudes inside a Contested De Facto State." *Territory, Politics, Governance*. vol. 1, no. 2, (2013): 170

¹⁹⁷ Farid Shafiyev. "Ethnic Myths and Perceptions as a Hurdle to Conflict Settlement: The Armenian-Azerbaijani Case," *The Caucasus & Globalization: Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, (2007)" 57-69.

David Laitin and Ronald Suny, "Armenia And Azerbaijan: Thinking a Way Out of Karabakh", *Middle East Policy*, vol. 7, no. 1, (1999) 146-148.

Last, but not least, there is also some objection to the use of certain sources in investigating the history of the South Caucasus. Armenian and some Western scholars such as Thomas de Waal object to making references to Russian chauvinistic authors such as Vasiliy Velichko. 199 An academician investigating the Russian Caucasus must cite contemporary sources if they contain relevant information, regardless of the ideological colours of their authors. Unfortunately, sometimes references to such authors by modern South Caucasian scholars have a discriminatory purpose, and are characterized by negative rhetoric towards certain ethnic groups. In dealing with sources I was guided by intention to identify and separate the actual facts and ideological narratives surrounding them.

2.3. Resettlement of Armenians, 1828-1831.

As a result of two wars with Persia (1804-1813, 1826-1828) and one with the Porte (1828-1829) Tsarist Russia conquered the territory of the South Caucasus. What today constitutes the Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan – territories of several Turkic (Azerbaijani) khanates – came under Russian control after two treaties with Qajar Iran: the Gulistan and Turkmanchay treaties (1813 and 1828). One of the important provisions of the Turkmanchay Treaty was the permission of the subjects of the two states to change their place of residence within one year. Article 15 opened the way for Armenians and other Qajar subjects to leave the Persian Empire and move under the protection of

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¹⁹⁹ De Waal, *Black Garden*, 143.

Russia. 200 Russian officials and Armenians took this opportunity to begin resettlement from Persia to the Russian Caucasus.

Interestingly, when Tsarist Russia embarked on negotiations with Persia over a peace treaty, its initial demands did not contain the above-mentioned provision; it was only later incorporated, with a certain role played by the Armenian nobility and clergy.²⁰¹ L. Semenov noted in his study of the Turkmanchay Treaty that Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and Persia sent several secret requests to the Russian side for the creation of an Armenian special territorial unit (osobiv udel). 202 This territory in the Armenian plan would serve the basis for future independent Armenian kingdom, and would be reinforced by resettling the Armenians from Persia. Nicholas I, preoccupied with expenses for the continuation of the war, initially instructed Caucasus officials to sign a treaty with Persia as quickly as possible without insisting on some contentious issues. 203 However, local actors both Armenian (archbishop Nerses) and Russian (general Paskevich) decided to move with their own plan, which eventually produced a treaty with all desirable provisions incorporated.

The role of the Russian diplomatic representative in Persia, renowned Russian poet Alexander Griboyedov and author of *Woe from Wit*, is especially significant. Although in 1819 Griboyedov made highly negative remarks about Armenians and accused them of treason, 204 over time he changed his attitude. Griboyedov played a pivotal role in negotiating relevant provisions of the treaty concerning the Armenian

²⁰⁰ PSZ, Compendium 2, (1825-1881) vol. 3, doc. 1794, (St. Petersburg, 1828), 125-130.

See Paskevich's report to Nicholas I on Russian demands: AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 528, 571.

²⁰² L. S. Semenov, "K voprosu o znacheniyi Turkmanchayskogo dogovora dlya istorii Armenii". *Istoriko*folologicheskiy zhurnal Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR, 4 (1959): 106.
²⁰³ Boris Balayan, "Iz diplomaticheskoy istoriyi prisoyedineniya Vostochnoy Armeniyi k Rossii", *Izvestiya*

Akademii Nauk Armenskoy SSR, 11 (1962): 24.

Alexander Griboyedov. "Pismo S.I. Mazarevichu, 11 — 13 September 1819", in *Sochineniya* by Alexander Griboyedv, ed. by V. Orlova, (Moscow - Leningrad: Goslitizdat, 1959), 514-520.

resettlement. 205 As someone who participated in the military campaign against Persia, he appreciated the significance of the Armenian support in this war. Griboyedov visited Armenian archbishop Nerses personally and discussed the future of the Armenian people; it is likely that the question of the resettlement surfaced during these discussions. It was Griboyedov on the Russian side who made the issue of resettlement vital to the interests of St. Petersburg. He began pondering resettlement in 1827, while the war was ongoing, and incorporated the clauses into the text in its final version of 1828 – having full support of Paskevich and archbishop Nerses. 206 Paskevich praised Gribovedov for his exceptional efforts in reaching a deal with Persia. 207 Griboyedov, being at a diplomatic mission in Iran, was later killed due to his personal involvement with the Armenian community. 208

As described in this study, bonds between Tsarist Russia and the Armenians stretched far beyond Griboyedov's personal transition, being established long before – during the reign of the Peter the Great. 209 As I have discussed in the previous chapter, Peter encouraged the resettlement policy, which focused on settling Armenians within the empire and deporting Muslims. Imperial historian Vasiliy Potto wrote that Peter ordered the following: "Try by all means to summon Armenians, and reduce Muslims as much as

²⁰⁵ Avik Isaakian, "A.S. Griboyedov i Armeniya," in A.S. Griboyedov i Armeniya, ed. by V.G. Tunian, (Yerevan: Obshchestvo "Rossiya", 1995); Boris Balayan, Krov' na almaze Shakh: Tragediya A.S. Gribovedova, (Yerevan: Ayastan, 1983); Semenov, "K voprosu o znacheniyi Turkmanchayskogo dogovora", 105-122. ²⁰⁶ Isaakian, "A.S. Griboyedov i Armeniya", 148.

²⁰⁷ I. Yenikolapov, *Griboyedov na Vostoke*, (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1974), 129.

²⁰⁸ He hid two women and one eunuch of Armenian origin from the shah's harem, which was used as a pretext for attacking the Russian diplomatic mission in Iran. The mob crowd stormed the Russian mission and killed Griboyedov and other staff members - Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 3, issue 6, 613-617. ²⁰⁹ P.G. Arutunian, Osvoboditelnoye dvizheniye armyanskogo naroda v I chetverti XVIII v., (Moscow, 1954); P.G. Arutunian, S.A. Ter-Avakimov, V.A. Akopian, Armyano-russkiye otnosheniya v pervoy treti XVIII veka, vol. 2, part 1, (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo AN Armyanskoy SSR, 1964); P.G. Arutunian, S.A. Ter-Avakimov, V.A. Akopian. Armyano-russkive otnosheniva v pervov treti XVIII veka. vol. 2, part 2, (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo AN Armyanskoy SSR, 1967).

possible by quiet means so that they [Muslims] will not know." ²¹⁰ The resettlement was also promoted by the Catherine the Great. Her favorite, Potemkin, advanced a plan for Russian penetration of the Caucasus, which envisaged the establishment of proxy Christian states – Armenia and Albania. Catherine II approved the plan of the restoration of the Armenian state under the Russian protectorate. ²¹¹ but its implementation was complicated due to the unstable situation in the region and war with the Porte and Persia. Tsarist Russia, approaching the Caucasus already in the 18th century, embarked on the resettlement of Armenians to the North Caucasus. ²¹² In 1778 Russia began the resettlement of Crimean Armenians; out of 31,098 Armenians in the territory, 12,000 moved across the Russian border to southern regions. ²¹³ Some died due to the poor organization of the resettlement; a similar fate befell Armenians later when St. Petersburg began the resettlement of the Ottoman and Persian Armenians in 1828-1831.

Armenian Archbishop of Russia Iosef Argutinskiy played a significant role in encouraging Armenians to move into the Russian Empire and secured lands and some other privileges from Catherine II to the Armenian community. 214 On October 28, 1799 Emperor Paul I granted the Armenian communities in Astrakhan, Kizlar, Mozdok and other settlements various privileges including the freedom of their faith and some merchant rights.²¹⁵ Emperor Alexander I allowed Armenians from Poland to settle in Derbent, and reconfirmed "the rights and privileges granted by his ancestors to the

²¹⁰ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol 3, issue 6, 716: "Starat'sa vsecheski prizvvat' armyan, a busurman zelo tikhim obrazom, chto by ne uznali, skol' vozmozhno".

Aleksandr Anninskiy, *Istoriya Armyanskoy tserkvi (do XIX veka)*, (Kishinev: Tip. Spivaka, 1900), 305. ²¹² This resettlement was discussed in Chapter 1.

²¹³ Ezov, *Nachalo snosheniy*, 21.

²¹⁴ Zh. A. Ananyan, "K voprosu o zaseleniyi yuga Rossii armyanami vo vtoroy polovine XVIII stoletiya," *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR, Obshchestvenniye nauki*, 5 (1963): 45-54. ²¹⁵ SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 93.

Armenian people."²¹⁶ Armenian merchants were an important element for the Russian empire in terms of increasing trade and communication between Asia and Europe. Along with their commercial contribution, Armenians were perceived by Russian officials as playing a pivotal role in St. Petersburg's geopolitical endeavours on Russia's southern borders. Before the military campaign in the South Caucasus in 1804, General Pavel Tsitsianov had reported to St. Petersburg that Armenians, due to their "common Christian faith, expressed loyalty to the Russian government for their own benefit and would like to see the installation of Russian power."

The emphasis on Christianity was an important element for strengthening Russian power in the Caucasus. St. Petersburg had sent an "invitation" to other Christian ethnic groups such as Greeks and Assyrians to settle in the region. General Tsitsianov in 1804 invited Assyrians to settle within newly conquered Russian territories underlining that together with other Christians it would be easier "to rebuff the persecution by Muslims."

Potto wrote that in 1804-1805 some Armenians had settled in the Borchali, Lori, Telavi and Signakh regions in Georgia.

The Turkmanchay treaty, which opened up the way to Armenian resettlement of the Russian empire, necessitated the rearrangement of the new territories to accommodate new settlers. Russian officers of Armenian origin – Christopher Lazarev, Alexander Hudabashev and Movses Argutinsky-Dolgorukiy – developed a plan to establish an autonomous Armenian principality under a Russian protectorate. Thus, the idea of the establishment of Armenian statehood resurfaced after the Russian conquest of the region, and all previous discussions on this matter preconditioned the creation of Armenian

²¹⁶ SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 94, 99.

²¹⁷ Dubrovin, *Istoriya voyny*, vol. 4, 44.

²¹⁸ Nikolay Dubrovin, *Zakavkaz'ye s 1803 po 1806 gody*, (St. Petersburg, 1866), 412.

²¹⁹ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 3, 722.

Province (Oblast) in the territory of Erivan and Nakhichevan khanates. Armenians hoped that this province would be the future ground for an independent Armenia. However, St. Petersburg, after liquidating the Georgian kingdoms and Muslim khanates, was not inclined to grant independent statehood to Armenia. Instead, St. Petersburg formed the province of Armenia, which was assigned to General Bebutov under the supervision of Caucasus commander-in-chief Paskevich. This shift in imperial policy was connected to the development around the Russian acquisition of Georgian kingdoms (discussed in previous chapter). Resistance of the Georgian nobles to subordination under Russian rule was an important factor in the imperial officials' reconsideration of their approach to Armenian statehood as well.

One of the important elements for strengthening the Russian foothold in the Caucasus was resettlement policy. As noted earlier, in 1817 St. Petersburg settled Germans to the region – a campaign that by 1828 was deemed unsuccessful overall. Much hope was placed on Armenians in this regard, whose elite advocated before St. Petersburg the idea of a compact contiguous territory inhabited by a loyal Christian ethnic group. As early as 1805, Ottoman Armenians in Bayazed declared that "when Erivan will be occupied by the Russian army, all Armenians will agree to move under Russian protection and live in Erivan province." ²²⁰ Paskevich referred to Armenians as industrious and loyal people, justifying their resettlement within the empire. ²²¹ He emphasized the necessity of resettling all Armenians in Karabakh, Erivan and Nakhichevan in order to increase the population of newly acquired territories. 222 Imperial historian Sergei Glinka in his description of the Armenian resettlement from Persia to

AKAK, vol. 2, doc. 1265, 631.
 AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 829, 846.
 Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier*, 42.

Russia emphasized the benefit of settling Christians in the Russian borderland and referred to the previous experience in moving Armenians to Nakhichevan-on-Don and Kizlar in the North Caucasus as a counteraction measure against Persia, Turkey and mountaineers. Lazarev, a Russian officer of Armenian origin who supervised the Armenian resettlement from Persia, stressed in his reports to Paskevich the economic benefit promised by Armenians and underlined how Armenians boosted Nakhichevan-on Don and Kizlar. 224

After the conquest of the South Caucasus, sealed by the Turkmanchay Treaty,
Tsarist Russia created an "Armenian territory" on 10 February 1828. Forty days later, on
21 March 1828, Nicholas I issued a decree on the formation of the "Armenian Province
[Oblast]" on the territory of Erivan and Nakhichevan khanates. ²²⁵ General Alexander
Chavchavadze was appointed the chief administrator of the province. The major portion
of Armenians from Persia was directed to this province. ²²⁶ In 1828 a Committee for the
Resettlement of Persian Christians was established in Tbilisi, and a year later a similar
institution was founded to control migration from the Ottoman Empire. Newcomers
received some monetary aid, a tax exemption for three years and also freedom from
military service. Paskevich wrote to the Erivan Temporary Administration that Muslims
should not be allowed to settle in the Armenian province: "We can always find settlers

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Sergei N. Glinka, *Opisaniye pereseleniya armyan adderbidzhanskikh v predely Rossii, s kratkim predvaritel'nym izlozheniyem istoricheskikh vremyon Armenii iz sovremennykh zapisok,* (Moskow: Tip. Lazarevykh Instituta Vostochnykh Yazykov, 1831), 93.

SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 181.

²²⁵ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 437, 487.

²²⁶ Due to the complexity of demographic changes and statistical data, the exact number of settlers will be discussed below in a separate subchapter.

who are more loyal to us than Muslims, who are absolutely unreliable due to their religion and inclination to raiding."227

The resettlement of Armenians from Persia began on 16 March 1828 under the supervision of Colonel Lazar Lazarev, a Tsarist officer of Armenian origin whose rich and influential family made its fortune during the reign of Catherine the Great. In an instruction given by Paskevich to Lazarev it was emphasized that Russian officers should visit all areas in Iran inhabited by Christians and agitate for them to move into Russian territory, without resorting to force. ²²⁸ Instructions underlined that Christians should go to Nakhichevan and Erivan, "where we are supposed to increase the Christian population as much as possible. However, the villagers of Uzumchi and the other three neighboring Armenian settlements are allowed to move to Karabakh since this province is closer to them."229 Paskevich also instructed the Russian administration in Nakhichevan and Erivan to settle Armenians by whole villages and not mix them with Muslims, and especially to inhabit Megri, Kapan (in today's Armenia) and Ordubad (in today's Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan). The authorities provided 10-20 silver rubles to settlers as financial aid. He instructed the Committee in charge of the resettlement:

The Committee should try to arrange resettled villages in the same order, separately or next to each other, as they were located on the former territories... Please locate those who lived in the mountains, in the mountainous areas, and those who lived in the plains in the lowland areas to avoid disease and death among the population. The Committee should also create conditions to preserve their customs and business skills... Avoid placing Christians in Muslim villages – for this you need to create a separate district for Christians and magals [for Muslims]. Christians, surrounded by Muslim villages, should

²²⁷ Quoted from Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy," 58. SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 151-152.

²²⁹ SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 154.

be relocated to their co-religionists, and Muslims surrounded by Christian villages should also be relocated... Persons should not be placed on the lands of the landlords – only on public lands... For initial grain sowing, immigrants should receive an equal amount of credit. Credits issued to revive the economy should be without interest, and the payment of principal shall be made after 4 years from date of issue during 6 years... When choosing locations for settlement, please, take into account the availability of water resources and the health conditions of the population. ²³⁰

Following instructions, Lazarev visited almost all areas of Armenian inhabitation in Persia in an effort to encourage settlement to Tsarist Russia. He appealed to Armenians in Persia to move under Russian protection and identified three places – Nakhichevan, Erivan and Karabakh, "where you will find fertile land in abundance, partly harvested... six years exemption from duties, and aid for resettlement for the poorest ones." As for practical measures, Lazarev arrived to Maraga to start moving Armenians, while he left Argutinskiy-Dolgorukiy in Tebriz to oversee the process there. Most Armenians were leaving Persia following the withdrawal of the Russian army. Despite Paskevich's instruction to settle Armenians in Erivan and Nakhichevan as a matter of priority, Lazarev informed Paskevich that this area could not accept all settlers. Further, Lazarev reported that initially 5,000 Armenian families were directed into the Armenian province but later, due to Paskevich's order dated 24 April 1828, he moved them into Karabakh – especially the poorest ones. However, Glinka wrote that the resettlement was initially directed to Karabakh, and later became the region receiving Armenians too. George

²³⁰ SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 159-160

²³¹ SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 163-164.

²³² SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 177.

²³³ Glinka, *Pereseleniye*, 48.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* 87.

Bournoutian's research states that only a small minority of Armenians settled in Karabakh.

Only 279 Armenian families decided to immigrate to Karabakh, and that they settled in Kapan and Meghri on the banks of the Arax (in the southernmost part of Zangezur bordering Iran)... All documents relating to the Armenian immigration make it clear that Russia, for political, military, and economic reasons, strongly encouraged the Armenians to settle in the newly-established Armenian province, especially the region of Erivan, which between 1795 and 1827 had lost some 20,000 Armenians who had immigrated to Georgia. ²³⁵

However, Russian imperial sources indicate that more Armenians settled in Karabakh. While some Armenians were redirected to Karabakh instead of the settlement in Erivan and Nakhichevan (the 279 Armenian families were indicated by Paskevich in a letter dated 26 May 1828 to General Karl von Dibich), ²³⁶ Lazarev, as it is mentioned above, reported that many more Armenians—about 5,000 families— settled in Karabakh. In another report to Paskevich, Lazarev reported that 700 families from Persian Maraga crossed Araz but had difficulties settling in Nakhichevan and Erivan due to a shortage of bread. ²³⁷ Later, Persian Armenians from Maraga founded a new Maraga in Karabakh. ²³⁸ Overall, the influx of Armenians was significant in terms of regional demographics.

The Armenian Church, represented by archbishop of Georgia Nerses, was also actively seeking to encourage Armenians to move into the Russian Caucasus. The

²³⁵ George A. Bournoutian, "The Politics of Demography: Misuse of Sources on the Armenian Population of Mountainous Karabakh," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 9 (1999): 99 - 103.

²³⁶ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 597, 628.

²³⁷ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 573, 611.

²³⁸ In 1978 in Maraga Armenians erected a monument celebrating the 150th anniversary of their resettlement in the region. This monument was destroyed by Armenians in 1988, when the conflict with Azerbaijan erupted in apparent efforts to eradicate the trace of the Armenian resettlement in what was claimed to be a "historic" Armenian region.

Armenian Church retained influence over its people and its linkages with St. Petersburg helped to advance the resettlement project. Therefore, the Caucasus administration envisaged the active role of Nerses in encouraging Armenians to move into Russia's Caucasus. ²³⁹ However, the Armenian clergy was divided on the issue of the resettlement. A few Armenian clerics – for example, Israel Salmasskiy – agitated against migration to the Tsarist empire. ²⁴⁰ Many Armenians enjoyed a relatively smooth and peaceful life under Qajar rule, and therefore were not enticed by the call for the resettlement. ²⁴¹ The Armenian priesthood of Nestorian branch ²⁴² was especially against migration; however, they wanted Russian troops to stay in Tebriz, Urmiya and other occupied areas from which St. Petersburg later withdrew in accordance with the Turkmanchay treaty. ²⁴³ In a letter from prince Abbas-Mirza to Lazarev it became known that archbishop Nerses threatened to excommunicate those priests who were opposing the resettlement to

Although many Armenians expressed the desire to voluntarily move to Russia, in practice they had to make a tough decision: whether or not to leave property and move to an unknown and probably hostile physical and human environment. Potto wrote that "the conditions proposed by Russia to settlers were very heavy and could not but cause hesitations. All the wealth Persian Armenians possessed was in real estate – homes, orchards, cultivated fields; all this had to be abandoned, and therefore it was natural for

²³⁹ SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 162.

²⁴⁰ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 3, 729.

Bournoutian discusses various reasons and moods among Armenians with regard to the resettlement and the Qajar rule in George Bournoutian, *The Khanate of Erevan under the Qajar Rule, 1795-1828,* (Costa-Mendes: Mazda Publisher, 1992), 65-92; also Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 40-42.

Nestorian Armenians were small offshoot of Eastern Christians emerged in the Sassanid Persia in the 5th century.

²⁴³ Glinka, *Pereseleniye*, 52.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 77.

them to ask Russia to render at least a third of the cost of what they left behind."245 Despite such demands, Lazarev could not promise more – he had clear instruction to assist only poor settlers. "He bluntly told them that they would not find beyond Araks (Araz) what they left in Persia, that all benefits could not extend more than five silver rubles per family, but under the shadow of the same-faith power, they could be assured of the prosperity of their offspring and of their own peace of mind."²⁴⁶ In the meantime, the Persian shah Fath Ali prohibited Armenians from selling their real estate and thus deprived them of income which could support them in the new territories. Alexander Griboyedov wrote to Karl Nesselrode, Minister of Foreign Affairs, that the departure of 8,000 Armenians emptied the Persian provinces Urmiya, Maraga, Slamast and "saddened Abbas-Mirza" [prince and vicegerent in Iranian Azerbaijan] due to the financial loss from potential taxpayers. 247 The Persians also sought to influence the Armenians, telling them that in Russia they would be turned into serfs. The Persian shah, worried about the huge loss, accused Lazarev of violating the provision of the Turkmanchay treaty by forcing Armenians to leave. He wrote to him: "If we judge conscientiously, how can it be possible that several thousand families would honestly and voluntarily desire to leave their thousand-year residence, estates, orchards and fields in order to become homeless and deprived of everything."²⁴⁸ Lazarev refuted any claim that he and Russian soldiers had forced Armenians to leave. 249

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²⁴⁵ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 3, 730.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 730.

²⁴⁷ I.K Yenikolopov, "Pis'mo A.S. Griboyedova k K.V. Nesselrode", *Izvestiya AN Armyanskoy SSR: obshestvenniyi nauki*, 5 (1963): 104.

²⁴⁸ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 3, 731.

²⁴⁹ Glinka, *Opisaniye pereseleniya armyan*, 62-74; Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 3, 731.

In view of these competing narratives, modern scholars also differ in their opinions with regard to the balance between voluntary and forced resettlement in this case. Dana Sherry argues that the impetus for the resettlement came from below – from Armenians themselves. 250 The Russian officials emphasized good governance and high civilization as a point of advantage over Muslim rule. However, Firouzeh Mostashari believes that force was used to ensure the departure of Armenians from Persia. "The question, however, remains as how and why thousands of Armenians would leave their countries of residence and rush to join the Russian empire."²⁵¹ I would argue that Armenians for a long time clearly expressed their desire to move under Russian protection. Thus, it was a mutually beneficial project, which had far-reaching consequences in the region. St. Petersburg created the pocket of "loyal" Christian subjects – this is what the Tsarist officials hoped to achieve by moving Armenian settlers. Armenians, mostly the clergy and the richest, wanted to strengthen their presence in the region, which they believed would become the basis of Armenian independence. As history showed, the Armenian statehood in the 20th century was created exactly on these territories.

At the same time, some Armenians decided to stay in Persia due to hardship and uncertainty. In these cases, Lazarev and his mostly Armenian entourage apparently resorted to force. In attracting Christians, the Russian administration evoked religious sentiments and solidarity but religion alone was not able to compel Armenians to leave. In the report to General Karl von Dibich, Paskevich noted that Armenian priests Stephan and Nikolay – sent by archbishop Nerses – approached Persian Armenians to seek their

Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 38.
 Mostashari, On the Religious Frontier, 41.

migration; however, "persuasions of these clergymen did not influence settlers", concluded Paskevich. 252 There was also indirect use of force, as prince Abbas Mirza referred to the threat of excommunication from the Armenian Church and the presence of Cossacks in Armenian settlements in the above-mentioned letter to Lazarev. ²⁵³ Moreover. Glinka in his study noted that "until the arrival of Lazarev to Persia, Armenians were not moving" despite the fact that some had registered and expressed their desire to do so. 254

Probably certain actions besides simple verbal persuasion were implemented by Russian representatives in Persia to convince Armenians to hastily leave their homes and migrate to the South Caucasus; Russian sources obviously did not report this, but the Persian side complained about the force used to move Armenians. In a view of competing narratives it is hard to make any definitive conclusion. My sense is that the resettlement was an important plan for the Armenian clergy and nobles, and as I mentioned, they thought the creation of the compact area in Erivan and surrounding territories could serve as a nucleus for the future Armenian state. Armenian peasants were more preoccupied with the immediate consequences of the migration – the loss of lands and property and the uncertainty in new places.

The first wave of resettlement lasted from 16 March to 11 June 1828, when 8,000 Armenian families or about 40,000 people moved into the Russian Caucasus. ²⁵⁵ According to the report by Russian scholar and statesman Ivan Shopen, 366 Iranian Armenian families (1,715 people) settled in the city of Erivan, 265 families (1,110

²⁵² AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 597, 628. ²⁵³ Glinka, *Pereseleniye*, 76-79.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 92.

people) in Nakhichevan and 36 families (182 people) in Ordubad. ²⁵⁶ Relocated Armenians were also placed in 119 villages in the Erivan region, 61 villages in the Nakhichevan region and 11 villages in the Ordubad district. In general, the area of Erivan received 4559 Armenian families (23,568 people), the Nakhichevan region – 2137 families (10,652 people), and the Ordubad district – 250 Armenian families (1,340 people). Overall, 6949 Armenian families (35560 people) were settled in the "Armenian Province." Soviet scholar Nikolay Smirnov estimates that 90,000 Armenians migrated from Persia (and 75,000 from the Ottoman Empire) but he does not cite his sources and explain calculations. ²⁵⁸ Upon the end of his mission, Lazarev in his report to Paskevich emphasized that "instead of the deserts which now cover the fields of ancient Great Armenia, rich villages, and perhaps cities will emerge, populated by hard-working and industrious residents." ²⁵⁹

However, the condition of new settlers was difficult; as with German settlers, the local government was not prepared to deal with the inflow of Armenians. Nor did the Russian administration have enough land, food and finance to accommodate the necessary amount of settlers. Armenians in rural areas, especially in Karabakh and Nakhichevan, were in a much more difficult situation than those who settled in Erivan. Even so, in Erivan – where 6,500 families were settled by August 1828 – Argutisnkiy-Dolgorukov urged Paskevich to render additional financial assistance to avoid hunger in the upcoming winter. ²⁶⁰ The significant influx of Armenian settlers was quickly well-

²⁵⁶ Shopen, *Istoricheskiy pamyatnik*, 636-638.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 635-642.

²⁵⁸ Nikolay Smirnov, *Politika Rossii na Kavkaze v XVI - XIX vv.*, (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsialno-ekonomicheskoy literatury, 1958), 180.

²⁵⁹ Glinka, *Pereseleniye*, 132-133.

²⁶⁰ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 614, 640.

known to the Russian administration, as numerous petitions from Armenians as well as local bureaucrats reached Tbilisi. For the most part, the problems were due to the inability of the Caucasus Administration to envisage and manage the inflow of population. In addition, many Armenian settlers were poor, or at least came deprived of estate and resources since they were unable to sell their property in Persia. The third factor was the adaptation to a new situation; the lack of nutrition and proper sanitation caused various diseases.

The arrival of a large number of settlers also caused clashes with the local Muslim/Azerbaijani population. A memorandum from Griboyedov warned the Russian administration that the resettlement was implemented hastily, without due preparation and management. Money was poorly allocated and a land registry was non-existent, which made the distribution chaotic. For this reason, Armenians were settled mostly on Muslim lands and clashed with them. Griboyedov quite prophetically warned: "We have to deliver to the Muslims assurances that their present difficulties should not last for a long time, and eliminate their fears that Armenians will take possession [of their lands] forever – that Armenians are allowed to stay only for a short time."

A report to Paskevich noted the animosity between Armenians and "Tatars" (Azerbaijanis) in Nakhichevan²⁶³ while Griboyedov in another letter to Paskevich

²⁶¹ This memo has no specific addressee, but apparently was sent to the Caucasus Administration. I. Yenikolopov challenged the authorship of the letter on the Armenian resettlement. He maintained that it was not Griboyedov but local bureaucrat Zubarev (I. K. Yenikolopov, "Zapiska o pereseleniyi armyan v nashi oblasti" i yeyo nastoyashiy avtor," *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR: obshestvenniyi nauki*, 8 (1949): 69-73). No matter who wrote this letter, it contained valuable information about the state of the Armenian resettlement, confirmed by other sources. In a letter to Paskevich dated 1 October 1828, Griboyedov reported about the pressure exerted by Armenian settlers on local Muslims in Nakhichevan (AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 623, 647.) Therefore, I accept the mainstream opinion about Griboyedov's authorship of the letter in question.

²⁶² AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 618, 644.

²⁶³ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 622, 646.

informed of "more unrest and oppression because of the Armenian resettlement" than in Erivan. ²⁶⁴ The number of indigenous Armenians ²⁶⁵ versus new Armenian settlers in Nakhichevan was 290 to 943 (1:3). As for the proportion to local Muslims, the number changed. Before the resettlement the region was inhabited by 290 Armenians versus 1,632 Muslims, and after the resettlement there were 1,233 Armenians. ²⁶⁶ Such an increase inevitably put pressure on the local Muslim population.

In sum, the result of the Armenian resettlement from Persia deviated significantly from goals and instructions given by Paskevich both to Lazarev and the Erivan administration. There was not enough logistical support to provide Armenians with food, and Armenians were settled on private properties instead of state lands, which caused conflict with Muslim/Azerbaijani population. Overall, the campaign was characterized by a lack of coordination and organization. While Glinka praised Lazarev for the exceptional role he played in resettling Armenians, Alexander Griboyedov was critical about his participation in the campaign and how he handled the resettlement. ²⁶⁷

The second stage of the Armenian resettlement began after the end of the war with the Porte in 1829, as a result of which Russia acquired the Black sea coast in the Caucasus – including Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki. The Turkish Sultan also recognized the Erivan and Nakhichevan khanates acquired from Persia as well as all Georgian kingdoms as part of Russia. The Peace Treaty of Adrianople between Russia and the Ottoman Empire signed on 2 September 1829 contained a similar clause to the

²⁶⁴ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 623, 647.

²⁶⁵ Armenians who inhabited the area prior to the Russian resettlement

²⁶⁶ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 623, 647

²⁶⁷ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 618, 643; See also: Alexander Griboyedov, "Zapiska o pereseleniyi armyan iz Persiyi v nashi oblasti," in *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy v 3-kh tomakh*, by Alexander Griboyedov, vol. 3. (Petrograd: Izdatel'stvo razryada izyashnoy slovesnosti Akademii Nauk, 1917), 268.

Turkmanchay Treaty: the Porte agreed to allow the resettlement of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire to Russia within eighteenth months. ²⁶⁸ The Armenian resettlement became especially important in light of the assistance the Armenians rendered to the Russian army during the war. Paskevich, in his report to Nicholas I dated 10 October 1829, informed that the withdrawal of Tsarist troops from the occupied Ottoman territories worried Armenians who feared possible Ottoman reprisal.²⁶⁹ According to Paskevich, 2,000 Armenians fought on the Russian side in Bayazet, 800 in Kars, and many more in Erzerum. For this reason Paskevich requested permission to settle Armenians and Greeks in Georgia and the newly-created Armenian Province, as well as the financial assistance of 25 silver rubles per family and 1 million for the whole resettlement of 10,000 families.²⁷⁰ "I am sure," Nicholas I replied in his letter, "that such a significant augmentation of the people in the province entrusted to you... will be useful for the Empire." Potto wrote, "the Emperor even found it useful to settle some of the Armenians, distinguished by their courage, in the Akhaltsikhe and its surrounding areas, where they, as part of battalions or cavalry units, could be employed to protect our borders."271

On 18 November 1829, Minister of War Chernyshev replied to Paskevich about the emperor's approval of the Christian resettlement from the Ottoman Empire to the Caucasus.²⁷² Immediately thereafter, Paskevich began implementing this plan and set up the Resettlement Committee in Tbilisi to oversee the project. In the instruction given to

²⁶⁸ Turkmanchay Treaty, Article XIII. Russian language text is available at http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/FOREIGN/turkman.htm

²⁶⁹ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 818, 830.

²⁷⁰ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 4, 656.

^{2/1} *Ibid*, 655

²⁷² AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 819, 830-832.

the Committee, Paskevich divided the settlers into three classes; merchants, craftsmen and peasants.²⁷³ Merchants and artisans were instructed to settle in cities, and peasants in rural areas, suitable for farming. The Resettlement Committee sought to take into consideration the climatic conditions of the settlers' homeland, and accommodate them in a similar environment. Besides Georgia and the Armenian province, Paskevich also allowed Christians – especially tradesmen and artisans – to settle in Elizavetpol province (the modern-day Ganja and Karabakh regions of Azerbaijan). Potto also reported that new settler areas stretched as far as to Shirvan. 274 While Paskevich encouraged settling Christians on state lands, he in the meantime gave instructions to prevent settlers from inhabiting private estates. Russian authorities did not wish to encroach upon the property rights of indigenous population, having learned about clashes between settlers and locals during and after the Armenian resettlement from Persia. Similar to the instruction given for the resettlement of Persian Armenians, Paskevich emphasized the necessity to settle by "whole villages" and "not to mix with Muslim population." In attracting Ottoman Armenians the Russian administration was more cautious and instructed its envoys to call upon free will only. At the same time, having learned of the negative experience with the Persian Armenian settlers caused by material shortages, Russian authorities provided more assistance to Ottoman Armenians.²⁷⁶

Many Ottoman Armenian families decided to take this opportunity and relocate to the Tsarist empire. While Armenian archbishop of Echmiadzin Nerses played an important role in encouraging Persian Armenians' emigration to Russian Empire, the

²⁷³ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 820, 832

²⁷⁴ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 4, 657.

²⁷⁵ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 820. 832.

²⁷⁶ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 4, 671.

Armenian archbishop of Erzerum Karapet had a similar influence on the outflow of Ottoman Armenians from Erzerum, Kars and Bayazet to the Russian Caucasus. During the war, the Armenian Church in Echmiadzin appealed to Armenians in the Ottoman Empire to assist the Russian army. In Erzerum archbishop Karapet helped Paskevich to storm the city, informing him about weak spots in its defence line. Potto wrote: "Karapet subdued the heart and will of the people. He pointed to the [Armenian] people in an imperative way which road they should take – and the mass of the Turkish Armenians moved blindly after their archbishop. More than fourteen thousand families – up to ninety thousand souls – then surrendered under the patronage of the Russian sovereign."²⁷⁷ The Armenian clergy was an important bridge between the Russian administration and the Armenian population. Along with Karapet another archbishop – Serafim – actively influenced Ottoman Armenians to immigrate to the Russian empire. Karapet sold all treasures belonging to the Church to help the Armenians with the initial resettlement in Russia. 278 The active participation of the Armenian Church in the resettlement should be considered in the context of the previous engagement of the Armenian clerics with the Russian officials. The desire to recreate independent Armenia was fostered primary by the Armenian Church, and the latter believed that the Russian protectorate would ensure its sustainability due to the Christian bonds.

In the winter of 1829-1830, Ottoman Armenians began moving to Russia. In his letter to Minister of War Alexander Chernyshev on 22 January 1830, Paskevich indicated that 2500 Armenian families from Kars and 3,143 families from Bayazet migrated to the Muslim villages of Pambak, near Mount Alayaz (Alagez) – which had been abandoned

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²⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 671.

²⁷⁷ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 4, 668.

by Muslims.²⁷⁹ The major movement of settlers took place in the Spring-Summer of 1830. In a document compiled before the end of migration, allowed by the Treaty of Adrianople (3 April 1831), Tsarist officials gave the following figures about the number of settlers: a total of 14,044 Armenian families were settled in the Caucasus – "Pashalik Akhyska, Borchalinskiy region and Bambak Shorael" (all in today's Georgia), and "areas around lake Geycha and Bash Abaran" (today's lake Sevan in Armenia). One of the largest Armenian settlements was in Akhaltsikhe, where about 40,000 settlers arrived.²⁸⁰ This document also states that it was not possible to identify the exact number of settlers due to the lack of a complete and detailed reporting. However, the authorities estimated that total of 84,000 Armenians and Greeks were resettled from the Ottoman Empire to the Russian Caucasus.²⁸¹ While the majority of Armenians settled in Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe and in the Armenian Province, some moved to Karabakh as well.²⁸²

While the Persian rulers were concerned about the economic consequences of Armenian outmigration, the Ottoman authorities were officially indifferent to such a move, arguing that "people so little attached to their homeland could not be a useful acquisition by any state." However, despite this statement, the Ottomans were concerned about the outflow of craftsmen and peasants. Trying to avert mass resettlement of Armenians and Greeks, on 17 February 1830 the Ottoman government decided to grant amnesty to those who assisted the Russian army during the war and dispatched their

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²⁷⁹ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 821, 833

Letter dated September 11, 1830, Committee to Strekalov: Quoted from Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy,"

^{53. 281} AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 830, 847.

²⁸² Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 4, 672-673.

²⁸³ Letter dated January 5, 1830, Bourgas (Russian Ambassador in Istanbul) to Paskevich: Quoted from Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy," 52.

emissaries to convince Christians to remain in the empire. ²⁸⁴ Potto wrote that the Porte sent Armenian priest Varfolomey (Bartholomew) to persuade Armenians to stay in the Ottoman Empire, but his mission failed. ²⁸⁵ The accusation was also made by the Ottomans that the Russian army, supported by the Armenian clergy, forced people to immigrate to Russia. ²⁸⁶

To accommodate Armenians, Russian authorities allocated 380,000 rubles for the purchase of grain and 350,000 gold rubles (*chervontsy*) in total for direct aid to settlers.²⁸⁷ Despite better assistance rendered to Ottoman Armenians compared to the settlers from Persia, Armenians and Greeks from the Ottoman Empire also faced many challenges during migration and adaptation. The Tsarist administration estimated that a total of 8,000 families would migrate, but in reality many more Christians – Greeks and especially Armenians; around 14,000 families or 90,000 people – moved to Russia. Potto noted that the "new homeland did not welcome settlers. Premises were not prepared for them, and most people had to spend the most severe winter in tents, hastily installed in those very mountains where later a new Akhaltsikhe formed. The rural inhabitants were not in a better condition."²⁸⁸ It took several years until the Armenians firmly settled in the Russian Caucasus. The Russian imperial historian exclaimed:

The resettlement of Christians is an accomplished fact. Since then a new life, full of bright hopes for the future, has begun. One of the main "culprits" of this change in the fate of the Armenian people was Archbishop Karapet, who settled in Akhaltsikhe, and there, in 1837, he had the good fortune to host the Emperor Nicholas, during his travel to

²⁸⁴ Kemal Beydilli, "1828-1829 Osmanli-Rus savashinda Dogu Anadoludan Rusiyaya kochurulen ermeniler," *Turk Tarih Kurumu Belgeler Dergisi*, vol. 13, no. 17 (Ankara, 1988), 386-387. ²⁸⁵ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 4, 669.

 ²⁸⁶ Besim Ozcan, "1828-29 Osmanli-Rus harbi'nde Erzurum eyaleti'nden Rusya'ya göçürülen Ermenilerin geri dönüşlerini sağlama faaliyetleri". *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 46 (2011), 195-204.
 ²⁸⁷ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 829, 845-846 and doc. 832, 847

²⁸⁸ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 4, 671-672.

the Caucasus. Before leaving, the emperor offered him a gift. Karapet reverently knelt and asked only for mercy for his people. "As a Christian bishop, - he said - I have long supported the Christians in Turkey, and now entrust them to the Christian sovereign!" ²⁸⁹

During the first years of their settlement, both Persian and Ottoman Armenians were faced with hardship and difficulties they were not prepared to deal with; however, the Ottoman Armenians were much better off than their brethren from Persia due to greater assistance received from the Russian government. It was mostly the Ottoman Armenians rather than Persian Armenians who returned back to the previous places of residence, and local Turkish authorities returned their property to them. ²⁹⁰

This undermines the negative Armenian and Russian imperial narratives, and modern narratives about the plight and oppression of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Armenians cited economic reasons for the departure, emphasizing that opportunities for work existed in their places of residence in the Ottoman Empire. One Armenian, a local deputy of Erzerum who later returned to the Ottoman Empire, described his departure in the following terms during a speech at the Ottoman parliament in 1877:

I am short of words to explain how Armenians enjoyed the Ottoman Empire's citizenship, trust and patronage for five hundred years. I, resident of Erzurum, 48 years ago was among the 100,000 people who left due to Russia's deception. However, by understanding the intent of Russia, I have returned to the Ottoman land.²⁹¹

In harsh conditions, especially in the course of first winters of 1829-1831, some Armenians decided to leave Russia; this trend became alarming for the Caucasus

²⁸⁹ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 4, 676.

²⁹⁰ Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 65. ²⁹¹ Ozcan, "1828-29 Osmanli-Rus", 203.

administration, which adopted measures to prevent such an outflow of population.²⁹² In 1831, the Caucasus Administration tightened control oover the Russian-Ottoman border.

The return of Armenians threatened not only to destroy the Russian imperial plan to redesign the Caucasus, but also to undermine grandiloquence about common Christian bonds and "civilized" Russian rule versus "despotic" Asian rule. This narrative was heavily promoted by both St. Petersburg and Echmiadzin. In the 1830s, the Caucasus administration conducted a study and discussion about the Armenian flight. In the view of General Georg von Rosen, the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus administration (1831-37), it was imperative to prevent the outflow of the Armenian population: "We will lose the influence we gained over Armenians in Persia and Turkey, which is always useful and necessary for us, especially during war with those powers."²⁹³ This opinion reinforced the Tsarist attitude towards Armenians as the ethnic group that Russia used and might use in the future for geopolitical purposes. However, in terms of economic benefits from the Armenian migration – especially the merchant links which Russia could strengthen through the Armenian network (a consideration present since the time of Peter the Great) – the Caucasus officials did not have a united opinion. Rosen in 1836 viewed the economic damage from the Armenian outflow to be significant, while other officials were not afraid of losing Armenian trade links. In a document about the state of trade in the South Caucasus, Minister of Finance Kankrin (1823-1844) wrote that the return of some Armenians to the Ottoman Empire "does not deserve attention due to the

²⁹² Dana Sherry gives a detailed account of the Armenian movement back to the Ottoman Empire, and the discussion of this problem among the Russian Caucasus Administration: Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 65-

^{71. &}lt;sup>293</sup> AKAK, vol. 8, doc. 95, 166.

insignificance of the capital [of Armenians]."²⁹⁴ Kankrin opined that Armenians would continue to trade through the Ottoman Empire, and that Russia needed Russian traders and merchants to enforce trade links in the region. Here, the Russian officials began manifesting the nationalistic trend about the importance of the stronger presence of the ethnic Russians in the region.

As more Armenians left, the Russian Caucasus administration became disenchanted with the Armenian people, and subsequently rhetoric with regard to them rapidly transformed. If in 1827, for Paskevich, Armenians were industrious people whose resettlement would benefit Russia, in 1832 Russian officials began describing them as lazy, trying to explain their economic difficulties as well as justifying close surveillance and control. 295

While initially after the conquest Russia generally favoured Armenians by creating special conditions for them, the Caucasus administration ultimately desired to subjugate the region. In the framework of imperial policy, Armenians were designed to play this role – bringing the region closer to Russia. Once Armenians tended to trespass on Russian imperial design, the Caucasus authorities moved to suppress Armenians. Paskevich in one of his early reports dated 2 April 1828 manifested the desire to preserve peace in the region, and gave instructions to defend Muslims in the Armenian Province. He wrote to the Chief of Staff that Nerses and his entourage treated Muslims badly, and "began to grumble and if I had not arrived, the implication for us would have been very negative."²⁹⁶ Paskevich went further, underlining that while Russian troops were stationed in Iranian Azerbaijan (despite difficulties and intrigues instigated by Abbas-

²⁹⁴ AKAK, vol. 8, doc. 97, 171. ²⁹⁵ Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy," 48. ²⁹⁶ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 438, 488.

Mirza) Muslims did not make trouble for Russia while in the Armenian Province under Russian management as "they [had] already missed the previous *sardar*²⁹⁷ rule", rule", Paskevich instructed Russian officials to treat Muslims and Armenians equally.

The Armenians' aspirations for independent rule (even in a limited sense within the Russian empire) raised concerns in St. Petersburg and caused the Russian administration to change its policy towards the Armenians in the 1830s. The state of affairs in the Armenian Province, created by the Russian empire in the territory of Erivan and Nakhichevan khanates populated mostly by Azerbaijanis, became troublesome due to the growing power of the local Armenian clergy and aristocracy. Personant Pers

The extreme old age and disease of Supreme Patriarch Ephraim gave him [Nerses] a chance to seize control of the Armenian Church; he is not content with this, spreading its influence on worldly affairs, wanting to present himself as the head of the entire Armenian nation. In this regard, his ambition has grown to the extent that he began to publish a proclamation to foreign Armenians and entered into relations with the

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²⁹⁷ Sardar – a term used in Iran and other adjacent countries to identify ruler, commander and master.

²⁹⁸ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 438, 488.

²⁹⁹ 'Aristocracy' in its conventional sense is not an appropriate term by which to define the Armenian upper class in the South Caucasus. While Armenians had some limited nobility prior to the Russian conquest, the 'aristocracy' became filled with Armenians who were granted various titles (mainly military and merchant-class titles) by the Russian Empire.

neighbouring Turkish chiefs, trying to present himself as a neighbour and owner of the riverside Arpachai, highlighting his own benefits from the general interests of the state... Moreover, Nerses was found repeatedly to intend to increase the income and property of Echmiadzin Monastery, even at the expense and to the detriment of the government. One of the reasons of known intrigue in former Erivan was, without a doubt, the fact that Nerses saw from the first glance my care over the safety of state affairs and understood that I would strongly oppose his intentions to assign estates and incomes to the Armenian Church which do not belong to it.... 300

Paskevich underlined that Nerses' tendency to intrigue was caused by his lust for power and bias in favour of the Armenian Church. His influence might affect other Armenians, who demonstrated their inclination to deviate duties imposed by the state. "A striking example of this – continued Paskevich – are the Armenians settled in the North Caucasus, who so far are not only shying away from all duties [referring to the trade privileges granted by Peter I], but also trying to damage the state treasury by granting new immigrants the same rights [privileges] to those who have never been promised those rights. Such aspirations should be expected from the Caucasus Armenians too." In December 1832, Paskevich dismissed the head of the Armenian Province of Chavchavadze over suspicions that he had plotted with Georgian nationalists against Russia. Another prominent Armenian cleric, archbishop Karapet Srbazan (Bagratuni Ovanes) – who was instrumental in resettling Armenians from the Ottoman Empire – fell temporarily into disgrace, and Paskevich ordered him distanced from Armenian settlers' affairs due to his unrestricted influence.

By the 1840s, Russia ended the policy of inviting or even allowing immigrants – including Armenians from Persia and the Ottoman Empire. The most important aspect

³⁰⁰ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 3, 742-743.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, 744

³⁰² Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 56-57.

behind this shift in the imperial approach was the rise of Russian nationalism, which became more prominent in the second half of the 19th century. The 1840s was the period when Russian officials began sensing the importance of bolstering Russian elements in the region, and treating foreign settlers more cautiously. Several factors were conducive to the ascendance of Russian nationalism in the following decades. I have previously noted that some geopolitical factors – such as the Muslim rebellion in the North Caucasus in the 1830-1850s and the Polish revolt of 1863 – raised concerns in the Russian court. Moreover, the Crimean War and the tension between the Russian Empire and Western powers caused a significant shake-up in the minds of the Russian aristocracy and officials. The birth of various doctrines concerning the uniqueness of the Russian path, state and people as well as the role of the Russian Empire in consolidating and proliferating civilized and morally superior rule was vividly present in the discussion of the Russian nobles and intellectuals. This trend caused the emergence of movements such as Slavophiles, Pan-Slavism, Eurasianism and other schools of thought. 303 Within this nationalist drive, Russification of other ethnic groups and peripheral territories was the important goal to achieve. Geoffrey Hosking indicates that Russification policy was at the core of the imperial policy, as it promoted the centralization of power, the elimination of privileges and other local "anomalies." According to him, it was also a task of Russification to instill in all peoples of the Russian Empire a sense of belonging to Russia - and an affinity for its past and traditions. 304

³⁰³ This issue will be discussed more in the following chapter on the Russian resettlement. See also: Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Russian Identities: A Historical Survey,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 130-210; Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 367-397. For a polemical view on Russification see: Alexei Miller, "Russifikatsiya: klasifitsirovat' i ponyat", *Ab Imperio,* 2 (2002): 133-148.

³⁰⁴ Hosking, Russia: People and Empire, 367.

In the Caucasus, the ascendance of Russian nationalism became visible earlier, as this Muslim borderland had sharpened the sensitivities of the imperial bureaucrats. The war with Sheikh Shamil compelled the Russian administration to enforce more strict security measures. The border with the Porte was closed in 1842, with Persia in 1844; only through passport control and security procedures could someone from Persia and Turkey enter the Russian empire. Yevgeniy Golovin, new commander-in-chief of the Caucasus (1838-1842) – who replaced Baron Rosen – conducted a very restrictive policy with regard to Armenians as well. He gave instructions to return all illegal Armenians crossing borders back to Persia and the Porte. 305 Such surveillance measures also coincided with St. Petersburg's plan to conduct administrative reforms in the periphery and reorganize the South Caucasus to fit the territorial management and divisions present in the Russian internal provinces. 306

This topic requires some discussion on the territorial and administrative imperial arrangement for the South Caucasus. After the annexation of the Caucasus, military tasks necessitated the management of the territories primarily from a security perspective. Accordingly, in the first four decades of the 19th century until the region's new Russian borders were defined for the time, St. Petersburg opted for military commandment. Until 1841, the so-called *komendant* system of the administration remained in the region. The territory of the South Caucasus was divided in accordance with the administrative borders of the Azerbaijani khanates – Sheki, Shirvan, Karabakh and others. When St. Petersburg abolished khanates, it had divided the South Caucasus into Georgian guberniya and Muslim distances. Further on, Russia opted for traditional Russian administrative

 ³⁰⁵ Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 72-73
 306 On Russian administration see Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier*, 29-35.

division - guberniyas and uyezds. St. Petersburg desired to bring the Caucasus administration closer to its internal territories.

As mentioned earlier, in 1828, an Armenian *Oblast* (province) was created on the territory of the formerly Erivan khanate. Christopher Walker remarks in this regard that the settlement of Armenian immigrants in the Armenian Province was an important step for the future national awakening, since this would provide a territorial basis for a collective identity³⁰⁷ or "the embryonic core of the future Armenian state" as Razmik Panossian put it. 308 However, concerned by the concentration of Armenians in this region, the Armenian Oblast was abolished in 1846.

In 1844 St. Petersburg created the Caucasus *namestnichestvo* (viceroyalty), and carried out extensive administrative reforms with the goal of the unification of the regional administration with the Russian core. In the 1930s-1840s, St. Petersburg decided to consolidate the region rapidly by enacting administrative and land reforms in the South Caucasus such as limiting Muslims' land owning rights, enforcing the Russification of administration, and increasing taxes and duties. The method recommended in order to achieve this goal was "to tie this region with Russian civil and political bonds in a single body and force people there to think and feel like Russians."309 The authors of these reforms assumed that "under the influence of general laws and institutions, Muslims would increasingly converge with Russia." This project, approved by Nicolas I, received the status of an official policy of the Russian state in the

³⁰⁷ Christopher J. Walker, Armenia: the Survival of a Nation, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 55. ³⁰⁸ Razmik Panossian. *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars*, (London: Hurst & Co, 2006), 122.

³⁰⁹ Kolonial'naya politika rossiyskogo tsarizma v Azerbaydzhane v 20—60-kh gg. XIX v, vol. I, (Moscow-Leningrad: Izd. Instituta Istorii Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1936), 21. ³¹⁰ AKAK, vol. 7, 35.

Caucasus. In the final version of the reform, it was noted that "the Transcaucasian region does not give the state real income" and therefore it is necessary "to make this region useful for Russia."311

However, due to insurgency and resistance, St. Petersburg rolled back from advancing the reform shortly after. The Tsarist authorities acknowledged their mistakes in enacting land reforms disregarding local peculiarities. "The situation is intolerable" wrote a chief of the civil department in the Caucasus administration, highlighting the tension between the local nobility and the population caused by the reforms advanced by imperial bureaucrats. 312 The colonial authorities further highlighted the following differences between the Caucasus and internal Russia: 1) a considerable number of peasants had a nomadic lifestyle; and 2) many plots of land for agriculture required the construction of an irrigation system, which demanded state support.

Another important goal of the administration beginning in the 1840s was the creation of multiethnicity. The Caucasus officials favoured the presence of many small groups rather than one dominant group in the given territorial unit. While Tsarist bureaucrats generally began advocating for the resettlement of Russians, in the meantime they believed that until the Russian element was strongly present, it was more expedient to mix people in a greater variety – as no local group would dominate the region. In the meantime, not all Russian officials shared strong nationalist feelings; some, such as Viceroy Mikhail Vorontsov (1845-1854), believed that for the sake of the empire it was important to engage locals – Muslims, Armenians and others – in the imperial design. Dana Sherry believes that the Russian administration in the Caucasus realized that

³¹¹ AKAK, vol. 7, 35. ³¹² RGVIA, f. 400, op. 261/911, d. 81/86, 1890, 9-12.

homogenization of the population was impossible, and that ethnic diversity could serve the purpose of the empire better, and further promoted it. Nevertheless, while homogenization was never reached, the demography of the South Caucasus transformed over time in cities like Tbilisi and Baku and regions such as Erivan and Karabakh.

Summarizing the Tsarist resettlement policy with regard to Persian and Ottoman Armenians in 1828-1831 (and further on until the 1840s), St. Petersburg implemented a plan to create a compact area containing the Armenian population in Muslim South Caucasus. Prior to the Russian conquest, this was inhabited mainly by Azerbaijanis – including in today's Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The formation of the Armenian Province in the territories of Muslim khanates reinforced the Armenian illusion of independence. However, for the Russian Empire the Armenian cause represented a tool for its own geopolitical projects, and once the goal of subjugating the South Caucasus was achieved, the idea of independence was abandoned. Moreover, the Russian administration in the Caucasus realized that it needed to accommodate the needs of the Muslim population. There was no plan for the total deportation of Muslims, although in the 1860s St. Petersburg acted brutally to expel the Circassian population in the North Caucasus. Thus, the Caucasus administration embarked upon various policies and practices to manage Armenians and Muslims, including Azerbaijanis as well as other ethnic groups.

2.4. Russia and Armenian Settlers, 1850-1914

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russia continued to receive the Armenian population in the form of legal migrants. Permission for settling in the Caucasus was issued by local authorities to Armenians migrating from Persia and the Ottoman Empire, in return for the Armenians rendering assistance to the Russian troops in the Crimean War (1853-1856). On 8 April 1856 Colonel Loris-Melikov, an Armenian by origin and head of Kars region occupied by Russian troops, reported that the Christian population of the region supported Russia in the war and "would enthusiastically move to Russia." St. Petersburg allowed all Christians from the Kars region of the Ottoman Empire to resettle in the Caucasus. In May, another military commander of Armenian origin, General Bebutov, allowed Christians from Kars to settle in Russia provided that all such cases be reported to the Caucasus Administration. On 28 May 1856, General Khrulev issued the instruction to "approve General Bebutov's decision on the resettlement of Christian subjects of Turkey in our territories; [...] this resettlement is allowed but not encouraged." This instruction clearly manifested the change in attitude of the Russian administration towards the Christian settlers – from encouraging to allowing and controlling the cross-border movement. Around 120 families, including some Muslim Talyshes, moved to the Russian Caucasus from Kars by July 1856. A few other families, mostly Armenian ones, crossed the border later. 315

The proportion of the Armenian population was gradually increasing in the second half of the second century in the South Caucasus. In 1834, 10,350 indigenous

³¹³ AKAK, vol. 11, doc. 307, 313. ³¹⁴ AKAK, vol. 11, doc. 307, 313. ³¹⁵ AKAK, vol. 11, doc. 307, 314-315.

(*starozhily*) Armenians and 24,255 new settlers resided in the Armenian Province (which later became Erivan *guberniya*) according to a Russian source. This comprised a total of 34,605. Alexander Khudobashev roughly estimated that the number of Armenians in the South Caucasus in 1859 had reached 500,000 people. Overall, in the South Caucasus their number was growing and Armenians were moving to Baku, Shirvan, Karabakh and other regions. The migration of Armenian settlers to the Caucasus was summarized by a Tsarist scholar as follows:

The first years of the resettlement of Armenians were accompanied by a variety of disasters. Most of the immigrants, having fled in a panic from the Turks, Kurds, and Persians, came to the region poor – not only without livestock and farming tools, but often without any clothes and in some rags. Morbidity and mortality was very high among them, but we do not have the actual figures... However, quite soon Armenian settlers recovered, and then (due to their culture and habits) engaged in agriculture, trade and crafts... As compared to other Asian tribes, they had more resourcefulness, perseverance, and unity – this consequently helped them to rapidly consolidate the occupied areas and to achieve greater welfare in comparison with other natives. 318

The description of Armenians as a "resourceful" Asian tribe was typical for imperial Russian scholars, who saw both political and economic benefits to be gained from the Christian settlers. Armenians became one of the wealthiest ethnic groups in Russia, favoured by the Russian administration. Viceroy Mikhail Vorontsov (1845-1854) who advocated the greater integration of locals into the imperial administration, regarded Armenians as key elements in the state administration of the region. He restored the

³¹⁶ *Obozreniye rossiyskikh vladeniy za Kavkazom*, vol. 4, (St. Petersburg: Tip. Departamenta Vneshney Torgovli), 371.

Alexander Khudobashev, *Obozreniye Armenii v geograficheskom, istoricheskom i literaturnom otnosheniyakh*, (St. Peterburg: Tip. 2 otd. sobstv. ye. i. v. kantselyarii, 1859), 398.

318 KK, 1899, otd. 2, 81-82.

"Armenian *Oblast*" to the Erivan governorate in order to address the concerns of Armenians. However, Canadian scholar Anthony Rhinelander believes that Vorontsov unintentionally caused an upsurge of nationalist feelings among them:

By re-establishing an Armenian province, however, he did more to kindle nationalistic feelings than to assuage them. Armenian nationalists became deeply eager to reunite Turkish and Russian Armenia. The failure of their quest planted one of the twentieth century's most poisonous plants. The Georgian cultural reawakening led to nationalistic sentiments as Georgian patriots became concerned with preserving Georgian culture in the face of pressures (intentional or otherwise) in favour of Russian acculturation. ³¹⁹

Rhinelander stresses in this regard that Vorontsov restored the division of territories among the Dagestani, Azerbaijani and Armenian populations. Audrey Altstadt opines the opposite – that "none of this division took account of the composition of the population or their wishes or of historic precedent." In reality, the greatest benefactors were Armenians, who received the administrative region back along with the influence that Vorontsov vested to the Armenian Catholicos Nerses – head of the Armenian Church.

No other ethnic group in the region enjoyed the same influence and privileges.

Armenians became one of the major stakeholders of numerous Baku oilfields, and the Armenian communities in urban centres in the South Caucasus (especially in Baku and Tbilisi) were becoming more prominent. Armenian schools, newspapers and literature were increasing under Russian rule. 322 However, Ronald Suny believes that the image of

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³¹⁹ Anthony Rhinelander, *Prince Michael Vorontsov: Viceroy to the Tsar*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 183.

³²⁰ *Ibid*, 157.

³²¹ Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks*, 18.

³²² For a good overview of the status of Armenians in Tsarist Russia, see Ronald Suny's "Eastern Armenians under Tsarist Rule" in *Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times Vol. II : Foreign*

Armenians as wealthy merchants was a typical exaggerated stereotype, ³²³ and most Armenians (around 70 percent) continued to reside and expand in rural areas.³²⁴

The Armenian Church was a key element in the Russian consideration of geopolitical interests in the region, and St. Petersburg maintained a fairly close and friendly relationship with an otherwise "heretic branch of Christendom" from the Orthodox perspective. 325 Paul Werth stresses in this regard that "over the course of the nineteenth century the Russian government accordingly made great efforts to uphold and enhance the prestige of the Catholicos in order to project imperial Russian power across the Southern frontier and to maximize its leverage in manipulating neighboring states." 326

Besides employing the Armenian population militarily during wars with Persia and the Ottomans, St. Petersburg tried to acquire control over the Armenian Church and use it in its geopolitical projects. At the beginning of the 19th century, Alexander I had already instructed General Bogdan Knorring (the first commander-in-chief of the Caucasus) "to take special care to win over the Armenian nation with every form of kindness" which should also help to strengthen "the faith of Christians" and to this end to court the "possible patronage of the Ararat patriarch at the Echmiadzin." Russian imperial historian Vasiliy Potto emphasized the benefit of such control over Echmiadzin, center of the Armenian Catholicosate (a suggestion was to cede part of Russian-occupied

Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century, ed. by Richard Hovannisian, (London: Palgrave, 2004), 109-135 and Onur Önol. "The Armenians and Tsarist Russia (1870-1906)". (MA Thesis, Dept. of International Relations, Bilkent University, Ankara, 2009). ³²³ See chapter "Images of Armenians in the Russian Empire" in Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, 31-52.

³²⁴ Richard Pipes. "Demographic and Ethnographic Changes in Transcaucasia, 1897-1956." The Middle East Journal, issue 13, no.1, (1959): 44

³²⁵ For relations between St. Petersburg and Armenian Church: Paul W. Werth, "Glava Tserkvi, Poddannyi Imperatora: Armianskii Katolikos na Perekrestke Vnutrennei i Vneshnei Politiki Imperii", 1828-1914, Ab *Imperio*, 3 (2006): 106-109.

³²⁶ Paul Werth, "Imperial Russia and the Armenian Catholicos at Home and Abroad," in *Reconstruction* and Interaction of Slavic Eurasia and Its Neighboring Worlds, ed. by Ieda Osamu and Uyama Tomohiko, Slavic Eurasian Studies, no. 10, (Sapporo: SRC, 2006), 204. ³²⁷ Suny, Looking toward Ararat, 36.

Karabakh to Persia and retain the part of the Erivan khanate): "The benefit for Russia was that, instead of Muslim subjects in Karabakh, she would acquire the Armenian population on the banks of Gokcha (today's Sevan lake in Armenia), with one of those ancient shrines so revered by Armenians."

Armenian clerics actively participated in the military operations of the Russian army against Persia and the Porte, providing ideological propaganda for local Armenian support to the advancing Russian troops. Two Armenian archbishops mentioned earlier (Nerses and Karapet) were key figures in recruiting Armenian settlers in Persia and the Ottoman Empire, respectively, to move to Russia in 1828-1831.

The decision to abolish the Armenian clerical centre in Gandzasar, Karabakh and fully subordinate it to Echmiadzin stemmed from the Russian plan to strengthen the single religious centre. Such a decision put an end to the independent life of the thousand centuries-old Albanian Church – a move which some Russian nationalist historians such as Vasiliy Velichko regarded as erroneous. Velichko, a fierce Armenophobe, wrote in this regard that "it turned out that our politicians were less far-sighted than even the Turks, who realized the necessity to support the independence of patriarchates of Sis and Akhtamar from "the Catholicos of all Armenians."

In 1909-1910 the Russian Holy Synod gave permission to Echmiadzin to destroy old archival files of subordinate eparchies, including Gandzasar. Some scholars in Azerbaijan argue that after this decision, all possible original Albanian sources perished

³²⁸ Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 3, 14.

Vasiliy Velichko, *Kavkaz. Russkoye delo i mezhduplemennyye voprosy*, (Baku: Elm, 1990 (reprint, St. Petersburg: Tip. Arteli Pechatnogo Dela, 1904), 41.

or were altered. 330 While such assumption might sound as having a flavour of a conspiracy theory, it is interesting that a manuscript written in the ancient Albanian alphabet was discovered in the 1990s in an Egyptian monastery³³¹ while no similar record was revealed in Echmiadzin up to that date. Russian linguist Timur Maisak notes that due to the strong relations between Armenians and the Arab caliphate, the Albanian Church was already subordinated to the Armenian one throughout the medieval era. "Worship in Albanian churches was completely passed into the Armenian language, and the use of non-Armenian liturgical books was suppressed. Books in Caucasian Albanian ceased to be copied, and writing itself was forgotten; manuscripts created in the V-VII centuries were destroyed or embroidered, while text on their pages was washed out in order to write on them again in other languages." 332 As a part of a series of measures to empower Echmiadzin, Nicholas I issued the Statute according to which the Armenian Church was granted the right to control the parish education network and oversee their land (as well as receive a tax exemption) in 1836. At the same time, the Russian emperor assumed the sole authority to approve the election of the Armenian Catholicose. Armenians gained importance in the Caucasus politically and economically and their communities were given greater autonomy in educational and cultural activities. Overall, under Russian rule, Armenian nobility, clergy and entepreuneurs strengthened their

³³⁰ For example, see Robert Mobili, "Albanskaya tserkov i armanskaya falsifikatsiya," accessed on January 7, 2014, http://udi.az/articles/0009-2.html; Farida Mamedova, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya i Albany*, (Baku: Tsentr Issledovaniy Kavkazskoy Albanii, 2005).

³³¹ J. Gippert, W. Schulze, Z. Aleksidze, J.-P. Mahé, *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mount Sinai*, (Brépols, 2009).

³³² Timur A. Maĭsak, "K Publikatsii Kavkazsko-Albanskikh Palimpsestov iz Sinaĭskogo Monastyrya". *Voprosy Yazykoznaniya*, 6 (2010): 89.

positions, although they lacked the independence which they had initially hoped to get from Russia 333

In 1877-1878 Russia gained another victory in the war with the Porte, and Armenians again assisted the advancement of the Russian troops. Russia occupied the whole Eastern part of Anatolia, including the Armenian-populated regions. According to the preliminary peace treaty of San Stefano, the Porte ceded Ardahan, Artvin, Batum, Kars, Olti and Beyazit to Russia, while Russia agreed to return other territories – including the Armenian-populated regions – to the Porte. St. Petersburg insisted upon including a relevant clause in the treaty to protect the rights of Armenians. Thus, the Porte agreed:

As the withdrawal by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupy in Armenia (which is to be restored to Turkey) might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians.³³⁴

The Armenian question again reappeared in the Russian geopolitical plan with regard to the Ottoman Empire. Russia had advanced also the idea of Great Bulgaria, and was considering to do the same on the Armenian front. However, European powers – especially Britain – feared that Russia gained too much through the Treaty of San Stefano and pressed for its revision. St. Petersburg, still remembering its defeat in the Crimean

³³³ Suny, Looking toward Ararat, 37–40; Panossian, The Armenians, 120-125.

Thomas Erskine Holland, "The Preliminary Treaty of Peace, signed at San Stefano, 17 March 1878", in *The European Concert in the Eastern Question and Other Public Acts*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 335–348.

³³⁵ Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 306-307; See more on this topic in Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923*, (London: Macmillan, St Martin's Press, 1966).

War, decided to step back; as result, the Treaty of Berlin was signed. According to the new treaty, Russia gained Ardahan, Batum and Kars only. However, the Porte was still obliged to ensure the protection of Armenians and provide religious freedoms throughout the empire – albeit after the withdrawal of Russian troops. In any case, the involvement of St. Petersburg in Armenian affairs in the Ottoman Empire caused growing tension between the Porte and its Armenian subjects, which led eventually to violent clashes in the 1890s.

After the war of 1877-1878, another wave of cross-border population movement occurred between the Russian and Ottoman Empires – bringing more Armenians under Russian rule, although this was not officially encouraged. St. Petersburg needed this time to settle and strengthen Kars region, which had been conquered from the Porte. In general, St. Petersburg preferred Russian settlers rather than "foreign elements" (this policy is discussed below); nevertheless, Ottoman Armenians penetrated the empire's borderland. Nikolay Shavrov noted that the war "gave us a flood of settlers from Asia Minor: 50,000 Armenians and 40,000 Greeks settled in Kars region [...] In addition, thanks to General Tergukasov, ³³⁷ 35,000 families of Turkish Armenians were brought to the Surmalin district, who remain with us. Thereafter, the continuous influx of Armenians began; individuals and families from Asia Minor were resettling". ³³⁸ Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov noted in his report to Nicholas II in 1907 that a plan to settle 1,000 people from internal governorates to Kars was declined by St. Petersburg, and the majority of

Edward Hertslet. "Treaty between Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Turkey, for the Settlement of the Affairs of the East, signed at Berlin, 13th July 1878". In *The Map of Europe by Treaty; Which Have Taken Place Sincet the General Peace of 1814. With Numerous Maps and Notes, IV (1875-1891)*, (First ed., London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1891), 2759–2798.

³³⁷ Arshak Tergukasov (1819–1881) - ethnic Armenian, was one of the key military commanders of Russia's army during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878.

³³⁸ Nikolay Shavrov, *Novaya ugroza russkomu dely v Zakavkaz'ye: predstoyashchaya rasprodazha Mugani inorodtsam,* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Ministerstva Finansov, 1911), 59.

available land plots were given to Armenians and Greeks by the first governor of Kars – Frankini ³³⁹

The Russian state needed land to distribute among the masses of settlers, especially Armenian ones. Svetlana Lurye notes in this regard that throughout the 19th century in Eastern Armenia (Erivan and Nakhichevan khanates) there "remained a tradition of gripping (*zakhvatnogo*) land use" which characterized the settlement of Armenians coming from Persia and Turkey. ³⁴⁰ With a growing deficit of land, the tendency towards the equalization of land plots also increased. Russian imperial expert Segal wrote that in Nakhichevan Armenians from Persia "settled in small groups of related families where they wanted, took as much land each family found it necessary to have. When the population increased significantly, the free use of land was gradually changed in favour of community restrictions". ³⁴¹ Nikolay Shavrov wrote that "these *inorodtsy* received a large amount of state lands without definitive boundaries... and with unclear documentation". ³⁴²

By the end of the 19th century, Tsarist authorities became very suspicious of the Armenian settlers, especially from the Ottoman Empire due to the growing revolutionary sentiments among them. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Armenians experienced a national awakening and aspirations for statehood (as did other ethnic groups throughout Russian and Ottoman Empire as well as in Central Europe). 343

³³⁹ Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, *Vsepodaneyshaya zapiska po upravleniyu kavkazskim krayem generala-adyutanta grafa Vorontsova-Dashkova*, (Sankt-Peterburg: Gosudarstvennaya Tipografiya, 1907), 69. ³⁴⁰ Svetlana Lurye, "Krest'yanskaya obshchina v Armenii (XIX-XX veka)" in Svetlana Lurye, *Metamarfozy traditsionnogo soznaniya*, (St. Petersburg, Tip. Kotlakova, 1994), accessed on September 27, 2014, http://svlourie.narod.ru/matamorphoses/arm-obsh.htm

³⁴¹ I. Segal. *Krestyanskoye zemlevladeniye v Zakavkaz'ye* (Tiflis: Tip. K.P. Kozlovskogo, 1912), 5. ³⁴² Shavrov, *Novava ugroza*, 61.

³⁴³ Several works are helpful to understand the Armenian nationalist and revolutionary movements: Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*; Gerard J. Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State,* (New Brunswick,

Revolutionary and national-liberation forces in the Armenian communities in both Russia and the Ottoman Empire gained momentum and strength. In 1885, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire formed the first political party: Armenakan. The two other important parties were the Hunchakian Revolutionary Party (identified also as *Hnchak or Gnchak*) established by Russian Armenians in Geneva in 1887, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or *Dashnaktsutyun*, which was founded in 1890 and was based in Tbilisi. Having Marxist and Socialist ideological inclinations, both groups were prepared to use terrorism and targeted both Tsarist and Ottoman government officials. In 1894-96 a series of demonstrations as well as terrorist and rebellious acts were committed by Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, which were suppressed by force and slaughter. 344 According to Soviet scholar Gurko-Kryazhev, Russia and the European powers formally protested against the Ottoman actions but remained indifferent to the Armenian situation overall. At this point, the Tsarist empire did not want the creation of independent "Great Armenia" close to its border³⁴⁵ – a plan which a few decades ago St. Petersburg had considered. Ronald Suny notes in this regard that Russia, fearing the expansion of revolutionary zeal, seized money and arms which Russian Armenians had tried to send to their brethren in the Ottoman Empire. 346 Russian Foreign Minister Lobanov-Rostovskiy remarked that "the Russian government would not adopt coercive measures nor consent

N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2004); Anahide Ter-Minassian, "Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement (1887-1912)", in Transcaucasia, Nationalism and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, ed. by Ronald Grigor Suny, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1983);

³⁴⁴ In the view of Armenian scholars, it was the Ottoman authorities who were responsible for the final tragic outcome, while Turkish scholars believe that the clashes occurred mainly between Armenians and Kurdish and Circassians armed groups. The argument that the massacres were organized from the centre is supported mostly by circumstantial evidence, "but awaits further research for decisive confirmation." Aram Arkun, "Into the Modern Age, 1800-1913," in The Armenians: Past and Present in the Making of National Identity, ed. by Edmund Herzig and Marina Kurkchiyan, (London: Routledge, 2005), 81.

³⁴⁵ Vladimir Gurko-Kryazhin, "Armyanskiy vopros," in *Bolshaya Sovestkaya Entsiklopediya*. issue 1, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1926), 437-440.

346 Suny, "Eastern Armenians under Tsarist Rule," 132.

to the creation in Asia Minor of a district in which the Armenians would have exceptional privileges." Justin McCarthy believes that the European powers, especially Britain and Russia, took an active part in instigating the Armenian rebellion movement. Contemporary writer Luigi Villari wrote in 1906 that "Russia made use of the committees [revolutionary organizations] for the purpose of furthering her own Eastern policy, and the committees made use of Russian protection to conspire against Turkey." For thirty years, after the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 until and throughout the First World War, the so-called Armenian Question (as part of the Eastern Question) was present in the discussion of the major imperial capitals – and each power tried to reap maximum benefit from advancing this issue. St. Petersburg tried to pursue two policies simultaneously: on the one hand, supporting Armenians for its own geopolitical benefit, and on the other hand, not wishing the creation of an independent Armenia.

The events of the 1890s in the Ottoman Empire caused another wave of Armenian movement into Russia. St. Petersburg was cautious about the inflow of Armenians, especially fearing the penetration of revolutionary elements. Moreover, as discussed above, Russia had been disappointed with the experience of the resettlement of foreigners

³⁴⁷ Arshag Ohannes Sarkissian, "Concert Diplomacy and the Armenians, 1890-97", in *Studies in Diplomatic History and Historiography in Honour of G. P. Gooch*, ed. by Arshag Ohannes Sarkissian, (London: Longmans, 1961), 69.

³⁴⁸ Justin McCarthy, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van,* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), 47-51.

³⁴⁹ Villari, Fire and Sword in the Caucasus, 149.

³⁵⁰ For discussion of the Armenian Question see: Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923*, (London: Macmillan, St Martin's Press, 1966); Arman J. Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question: from the 1830s to 1914*, (London: Gomidas Institute, 2003); Manoug Joseph Somakian, *Empires in Conflict: Armenia and the Great Powers, 1895-1920*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995); William Hale. *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 1774 – 2000, (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

(*inorodtsy*) and enforced the Russification policy in two directions: bringing Russian people to the South Caucasus and trying to assimilate natives.

St. Petersburg focused on the increase of the Russian ethnic population in the region and, in general, in the Empire's frontiers. The mobility of the population led to various edicts: 1889, 1899, 1901 and finally 1904 to encourage greater movement of Russian settlers – a policy which will be discussed in the next chapter. For the promotion of Russian settlements, Russia needed free lands. By that time Russia lost a considerable amount of state lands in the region. Initially, after the conquest of the region, the creation of the pool of state plots was directed against Muslim landownership. At the end of the 19th century, the Caucasus administration intensified appropriating lands from local owners – mainly Muslims – to intensify Russification of the borderland. By installing Russian elements, the government believed that this process would strengthen the imperial grip in the troubled frontier.

In the 1880-1900s, the Caucasus administration's attitude towards Armenians became highly negative. The Caucasus governors-generals Prince Dondukov-Korsakov (1882-1890) and Grigoriy Golitsyn (1896-1904) launched a series of anti-Armenian measures, such as confiscation of the Armenian Church's property, the closure of schools and the shutting down of newspapers. In 1885 Armenian parish schools operating under the Church were shut down, then reopened a year later and put under strict state supervision. In 1903 the property of the Church was confiscated. There was a strong belief that the Church was conspiring against the unity of the Russian empire together with Armenian nationalists and revolutionary organizations. In 1903 Armenian revolutionaries from *Hnchak* attempted to assassinate viceroy Golitsyn, but he survived.

The number of terrorist acts was growing in 1904 and more Russian bureaucrats were targeted by Armenian revolutionary activists.

Furthermore, the Caucasus administration decided to return Armenian refugees to the Ottoman Empire due to two factors: the lack of land plots and the growing fear of revolutionary elements which might penetrate from the Porte to Russia. However, due to the difficulties with the implementation of this measure, Nicholas II suspended the eviction of Armenian refugees on 19 June 1898. In Spring 1899, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia instructed the Russian ambassador in Istanbul to ask the Ottoman authorities to accept 10,000 Armenian refugees. The Russian diplomat reported back that the repatriation of Armenian refugees to the Ottoman Empire was impossible because Kurdish chieftains had already appropriated Armenian lands and property. The eviction of Armenians might cause more victims, and the Russian diplomat issued advice to allow Armenians – especially those who found jobs – to stay in Russia; advice which Nicholas II approved.³⁵¹ The tsar still wanted to be seen as a sovereign preoccupied with the fate of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire, and allowed the acceptance of refugees. In 1901 Nicholas II passed two decrees allowing Armenian refugees from the Ottoman Empire arrived since 1893 to stay in Russia. As a result, around 75,000 Armenian refugees from the Porte settled in the Caucasus. ³⁵² Nikolay Shavrov estimated that 90,000 Armenian refugees arrived to the Caucasus from the Ottoman Empire from 1893 to 1896. 353

The Caucasus administration took some measures to accommodate and address the problems of Armenians. On 9 November 1901, Viceroy Golitsyn issued an instruction to implement the above-mentioned decrees issued by Nicholas II whereby "Armenian

 ³⁵¹ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 129.
 ³⁵² ARPIISSA, f. 276, op. 9, d. 265, 12.

³⁵³ Shavrov, Novaya ugroza, 60.

refugees, who do not desire to move abroad, are allowed to stay in the places of present residence and to register in rural communities with the latter's consent... or in other cases to register in urban societies." Moreover, Armenian refugees were entitled to move to internal governorates, provided that they would accept Russian citizenship (poddanstvo). The next day Golitsyn issued another instruction to clarify in detail the imperial decrees with regard to Armenian refugees, and ordered to conduct their full registration.³⁵⁵

The inflow of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire, however, became hard to control. "Armenians encouraged their brethren, Turkish subjects, to cross our borders – who then spread throughout the region, settling as lenders in private estates or grabbing state lands. This systematic inflow of foreigners (inorodtsev) threatened to shut down Transcaucasia to the Russian people forever," reported the Caucasus administration to St. Petersburg. 356

However, as I mentioned earlier, under Golitsyn the official and Russian public sentiments were in general anti-Armenian; imperial rhetoric with regard to Armenians in the South Caucasus resembled rhetoric about Germans (as discussed above). Moreover, some Russian nationalists such as Vasiliy Velichko (editor of the magazine "Kavkaz") accused Germany of instigating Armenian separatism in the Caucasus. 357 Velichko, who was a "champion" of anti-Armenian rhetoric, accused Armenians of embezzling public funds, appropriating state lands, abusing Russian workers and attempting to secede from the empire. Several Russian imperial nationalists targeted Armenians, describing them in

³⁵⁴ ARDTA, f. 43, op. 1, doc. 372, 8. ³⁵⁵ ARDTA, f. 43, op. 1, doc. 372, 9.

³⁵⁶ RGIA, f. 391, op. 2, d. 1078, 58-78.

³⁵⁷ Velichko, Kavkaz, 48.

racially and ethnically pejorative terms. 358 Russian nationalists felt betrayed by Armenians – whom they believed St. Petersburg saved from the Persian and Ottoman yoke. Luigi Villari noted that "the Russian government, and to some extent the Russian people, were getting tired of the Eastern Christians, and began to regret that so much blood had been shed and so much treasure wasted for their liberation with so little in the way of results, both in terms of immediate advantages to Russia and even in gratitude". 359

Negative attitudes towards Armenians also influenced resettlement policy. The Minister of Agriculture and State Domains wrote the following in 1895 with regard to Armenian and Greek settlers in Caucasian Black Sea coast:

Armenians and Greeks soon adapted to the conditions of the places where they were settled, but living in the Black Sea area for more than 20 years, they nonetheless fully retained their tribal characteristics – including undisguised and still clearly manifested hostility towards everything Russian. They live isolated, without any communication with Russians, although they often enjoy quite considerable wealth. But the basis of this welfare is often nothing more than the exploitation of Russian neighbors or [agri]cultures which in their hands often acquire a predatory nature; for example, tobacco. Its cultivation is based solely on the plowed land uprooted from forest and then its exploitation until complete exhaustion; and then they move on to new lands, etc. 360

Nikolay Sharvov regretfully exclaimed that in terms of the colonization policy in the South Caucasus "we started not with the settlement of Russian people, but with the invitation of foreigners (*inorodtsev*)."³⁶¹ Shavrov, having further noted the resettlement of Germans and Armenians, to whom "were allocated the best land and various benefits," and who "widely using perjury, being landless aliens, captured vast expanses of public

³⁵⁸ See also I.K. Kanadpev, *Ocherki zakavkaskoy zhizni*, (St. Petersburg: Tip. Kolpinskogo, 1902).

³⁵⁹ Villari, Fire and Sword, 151.

³⁶⁰ RGIA, f. 1199, op. 1, d. 1: Zapiska Ministra Zemledeliya i Gosudarstvennykh Imushesty o Chernomorskom poberezh'ye Kavkaza. ³⁶¹ Shavrov, *Novaya ugroza*, 59.

lands,"³⁶² concluded that "economic domination in Transcaucasia was concentrated in the hands of the Armenians – they are now the masters of the province. The results of our colonization policy in the Caucasus have been disastrous."³⁶³ Shavrov also severely criticized the allocation of state lands to the Georgian and Azerbaijani nobility, while noting the failure to strengthen the "Russian element" as compared to the success of such policy in the North Caucasus.³⁶⁴ Russian bureaucrat I.Kanadpev, in his *Sketches of Transcaucasian Life* noted that:

Armenian illegal seizure of land belonging to the treasury and private individuals has also contributed to their enrichment. These aspirations were especially evident in the fifties and sixties [1850s-1860s]. The capture of state plots happened very easily and certainly not without the knowledge of officials of the administration — most of whom incidentally were always extremely attentive and helpful towards Armenians. 365

In 1897 the Council of Ministers, having considered the report of governor-general Dondukov-Korsakov, noted that it was imperative to adopt preventive measures against the spread of foreign landownership in the Caucasus. ³⁶⁶ Shavrov, in his study of the resettlement policy, gave the following figures of foreign settlers by 1897: Armenians – 1,000,000; Greeks – 82,043; Jews – 30,890; Poles – 17,264; Estonians – 5,241; Aysors (Assirians) – 5,028; Latvians – 4,561; Moldovans – 2724; Czechs – 2,041; and in total – 1,147,952. ³⁶⁷

The anti-Armenian policy was short-lived. With the appointment of new viceroy Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov in 1905, the previous policy towards the Armenian Church

³⁶² Shavrov, *Novaya ugroza*, 59-61.

³⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 65-66.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 62.

³⁶⁵ Kanadpev, Ocherki zakavkaskoy zhizni, 74.

³⁶⁶ RGVIA, f. 400, op. 261/911, d. 286, 1898-1900, 19-20.

³⁶⁷ Shavrov, *Novaya ugroza*, 60-61.

and community was reversed; the property was returned and some privileges were restituted. Vorontsov-Dashkov strongly advocated the return to the previous favoritism policy towards Armenians in the Russian Empire in a letter sent to Nicholas II.

Your Majesty knows that throughout the history of our relations with Turkey in the Caucasus until the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 (which ended with the annexation of Batumi and Kars regions to our territory), Russian politics has been incessantly based on a favorable attitude from the time of Peter the Great towards the Armenians, who repaid us for it during hostilities by actively helping our troops... Only in the 90s of the last century has this inherent Russian policy towards Armenians changed dramatically... Your Majesty knows well to what dismal results the change of our policy led. 368

Vorontsov-Dahskov, emphasizing that "favoring the Armenians, we have gained loyal allies, who always give us a great service," recommended fully restoring the status of Armenians and further advancing the policy aimed at the protection of Turkish Armenians. He wrote to Tsar Nicholas II that Armenians and Georgians would not be drawn to separatism in the midst of Muslims, realizing that "without Russia they would be swallowed up by the Muslims"; therefore, Russia should be afraid of separatism among the Muslim population, "due to its numerical superiority over other peoples and the possibility of the outbursts of religious fanaticism as well as the proximity of the Caucasus to the Muslim states." Though the viceroy was wrong in his evaluation of the aspirations of the Armenians and Georgians (they desired full independence from Russia), the Russian authorities continued to mistrust the Muslim population.

In terms of the resettlement policy, however, this period coincided with an active Russification policy – and St. Petersburg aimed to settle Russian people in the Caucasus.

³⁶⁸ "Pisma I. Vorontsova-Dashkova tsaryu Nikolayu II, 10 October 1912", in *Krasniy arkhiv*, vol. 1, no. 26, (Moscow-Leningrad, 1928), 118—120.

369 Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov. *Vsepoddanneishiy otchet za vosem let upravleniya Kavkazom* (St.

Petersburg, 1913), 9-11.

Vorontsov-Dashkov noted in his report to Nicholas II that the colonization of the region lacked a systematic approach, and as a result there was a shortage of available lands. He pointed out that the distribution of lands after the 1850s to foreigners such as Armenian and Greeks had been ill advised. ³⁷⁰ In the meantime, Armenians continued to emigrate to the Russian empire. All cases were considered individually by the administration of the Baku, Elizavetpol and Erivan governorates

A large influx of Armenians to Russia occurred during the First World War and especially in the aftermath of the 1915 events: the Armenian rebellion and the Ottoman resettlement of the Armenian population from Eastern Anatolia. While many ³⁷¹ Armenians perished in 1915-1916, some of them managed to make their way to the South Caucasus. 372 The tragic relocation of Armenians during the First World War, accompanied by massacres, was preceded by the slaughter of the Muslim population both in the Ottoman Empire³⁷³ and the Russian Caucasus, where Armenian "terrorization of local Muslims, reprehensible as it was from a moral point of view, nevertheless shifted the demographic balance in the area around the Erivan in favor of the Armenians". 374 The

³⁷⁰ Vorontsov-Dashkov, *Vsepoddaneyshaya zapiska*, 69-70.

Turkish historians claim 300,000-400,000 deaths while Armenians - 1,5-2 millions.

³⁷² The tragedy of the Armenian resettlement left a strong imprint in the memory of Armenians throughout the world and affected subsequent events and conflicts in the Caucasus, from 1918 until today. However, it was not the cause of the conflicts between Armenians on one hand, and Turks and Azerbaijanis on the other hand, as animosity between these ethnic groups began earlier in the 1890s in the Ottoman Empire, and in 1905 in the Caucasus, as I illustrated in the Chapter 4. There are a number of studies (many of them highly politicized) concerning this problem. As it is out of the scope of the present study, I focus briefly on its impact on the population of the South Caucasus. (A few references to the competing version of the 1915 events: Donald Bloxham, The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Guenter Lewy, The Armenian Massacre in Ottoman Turkey. A Disputed Genocide. (Salt-Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005).

³⁷³ Justin McCarthy. *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims*, 1821-1922. (Princeton: Darwin, 1995).
³⁷⁴ Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, 138.

total number of refugees in the Caucasus was approximately between 300,000 to 400,000, and mostly in Erivan governorate.³⁷⁵

During the First World War, the positive attitude of the Tsarist authorities toward Armenians strengthened due to geopolitical considerations – St. Petersburg hoped that Armenians would again help them militarily against the Porte. In December 1914, during his visit to the Caucasian front to advance a plan on the Armenian involvement against the Porte, Nicholas II exclaimed in the presence of the head of the Armenian Church and some notable wealthy Armenians: "Armenians from all countries are hurrying to enter the ranks of the glorious Russian Army, and with their blood, to serve the victory of the Russian Army... Let the Russian flag wave freely over the Dardanelles and the Bosporus, let the peoples remaining under the Turkish yoke receive freedom through your will. Let the Armenian people of Turkey, who have suffered for the faith of Christ, be resurrected to a new and free life." A year later, St. Petersburg was afraid of the dimension of the Armenian question, and in Fall-Winter of 1915 disarmed the Armenian units with

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³⁷⁵ There is a wide range of estimations on the number of Armenian refugees. Russian émigré scholar Pavel Paganutsi, referring to another researcher, G. Ter-Markarian, points to 350,000 Armenians crossing the Turkish-Russian border (Pavel Paganutsi, "Imperator Nikolay II – spasitel' soten tysyach armyan ot turetskogo genotsida", Rodina, 8-9 (1993): 93-96). Khajar Verdiyeva estimates that 400,000 Armenians moved to the South Caucasus (Verdiyeva, Pereselencheskay politika, 140), Justin McCarthy also believes that around 400,000 Armenians moved to the Caucasus (Justin McCarthy, Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire, (New York and London: New York University Press, 1983), 130), while Raymond Kevorkian maintains that 172,000 escaped to Russia, Bulgaria and some other countries (Raymond Kévorkian, "L'Extermination des déportés Arméniens Ottomans dans les camps de concentration de Syrie-Mésopotamie (1915-1916). La deuxième phase du genocide. Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine, 2 (1996) 7-8). In 1914 the Armenian Committee for the Relief of War Victims appealed to Armenian communities in St. Petersburg, Moscow and other cities to assist as many as 100,000 refugees. Peter Gatrell, referring to Russian periodicals, estimates that about 200,000 Armenians penetrated Russia in 1915 (Peter Gatrell, A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 19-26). About 100,000 Ottoman Armenians were seeking shelter in Erivan city alone by January 1916 and the governor of Erivan province reported that the total number of Armenian refugees tripled during the following twelve months (RGIA f. 1322, op. 1, d. 16, 38: Report of the governor of Erivan to MVD, 21 January 1916).

³⁷⁶ Stanford Jay Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol 2: *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey*, 1808-1975, (New-York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 314-315.

comments by Caucasus viceroy Grand Duke Nicholay Nickolayevich that "there is no Armenian question, any more than there is a lakut³⁷⁷ question."³⁷⁸ The Armenians, who enjoyed highly privileged status almost throughout the existence of the Russian empire and benefited greatly from the Tsarist resettlement policies, were at the end of the day pawns in the Russian imperial great game in the southern frontier.

2.5. Demographic Changes and Political Discourse

The demographic dimension of the Russian resettlement process in the South Caucasus due to the modern conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan became the subject of a highly politicized dispute between scholars. On one side, there were historical claims put forward by pro-Armenian scholars to justify territorial changes; namely, the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. As a reaction to that, Azerbaijani scholars produced studies to prove the non-existence of such historical accounts. This led to discussions charged with vituperative ethnic rhetoric about the initial percentage of the Muslim and Armenian populations before the beginning of the Russian resettlement policy. This study will not address the "historical and ethnic attribution" of certain territories in the South Caucasus to Armenia or Azerbaijan. However, this research does engage with the question of the scope of the Russian imperial resettlement process in order to show its dimensions and how it affected the demographic development of the region. This issue is also important in terms of the

³⁷⁷ Iakut or Yakut - ethnic group in Siberia and Russian Far East. ³⁷⁸ Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, 152.

impact of the Russian resettlement process on the ethno-territorial conflicts in the South Caucasus.

Russian scholar Viktor Shnirelman maintains that "[t]he resettlement of
Armenians in the Caucasus in the early 19th century and especially after 1828 is one of
the key arguments in modern Azerbaijani anti-Armenian propaganda. It [Azerbaijani
propaganda] says that, after the annexation of the Caucasus, Russian authorities tried to
establish a Christian stronghold against Muslims". While Shnirelman rightfully
emphasizes the degree of politicization of such debates, he fails to investigate and
appreciate the demographic transformation of the South Caucasus as a result of long-term
Russian and Soviet resettlement policies. In general, Russian scholars are reluctant to
admit that such a purpose as Christianization of the region existed. Numerous
quotations produced in the present study manifest that the Russian authorities planned
and implemented a policy of enlargement of the Christian population in the Caucasus.

Armenian scholars generally argue that the Tsarist resettlement process was insignificant in terms of its demographic impact, and that the resettlement of Armenians from the Persian and Ottoman empires to the Russian Caucasus ushered in "the return" of historical balance. In this regard, George Bournoutian and others point out that Persian and Ottoman rulers deported the Armenian population from modern-day Armenia and Karabakh before the Russian conquest in the 19th century, and St. Petersburg's resettlement process helped Armenians to return to their historical homeland.³⁸¹

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³⁷⁹ Shnirel'man, Voyny pamyati, 236.

³⁸⁰ Shnirelman's study is not dedicated to this issue, but he also somehow subscribes to the mainstream Russian academic trend. In the meantime, Shnirelman's in-depth, well-written study reveals the strong connection between historical studies in the three Caucasian republics: Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia – and ethno-territorial conflicts.

George A. Bournoutian, "The Politics of Demography: Misuse of Sources on the Armenian Population of Mountainous Karabakh," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 9 (1999): 99-103.

However, historical sources also indicate that many Muslims were also deported from the South Caucasus before the 19th century. Without going deep into historical details, clearly one might conclude that the South Caucasus was the arena of numerous battles and wars which affected both Muslims and Christians – including the Armenian population. However, by the time of the Russian conquest in the beginning of the 19th century, the South Caucasus – including Erivan and Karabakh khanates – was predominantly populated by Muslims.

Armenian historians tend to emphasize the significance of the Armenian population in the region. One popular reference in Armenian historiography is related to Russian imperial historian Sergei Soloviev, who wrote that in the 1720s Armenians offered Russians help and pledged to give 116,000 fighters, having 100,000 households in Karabakh alone. Later, Soloviev wrote that in 1724 Armenians were able to put forward an army of only 12,000 people, expecting to join the Russian troops. ³⁸³ In view of such contradictions, scholars should treat carefully the relevant Russian sources.

The Armenian authors of the 18th and 19th century (and following those Russian historians) definitely inflated their number to show the significance of their possible support to Russian troops in case of war.³⁸⁴ Robert Hewsen estimates that 50,000 Armenians lived in Karabakh and Syunik (today a region in Armenia) by the year

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³⁸² For example, Armenian historical source Arakel Davrizhetsi wrote: "Shah Abbas initially deported the population of Atrpatakan – Armenians, Muslims and Jews – and moved them into Isfahan; this was a great exodus (*surgun*)." (Arakel Davrizhetsi, *Kniga istoriy*, (Moscow: Glavnaya redaktsiya vostochnoy literatury izdatel'stva, Nauka, 1973), 488.)

³⁸³ Sergei Soloviev, *Istoriya Rossii*, kniga 4, tom 18, (St. Petersburg: Izdaniye Tovarishestva Obshestvennaya pol'za, 1896), 686 and 689.

³⁸⁴ Christopher Walker. "The Armenian Presence in Mountainous Karabakh," In *Transcaucasian Boundaries*, ed. by John Wright, Richard Schofield and Suzanne Goldenberg, (London: UCL Press, 1996), 94.

1800. 385 Here another debate evolves around the percentage of the population of Karabakh and Erivan khanates. Bournoutian opines that what constitutes today the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan (the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (province) in the USSR) had a predominately Armenian population, and refers to the survey conducted by the Russian authorities in 1823. 386 The survey in Karabakh was designed to determine the number of non-Orthodox Christians in the region which Russia obtained as a result of the first war with Persia in 1804-1813. This exercise also manifested that Russia was preoccupied by what percentage of the population was "loyal" and that the resettlement policy, which first launched in 1817 (Germans) and then in 1828 (Armenians), was aimed at increasing the Christian population. The survey indicated the number of villages and their ethnic affiliation and verbally collected the names of residents of settlements in Karabakh. 387 Bournoutian, speaking about the percentage of the Armenian population, argues:

The district of Khachen had twelve Armenian villages and no Tatar (Russian term for the Azerbaijani Turkic population) villages; Jalapert had eight Armenian villages and no Tatar villages; Dizak had fourteen Armenian villages and one Tatar village; Gulistan had two Armenian and five Tatar villages; and Varanda had twenty-three Armenian villages and one Tatar village. Thus the five mountainous districts (generally known as Nagorno-Karabakh today) which, according to Persian and Turkish sources, constituted the five (khamse) Armenian melikdoms, had an overwhelming Armenian population before 1828^{388}

³⁸⁵ Robert H. Hewsen, "The Meliks of Eastern Armenia: a Preliminary Study", Revue des Etudes Arméniennes, NS, 9 (1972): 291.

³⁸⁶ Bournoutian, "The Politics of Demography," 99-103.

³⁸⁷ Opisaniye Karabakhskoy provintsii, sostavlennoye na 1823 g. po rasporyazheniyu glavnoupravlyayushchego v Gruzii Ermolova deystvitel'nym statskim sovetnikom Mogilevskim i polkovnikom Ermolovym 2-m. (Tiflis, 1866).
³⁸⁸ Bournoutian, "The Politics of Demography", 101.

He concludes that "35.2% of the population of Karabakh (the Armenians) inhabited 38 percent of the land, where they formed an overwhelming majority," which would mean that there was a 90 percent Armenian majority in what is today Nagorno-Karabakh.

Nagorno-Karabakh is however an artificial creation of the Soviet authorities from 1921-1923. The Soviets divided historical Karabakh administratively to create a so-called "Mountainous" (*Nagorny* in Russian) Karabakh. The conclusion made by Bournoutian is full of deliberate misrepresentations. In order to avoid acceptance of the fact that the majority of the population of Karabakh was Muslim (mainly those who became known later as Azerbaijanis), which by Bournoutian's calculation was 65 percent, he selectively chooses villages with majority Armenian populations to highlight their dominance — while ignoring the largest regional city of Shusha in the same Nagorno-Karabakh, and other settlements. In this regard, Adil Baguirov points out:

Thus, excluding the estates as was done by Dr. Bournoutian et al. is tantamount to excluding 55% of all population centers in the Karabakh province, all in the name of manipulating the historical evidence to artificially increase the Armenian presence – whilst at the same time decrease the number of Azerbaijanis. Therefore, for all intents and purposes, according to the 1823 survey there were 35 population regions in Karabakh. Armenians might have been in majority in just seven or eight of them, with all honest and ethical researchers having an obligation to include all of them in their calculations – or provide clear and fair justifications for their exclusion. ³⁹⁰

While Bournoutian accuses some Azerbaijani historians of modifying historical texts,³⁹¹ he himself engages in the misrepresentation of historical data. Moreover, such historical

³⁸⁹ Bournoutian, "The Politics of Demography", 101.

³⁹⁰ Adil Baguirov, "Nagorno-Karabakh: Competing Legal, Historic and Economic Claims in Political, Academic and Media Discourses", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 2, (2012):. 139-175. ³⁹¹ George Bournoutian, "Rewriting History: Recent Azeri Alterations of Primary Sources Dealing with Karabakh", *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 6 (1992–1993): 185–190.

data as the survey of 1823 should be also approached cautiously by historians. Russian ethnographer Anatoliy Yamskov warns that all surveys and censuses conducted in the Caucasus were held in the winter and autumn seasons, when the nomadic population left their settlements to take their cattle to pastures. Thus, accurate counting was not possible due to the seasonal fluctuation of the Muslim/Azerbaijani population of the region. ³⁹²

Overall, in Karabakh a clear majority belonged to the Muslim/Azerbaijani population by the 1820s when Russia launched the resettlement policy in the South Caucasus. In a letter dated 2 August 1810 to St. Petersburg Russian general and commander-in-chief in the Caucasus Alexander Tormasov indicated that in Karabakh, 2,500 out of 12,000 families were Armenians³⁹³ (see also Appendixes for the demographic charts). The survey of 1823 counted 15,729 Muslim families and 4,366 Armenians.³⁹⁴ As one can see, between 1810 and 1823 the Armenian population in Karabakh had already grown. This process occurred not only because of the arrival of Armenians to the Russian-controlled territories, but also due to the outflow of the Muslim/Azerbaijani population. Some families were taken by the Qajar army, others preferred Muslim rule and decided to leave the Russian controlled territory.³⁹⁵ Russian imperial historian Vasiliy Potto in his history of the Caucasus War indicated that many Muslims and Armenians left Erivan for the Ottoman Empire and Persia during military

³⁹² Anatoliy Yamskov. "Traditsionnoye zemlepol'zovaniye kochevnikov istoricheskogo Karabakha i sovremennyy armyano-azerbaydzhanskiy etnoterritorial'nyy konflikt", in *Faktor etnokonfessional'noy samobytnosti v postsovetskom obshchestve*, ed. by Martha Olkott and Alexander Malashenko. (Moscow: Moskovskiy Tsentr Karnegi, 1998), 168—197.

³⁹³ AKAK, vol. 4, doc. 37, 38–39.

³⁹⁴ Opisaniye Karabakhskoy provintsii, sostavlennoye na 1823 g. po rasporyazheniyu glavnoupravlyayushchego v Gruzii Ermolova deystvitel'nym statskim sovetnikom Mogilevskim i polkovnikom Ermolovym 2-m. (Tiflis, 1866).

³⁹⁵ Some episodes of Muslim outflow were registered in Russian documents, for example: AKAK, vol. 5, doc. 177, 125 or see *Obozreniye Rossiyskikh vladeniy za Kavkazom v statisticheskom, etnograficheskom, topograficheskom i finansovom otnosheniyakh*, vol. 3 (Tiflis, 1836), 267.

actions. It was not likely that Muslims would return back after the Russian conquest. ³⁹⁶ In the census of 1832 in Karabakh, there were 20,546 families (54, 841 males) out of which 13,956 were Muslims and 6,491 were Armenians. ³⁹⁷ There was a continued trend in favour of an Armenian population increase, which was heightened by the end of the 19th century as a result of numerous migrations. The imperial census of 1897 indicated that 164,098 Azerbaijanis and 109,250 Armenians resided in three districts: Shusha, Javanshir and Jabrayil of Elizavetpol governorate, which covered the high (mountainous) and partly lowland Karabakh. ³⁹⁸ In Shusha district Armenians gained a majority – 73,953 versus 62,868 Azerbaijanis by 1897. Sebastian Muth summarizes the resettlement impact on the Nagorno-Karabakh as follows:

It was part of the consolidation of imperial Russian rule in Karabakh to change the demographic composition in favor of Armenian Christians who arrived from Persia, while Muslim Azerbaijanis and Turks were often forced to relocate to Persia and the Ottoman Empire, most likely increasing the number of Armenians in the greater region of Karabakh.³⁹⁹

In two other khanates – Erivan and Nakhichevan, which became Russian territory after the second Russian-Persian war (1826-1828) and was turned into an Armenian Oblast (province) – roughly 75 percent were Muslims. In his letter dated 1828, Russian

³⁹⁶ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyana, vol. 3, 334

³⁹⁷ Obozreniye Rossiyskikh vladeniy za Kavkazom, vol. 3, 267.

³⁹⁸ Reference to the results and calculations of the 1897 Imperial Census is given in the previous section on the Resettlement of Armenians. *Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiyskoy Imperii, 1897 g. Tsentral'nyy statisticheskiy komitet MVD.* Ed. by N.A.Troynitskiy. (St. Petersburg, 1899-1905). For the South Caucasus see vol. 61: Bakinskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905; vol. 63: Yelizavetopol'skaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1904; vol. 64 - kn.1 Karskaya oblast'. St. Petersburg, 1900; vol. 64 - kn.02: Karskaya oblast'. St. Petersburg, 1904; vol. .66: Kutaisskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905; vol. 69: Tiflisskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905; vol. 71: Erivanskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905

³⁹⁹ Sebastian Muth. "War, Language Removal and Self-identification in the Linguistic Landscapes of Nagorno-Karabakh", *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, vol. 42, no. 1, (2014): 65. See also Frederik Coene, *The Caucasus. Introduction*, (London: Routledge 2010), 145.

commander-in-chief of the Caucasus Ivan Paskevich wrote that General Karsovskiy, the governor of the Armenian Oblast, "allowed much Armenian influence in the province which consisted of a three-quarters Muslim population." The only available survey of this period is the one conducted by Ivan Shopen after the Russian conquest in the Erivan and Nakhichevan khanates as well as Ordubad district in 1829-1832. 401 While this survey published in 1852 indicates how many indigenous and newly-settled Armenians lived in the province, at the same time it does not reflect the number of deported or perished Muslims during the wars. The survey nevertheless calculated that prior to the Russian conquest of 1828 there were 117,849 Muslims and 25,151 Armenians, and after the conquest there were 82,073 Muslims and 82,377 Armenians (native – 25,151, from Persia -35,560, from Turkey -21,666). ⁴⁰² In the Erivan khanates there were 49,875 Muslims and 20,073 native Armenians along with 45,207 settlers. Essentially, the survey confirms the proportion of Muslims to Christians (80%-20%) before the Russian conquest indicated by Paskevich, and at the same time shows that after the Russian conquest half of the population of Armenian *Oblast* (Erivan, Nakhichevan and Ordubad) became Armenians.

In 1832 Nakhichevan there were 6,538 families (16,095 males) out of which 3,859 were Muslims, 533 were indigenous (*korenniyi*) Armenian families and 2,145 were settlers from Persia in 1828.⁴⁰³ In the Armenian Oblast in 1834 there were 22,366 families or 65,300 males out of which there were 29,690 Muslims, 10,350 indigenous

⁴⁰⁰ Potto, Kavkaszskaya voyna, vol. 3, 736.

⁴⁰¹ Ivan Shopen. *Istoricheskiy pamyatnik sostoyaniya Armyanskoy oblasti v epokhu yeya prisoyedineniya k Rossiyskom Imperii.* (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaya Akademiya nauk, 1852).
⁴⁰² *Ibid.* 635-642.

⁴⁰³ Obozreniye Rossiyskikh vladeniy za Kavkazom v statisticheskom, etnograficheskom, topograficheskom i finansovom otnosheniyakh, vol. 4, (Tiflis, 1836) 316-317.

Armenians (*starozhily*) and 24,255 settlers from Persia and the Ottoman empire – as well as 1,000 Yezids (Kurdish Christians) and some Romans. ⁴⁰⁴ In the survey of Elizavetpol dated 1833, there were 5,424 families out of which 1472 (868+640) families were Armenians and 3,916 (1,141+2,775) were Azerbaijanis (indicated as Tatars). ⁴⁰⁵

According to Russian contemporary sources of the 19th century, a number of Armenian settlers in Karabakh, Nakhichevan and Erivan from Persia in 1828 reached 40,000 people⁴⁰⁶ and from both Persia and the Ottoman Empire by the end of 1829 another 105,000 Armenians had migrated to the Russian empire. 407 Another Russian source, Sergei Glinka, reported about 100,000 Armenians who moved to Russia during the resettlement process from Persia and the Ottoman Empire. 408 while in another study he indicates that 8,000 families have moved beyond the Araz river to the Russian Empire and settled in the newly established Armenian province. 409 A book published by the Lazarev Institute in 1838 suggested settling 105,000 Armenians in Russia from the Persian and the Ottoman empires. 410 Russian scholar Nikolay Shavrov in his study published in 1911 noted that from 1828-1830 40,000 Armenians from Persia and 84,000 Armenians from the Ottoman Empire (total 124,000) moved to the Caucasus and settled in Erivan province and Elizavetpol – where before "the number of Armenians was almost zero." Shavrov also indicated that approximately 200,000 Armenians crossed the border illegally. Dana Sherry, based on documents from Georgian archives, estimates that

⁴⁰⁴ Obozreniye Rossiyskikh vladeniy za Kavkazom v statisticheskom, etnograficheskom, topograficheskom i finansovom otnosheniyakh, vol. 4, (Tiflis, 1836), 270.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*, vol. 2, 367.

⁴⁰⁶ Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 3, 733.

⁴⁰⁷ K.Borozdin. "Pereselntsy v Zakavkazye", Russkiy Vestnik, no. 15, (St. Petersburg, 1891), 128-129.

⁴⁰⁸ Sergei Glinka, *Obozreniye istorii armyanskogo naroda*, vol. 2, 264.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 92.

⁴¹⁰ SAOKOIAN, vol. 2, 1838, 184.

⁴¹¹ Shavrov, *Novaya* ugroza, 59.

130,000 Armenians and Greeks arrived in the Russian empire within months after the war ended with Persia and the Porte, in 1828-1829. he also indicates that thousands of Muslims also moved into the Russian empire. Alexander Griboyedov in a letter sent to General Paskevich informed that the number of indigenous Armenians versus new Armenian settlers in Nakhichevan was 290 to 943 (1:3).

In sum, the Russian resettlement campaign in 1828-1830 allowed Armenians to form the majority in the Armenian *Oblast* – especially in the former Erivan khanate – and increase their number in Nakhichevan. George Bournoutian admits that after "the Russian conquest of Persian Armenia the ethnic makeup of the region shifted and, for the first time in over four centuries, the Armenian population once again began to achieve a majority in one part of its historic homeland." ⁴¹⁴ The emergence the Armenian Republic in 1918 and the Soviet Socialist Armenian Republic in 1920 "would not have been a reality without the Russian (Christian) takeover of Persian Armenia." ⁴¹⁵ Ronald Suny also affirms that "the most important result of the Russian conquest of Transcaucasia and the subsequent migrations was the formation of a compact Armenian majority on a small part of their historic homeland." ⁴¹⁶ Ronald Suny summarizes demographic changes in the South Caucasus with regard to Armenian migration:

With the fighting over and the Russian hold over Transcaucasia secure, tens of thousands of Armenians living on the Turkish and Persian sides of the new border migrated into Russian territory, while Muslims left for Turkey and Persia. Before 1828 there had been approximately 87,000 Muslims and 20,000 Armenians in the Erivan khanate. After the

⁴¹² Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 32.

⁴¹³ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 623, 647.

⁴¹⁴ George A. Bournoutian. "The Population of Persian Armenia Prior to and Immediately Following its Annexation to the Russian Empire: 1826-1832" (paper presented at Conference on "Nationalism And Social Change In Transcaucasia", co-sponsored by Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, the Wilson Center and American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. April 24-25, 1980), 14.
⁴¹⁵ *Ibid* 14

⁴¹⁶ Suny, "Eastern Armenians under Tsarist Rule", 112.

migrations the number of Armenians reached 65,000 and the number of Muslims fell to just over 50,000, including about 10,000 Kurds. The city of Erivan still had a Muslim majority. Of its 11,400 citizens, more than 7,000 were Muslims and less than 4,000 were Armenians. Only later in the century, after population transfers following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 – 1878, would the Armenians form a dominant majority in Erivan province, and not until the early twentieth century would Armenians constitute a majority in the provincial capital. Nevertheless, the most important result of the Russian conquest of Transcaucasia and the subsequent migrations was the formation of a compact Armenian majority on a small part of their historic homeland. 417

Azerbaijani historian Rafik Safarov 418 and some others challenge the argument that Erivan was the historic Armenian homeland and that Armenians ever had a majority there. Armenian historians, to the contrary, trace their homeland, including in the Caucasus, to the ancient times, circa 7-6 BC; however, as I have stressed, the history prior of the Russian conquest is outside of the scope of this study. The argument of indigenous population rights versus settlers unfortunately was used to justify territorial claims not only in the South Caucasus but also in other parts of the world. Apparently, in the context of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts, both ethnic groups are settlers in the Caucasus, though with different historical intervals. So-called primordialism, a belief that ethnic groups are entitled to territories based on their historical roots, is an "absurd dilemma" because the relativity of the notion of autochthony in the history of humankind. 419

⁴¹⁷ Suny, "Eastern Armenians under Tsarist Rule", 112

⁴¹⁸ Rafik Safarov, *Izmeneniye etnicheskogo sostava naseleniya Irevanskoy guberniyi v XIX-XX vv.* (Baku: Sada, 2009).

⁴¹⁹ For *primordialism* see: Steven Grosby, "Debate: The Verdict of History: The Inexpungeable Tie of Primordiality – a Response to Eller and Coughlan," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, (1994): 164-171, and the discussion of primordialism with regard to the post-Soviet conflicts, including the Armenian-Azerbaijani one see: Christoph Zuercher, *The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic conflict and Nationhood in the Caucasus*, (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

Overall the inflow of migrants and settlers made a considerable demographic impact on the South Caucasus. Shavrov estimated that in 1897 there were 1,147,952 socalled "foreign people" - out of which 1 million were Armenians, 82,043 Greeks, 17,264 Poles, 30,890 Jews, and others. 420 There were also almost 120,000 Russians in three provinces, which increased the ratio of settlers to the indigenous population. The major part of such demographic changes, along with natural migration, was Russia's statemanaged resettlement policy. While Baku city underwent demographic changes due to economic causes, Erivan's transformation was state-made. By the time of the Russian conquest, this city was dominantly Muslim/Azerbaijani, but by the beginning of the 20th century it became half-Armenian and half-Azerbaijani. 421 The Erivan governorate also transformed significantly and the Armenian population acquired a strong and dominant presence there. The census of 1897 indicated that 56 percent of the population was Armenians, while 37 percent were Azerbaijanis. 422 The share of the Muslim population in the former Erivan khanate declined from 75 percent in the beginning of the 19th century to 36 percent in 1916. 423 The Karabakh region has also gained many more Armenians; this change was result of mixed factors, i.e. Russian-sponsored resettlement such as in 1828-1831 and migration in the second half of the 19th century, whereas many Armenians from Persia and Turkey moved to live nearby their brethren. As a result, from 1823 to

⁴²⁰ Nikolay Shavrov, "Russkaya kolonizatsiya na Kavkaze". *Voprosy kolonizatsiyi*, no. 8, (Sankt-Petersburg, 1911), 136.

⁴²¹ Erivan city's population was about 29,000, of which 49% were Azerbaijanis and 48% Armenians: See "Erivan". *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, vol. XLI (81), (St. Petersburg, Russia, 1904), 14-15.

⁴²² "Erivanskaya guberniya". *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, vol. XLI (81), (St. Petersburg, Russia, 1904), 12.

⁴²³ Statistics for 1916 available in KK, 1917, 214-221.

1891 the share of the Armenian population in Shusha *uyezd* increased from 8 to 58 percent. 424

Khajar Verdiyeva maintains that the increase of the Christian population — especially Armenians — in the second part of the 19th century in the Azerbaijani-populated areas (Baku, Elizavetpol, Erivan) was disproportionate. Armenians reached almost 30 percent of the population of Azerbaijan while Russians comprised only 4,3% of the population there. The strategic goal of Christianization of the South Caucasus and especially in terms of Armenian resettlement was discussed earlier, and this policy is well summarized by imperial historian Sergei Glinka: "The benefits of the population have always been tangible and obvious; in particular, the multiplication of resettled Christian brethren people can install a reliable bulwark for the Russian borderland to repel the hostile actions of neighbouring inhabitants — especially Turks, Persians and Highlanders."

Multiple resettlement campaigns throughout the 19th century led to the radical transformation of the South Caucasus, and especially of Erivan governorate. This was a clear example of Russian imperial population management in action in the borderlands. The resettlement of Germans and Armenians had various political and economic purposes but ultimately overlapped with the desire to Christianize the region – not for the sake of purely religious motive, but in order to increase the loyal population in the Muslim-dominated frontier. The geopolitical consideration – the expansion into Persian and Ottoman domains – was the important factor in this regard.

⁴²⁴ KK, 1896, otd. 5, 44-47.

⁴²⁵ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 189.

⁴²⁶ Glinka, Opisaniye pereseleniya, 93.

The poor management of the resettlement process was typical to the Tsarist bureaucracy and had been repeated on numerous occasions. Settlers were seen as the instrument of the imperial policy and left to deal with outstanding problems. When their "usefulness" ceased to exist in the eyes of Tsarist bureaucrats, especially as nationalist forces prevailed in the Empire in the second half of the 19th century, the policy of containment and discrimination prevailed. Here geopolitics continued playing its dominant role and was apparently present during the First World War. The most affected people in the South Caucasus were Muslims, especially Azerbaijanis, whose landownership as well as economic and social development was hindered by the Russian conquest and subsequent policies, including the resettlements.

CHAPTER 3

RESETTLEMENT OF RUSSIANS

Russian colonization was considered an accompanying phenomenon of imperial expansion. This chapter analyzes the resettlement of the Russians in the South Caucasus. For the reason discussed in the previous chapter, Caucasus officials began the colonization of the region by the resettling of foreigners. Having become disenchanted with the results of these campaigns, they moved to the resettlement of Russians.

The Russification of the Caucasus should also be understood within the three elements of the Russian administration: military control, the "civilizing mission" and religion. Firstly, St. Petersburg always used ethnic Russians to increase their military control; this policy was especially prevalent in the North Caucasus. Military considerations were closely intertwined with geopolitical issues, i.e. the Muslim presence and surrounding hostile Persia and Ottoman empires (these issues were discussed in the previous chapters). Secondly, the government hoped that the increased presence of Russians among locals would facilitate the "civilizing mission." The government's logic was that the greater presence of Russians would influence the Muslims in positive ways; - helping them to acquire the needed qualities of servants, farmers and workers. Thirdly, the Russian Orthodoxy was a foundational element of the Russian empire, along with autocracy and nationalism. However, in the South Caucasus the Russian state's consideration of the importance of Orthodoxy took on a peculiar character. The mass movement of Russian settlers began with sectarians because of the threat that they posed to Orthodoxy within Russian core territories.

The Russian resettlement to the region had several waves. The first settlers (in small numbers) were soldiers and their families, who moved to the South Caucasus in the 1820s. An organized campaign was launched in 1830 with the resettlement of Russian sectarians. Since the 1850s, St. Petersburg encouraged the settlement of Russian peasants. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, Russian officials renewed the policy of Russian settlement in the Caucasus – focusing on certain regions such as the Mugan-Mill steppe in Azerbaijan.

All waves of the Russian movement to the region represented what St. Petersburg wished to achieve in the Muslim borderland. The first attempt to settle militaries stemmed from the importance of the preservation of security and safety in the newly-acquired territories. For the other two waves of Russian colonization, economic factors were secondary. The resettlement of sectarians stemmed from the desire to jettison heretics from the Russian core and at the same time to utilize them as loyal elements in the Muslim environment. However, at the end of the day, Russian sectarians were also part of the imperial design aimed at strengthening the Russian presence in the region. Nicholas Breyfogle argues that this policy opened up a new chapter of Russian resettlement practices – "sectarian colonialism."

Whether they supported or opposed Tsarist power, the sectarian settlers influenced the course of Russia's imperial enterprise through their interaction with colonial authorities, with local inhabitants, and with Transcaucasia's natural environment. At crucial moments, the settlers performed a range of military, economic, and administrative functions essential to Russian empire-building – sometimes unwittingly. [T]he sectarians who migrated to the South Caucasus also played a decisive role in constructing and constituting Imperial Russia as a multi-ethnic, multiconfessional entity. 427

⁴²⁷ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 2-3.

Breyfogle maintains that Russian authorities did not consider the long-term consequences of the sectarian resettlement. It was an uncoordinated and multidimensional policy with the immediate need to move sectarians out of the Russian metropolis, though previously St. Petersburg considered the political and economic benefits of the conquest of the Caucasus. 428 In terms of the consequences of the sectarian resettlement to the region, Breyfogle highlights that sectarian colonization in the South Caucasus demonstrates the unity of colonization and empire-building processes. 429 As Breyfogle puts it, "the sectarian settlers became a cornerstone of Tsarist imperial aspirations in the South Caucasus, contributing directly to the achievements of the empire-building enterprise through a variety of economic, governmental, and especially military functions". 430 Michael Khodarkovsky emphasizes the long-term coherency of Russian policy towards imperial expansion in the region⁴³¹ as well as in the whole empire. 432 In my opinion, it is hardly coincidental that Tsarist Russia exploited the sectarian resettlement on two occasions: in Southern Ukraine and the Caucasus. Both territories represented important and troubled areas as newly-acquired territories on the border with hostile countries, i.e. Persia and especially the Ottoman Empire. Khajar Verdiyeva points out that sectarian settlement had a colonial significance in terms of the Russian ethnic presence in a Muslim environment. 433

⁴²⁸ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 19.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, 5.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid*, 309.

⁴³¹ Michael Khodarkovsky, "Of Christianity, Enlightenment and Colonialism: Russia in the North Caucasus, 1550-1800", Journal of Modern History, vol. 71, no. 2, (1999): 394-430.

⁴³² Michael Khodarkovsky, Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800, (Bloomington: Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2002). ⁴³³ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 188.

Khajar Verdiyeva identifies three stages of Russian settlement policy: sectarian, peasant and "Russian." ⁴³⁴ She considers the whole Russian endeavor in terms of population movement in the region as a policy of Christianization. However, I believe that while this was an important consideration for St. Petersburg, the motive of empirebuilding surpassed all others. Irina Dolzhenko suggests that the first stage (1820-1850) was characterized by Russian imperial policy in the South Caucasus and determined by military-strategic considerations. The second stage (1850-1914), which resulted in an increase of the rural Russian population, was due to economic factors and internal needs of the regional administration. ⁴³⁵

The last wave of the Russian resettlement (from the end of the 19th century to 1914) had important economic motives: for example, to ease the ostensible land tension in the Russian core and develop agriculture in the South Caucasus. However, the greater presence of ethnic Russians in the borderland was most important in terms of creating more certainty in an area prone to separatism – as we see from documents and discussion among the Russian imperial officials and experts.

St. Petersburg increasingly favoured Russian "proper" Orthodox elements in the South Caucasus for both political control and economic benefit. Alberto Masoero also emphasizes that the driving force behind resettlement – especially Russian peasant colonization – was the idea of the modernization of the empire. He notes that, while "peasant migration had been a 'fact of life' for centuries and the state had employed population policies before," the modern ideologies of colonization in the second part of the 19th century continued the tradition of spatial transformation.

⁴³⁴ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 171-215.

⁴³⁵ Irina V. Dolzhenko, *Khozyaystvenniy i obshchestvenniy byt russkikh krest'yan Vostochnoy Armenii.* (konets XIX– nachalo XX vv.), (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo AN Armyanskoy SSR, 1985).

Over time, supervised migration to the peripheries came to be seen as a powerful instrument for changing society and Russia itself. It evolved from a set of approaches used to govern an expanding dynastic empire to become a political myth, a strategy for accelerating modernization charged with patriotic and even socialist overtones. It reflected the sensitivity of an age of revolutions no less than one of empires. 436

The resettlement policy was an integral part of Russian imperialism and its power. This empire-building drive had underpinned or sometimes superseded considerations such as the desire to Christianize or modernize the region, or carry out the "civilizing mission."

The resettlement of Russian sectarians in the South Caucasus was thoroughly investigated by Nicholas Breyfogle in his work *Heretics and Colonizers*. The list of Russian language studies is a bit more extensive: Fikret Bagirov, Irina Dolzhenko, Khajar Verdiyeva, but all these works except the latter one investigate the settlers separately by time and type (sectarians, peasants, etc...). My task is to analyze the Russian resettlement policy's continuity and coherence within the empire-building process. In doing this I have used both Azerbaijani and Russian sources, and supported the research with secondary literature. The following files from state archives were especially important and helpful: the State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan; namely, a division of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Caucasus (*Ministerstvo Zemledeliya*), the documents of the Resettlement Administration (*Zemledelcheskoye Upravlaniye*) in the Russian State Historical Archive, and the Asian Division of the

⁴³⁶ Alberto Masoero, "Territorial Colonization in Late Imperial Russia: Stages in the Development of a Concept", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 14, no. 1, (2013): 87.

⁴³⁷ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*. I briefly analyzed this book in the Introduction and will discuss it through the chapter.

⁴³⁸ Fikret Bagirov, *Pereselencheskaya politika tsarisma v Azerbaydzhane, 1830-1914*, (Moscow: Maroseyka, 2009); Dolzhenko, *Khozyaystvenniy i obshchestvenniy byt*; Irina Dolzhenko, "Perviye russkiye pereselentsy v Armenii (30–50-ye gody XIX v.)", *Vestnik MGU, Istoriya,* issue 29, vol. 9, no. 3, (1974): 58–66; Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*.

Russian State Military-Historical Archive. I have also extensively cited the primary literature of the imperial period: books and papers of Tsarist officials, experts and historians who discussed the resettlement, colonization and agricultural issues.

3.1. Sectarians as Empire-Builders

Russian imperial scholars viewed colonization as an important characteristic of the Empire. In 1888, Evgeniy Veydenbaum presented the following summary of the Russian colonization of the Caucasus: "Along with the spread of Russian rule in the Caucasus by force of arms and politics, the region was conquered through state-managed and voluntary colonization by Russian settlers. [B]esides Russians, various foreign peoples inhabited the region different areas of the region – the Germans, Czechs, Bulgarians, Greeks, Estonians and others, who following the call of the government took vacant land in the region." ⁴³⁹ Imperial Russian scholars saw internal demographic and economic benefits in the resettlement policy. 440 Alexander Kaufman, for example, insisted that there were important humanitarian aspects of resettlement, believing that the Russian administration treated "natives" of the Caucasus as "Ours" (nashi) and took their interests into consideration.⁴⁴¹

For Russian nationalists, it was essential to point out the mistake of the first attempts to colonize the Caucasus through foreign settlers; they believed this was a deviation from traditional Russian colonization. In retrospect, the Russian nationalist

⁴³⁹ Evgeniy Veydenbaum, *Putevoditel' po Kavkzau*, (Tiflis, 1888), 127, 149.

⁴⁴⁰ Alexander Kaufman, *Pereseleniye i kolonizatsiya*, (St. Petersburg: Tip. Tovarishestva Obshestvennaya Pol'za, 1905). 441 *Ibid*, 10.

activist and entrepreneur Nikolay Shavrov wrote in 1911 that "we began our colonization policy in Transcaucasia not by settling Russian people, but by settling foreigners."442 In the Caucasus Calendar published in 1899, it was highlighted that "proper colonization of the Caucasus began only with the appearance of Russians here."443

In the view of other Soviet scholars, the first flow in settlement in the southern borderland regions of the Russian Empire – i.e. the North Caucasus, Central Asia and Kazakhstan – consisted of Cossacks, followed by peasants. 444 However, the settlement policy in the South Caucasus was characterized by the resettlement of a significant number of sectarians among Russian settlers. At the same time, Cossacks did not have a considerable presence in the South Caucasus and though officials initially tried to move Cossacks to the region, they did not pursue this policy in the second half of the 19th century. The uniqueness of the situation in the South Caucasus can be explained by the fact that the region was divided from the Russian core by the high mountains, which made it difficult to maintain population circulation as compared to the North Caucasus.

The first act of settlement was initiated as early as in 1816, when Russia, after the Gulistan Treaty of 1813, took possession of the current territory of Azerbaijan. The Caucasus administration decided to establish permanent headquarters in places of strategic importance to "form a community of married men who would lead, develop and consistently improve the regimental economy."445 Initially, military settlements were

⁴⁴² Shavrov, Novaya ugroza, 59.

⁴⁴³ KK, 1899, otd. 2, 81-82.

⁴⁴⁴ Konstantin Ten, "Russkoye naseleniye Sredney Azii i Kazakhstana vo vtorov polovine XIX—nachale XX vv." Istoriya SSSR, 4 (1970): 143-153; Lidiya Zasedateleva, Terskiye kazaki (seredina XVI- nachalo XXv.). Istoriko-etnograficheskiye ocherki, (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1974), 188-217. Potto, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, vol. 2, 638.

formed by soldiers. One such settlement was established in Khankendi, 446 which later became the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region in 1923 and was renamed by the Soviets into Stepanakert. General Ermolov, in order to raise the "spirit" of military personnel, gave orders to send several thousand young women and widows in Russia to military settlements. Marriages were organized by draw, and thus "the family sedentary life of Transcaucasian regiments was created to mitigate homesickness, which was especially strong among soldiers; not only due to the environment of a new place, but also because of the alien population that surrounded them."⁴⁴⁷

St. Petersburg commissioned the settlement of Russians in the Caucasus in 1821. 448 but this practice was unsuccessful as Russians were not willing to move and stay in the region. As for military settlers, their life was burdened with severe circumstances and was heavily restricted by military duties. In 1848, Caucasus officials ceased the practice of military settlements. Viceroy Alexander Bariatinskiy wrote: "Years of experience has shown that these settlements do not fulfill the purpose of their institutions. Some of them are unsustainable due to the infertility of land originally allotted to them; settlers cannot remain in place and the management of settlements burdens the military office."449 Upon Baryatinskiy's recommendation, in 1851 military settlements were transferred to civil administration, and settlers became state peasants. 450 Overall, the experience with the military settlements was a failure, and the Caucasus administration realized this relatively quickly and never promoted it again.

⁴⁴⁶ I.L. Segal'. "Russkiye poselyane v Elisavetpol'skoy guberniyi. Statistiko-etnographicheskiy ocherk" Kavkaz, no. 40, 1890.

447 Potto, Kavkazskaya voyna, vol. 2, 641.

⁴⁴⁸ PSZ, Compendium 1 (1649-1825), vol. 37, doc. 28714, (St. Petersburg, 1830), 793-796.

⁴⁴⁹ AKAK, vol. 12, 1349.

⁴⁵⁰ PSZ, Compendium 2, (1825-1881) vol. 32, doc. 32068, (St. Petersburg, 1857), 594-595.

The organized settlement of ethnic Russians began with the dispatch of sectarians – elements perceived to be harmful to the Russian monarchy and Orthodox faith. On October 20, 1830 Nicholas I issued a decree about the resettlement of Russian sectarians to the South Caucasus. In a peculiar way the decree stipulated the forcible exile and voluntary resettlement of sectarians of various kinds (Dukhobors, Molokans Molokans 453, Subbotniks, Old Believers and others).

Tsarist authorities had strong bonds with the official Orthodox Church. The Church was subjugated to the power of Tsar, and thus it also represented the official mantle of the "blessed" authority of the Russian Tsar. For this reason it was important to preserve the unity of the Church. Sectarians (Dukhobors, Molokans and some others) challenged the supremacy of the Orthodox Church and sometimes even the Tsar. Their persecution was a logical conclusion for maintaining the power of the sovereign as untouched and holy. While persecution did not always bring positive results, the Russian authorities decided to jettison sectarians to the imperial periphery.

There was a social dimension to the threat stemming from sectarians. The latter believed in equality and unity of all people, which caused sympathy among Russian liberal-minded intellectuals towards sectarians. It is not a coincidence that Lev Tolstoy especially supported Dukhobors and even funded their resettlement to the North America. The resettlement of sectarians to the Caucasus represented the importance of religious

⁴⁵¹ PSZ, Compendium 2, (1825-1881), vol. 5, doc. 4010, (St. Petersburg. 1830), 169-170.

⁴⁵² The combination of forcible exile and "voluntary" resettlement would resurface on many occasions; not only in the Russian empire's practices, but also in the Soviet Union's (especially in Stalin's decrees on population resettlements).
⁴⁵³ In the Introduction, I mentioned that my first encounter with the imperial resettlement was during my

⁴⁵³ In the Introduction, I mentioned that my first encounter with the imperial resettlement was during my military service, which was at the place of a former German settlement. However, before that (during childhood) I had another personal connection with the trace of the resettlement – my babysitter was a Molokan.

policy. It was act of purification of the Russian metropolis from religious and social heresy.

Three distinct groups of sectarians were moved to the Caucasus – Dukhobor, Molokan and Subbotnik. 454 All were in opposition to the official Orthodox Church of Russia, (especially in terms of its institutionalized hierarchies) refuted violence, and thus refused to serve in the army; therefore, Russian authorities and the Church harshly persecuted them. 455 However, Tsar Alexander I (who was inclined to accept all range of sects, something that played an important role in resettling the Germans) showed a positive attitude towards them and decided to use Dukhobors and Molokans in the resettlement strategy in Crimea. In 1802 he ordered the resettlement of sectarians in Molochniye Vody in Crimea. 456 A group of Mennonites from Germany also joined other sectarians in Southern Ukraine. 457

Thus, the resettlement of sectarians in the South Caucasus was not a new policy but rather a repetition of the established practices in the newly-conquered periphery of the Russian Empire. At the same time, the sectarian resettlement (unlike the German and Armenian resettlement waves), generally resembled the Russian colonization of the steppes, Urals and Siberia since newcomers were predominantly peasants.

While Alexander I's reign was characterized by a high degree of tolerance towards various faiths and sects, Nicholas I's attitude towards sectarians was negative.

⁴⁵⁴ I do not consider other sectarians, e.g. Old Believers, as they were settled in the region in very small numbers.

⁴⁵⁵ The Dukhobor faith, which originated in the XVIII century, was influenced by the doctrine of pantheism - they believed that God's spirit resided in each individual. They also believed that in addition to the Holy Bible, individuals should embrace the living spirit of God. Molokans apparently stemmed from the Nestorian Church and like Dukhobors they denied the legitimacy of the official Orthodox Church. Subbotniks' belief was somewhat close to Judaism, but they accepted the divinity of Jesus Christ. Some groups of Molokans and Subbotniks tend to be close to Judaism, others to Christianity. 456 Orest Novitskiy, *Dukhobortsy. Ikh istoriya i veroucheniye*, (Kyev, 1882), 39.

⁴⁵⁷ Henry Smith, Smith's Story of the Mennonites, (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1981), 258-262.

Nicholas was a staunch supporter of the traditional Orthodoxy. Vasiliy Lanskoy, Minister of Internal Affairs, proposed to isolate sectarians by forcible deportation to Siberia. While the proposal was under consideration, the Orthodox Church (Synod) proposed to move sectarians to the South Caucasus. After numerous administrative and bureaucratic steps, considerations and proposals, by 1830 there was a decree on the resettlement of sectarians to the South Caucasus. The proposal was supported by Caucasus bureaucrats, and by some Russian officials who believed that by sending sectarians to the Caucasus they would jettison non-loyal and disturbing elements to the Orthodox Church and isolate sectarians from the Russian core. Moreover, in a hostile environment, sectarians might resort to force to defend themselves; thus, this measure would "return" them to "normalcy". 458 All these considerations would also support the policy of colonization of the South Caucasus.

Later the Caucasus commander-in-chief Ermolov and his successor Paskevich grew to view sectarian resettlement as an unwise move. Paskevich was afraid that sectarians such as Dukhobors would "contaminate" other Russians; primarily, Cossacks in the Caucasus. Russian officials perceived another danger in connection with the possible negative influence of sectarians on the native population: as sectarians did not recognize state authority, Caucasus officials were afraid this principle might disturb the already shaky loyalty of the population in the newly-conquered territory towards new rulers. 459 Eventually, Russian authorities concluded that sectarians should be resettled in a territory that was not adjacent to lands with a Russian presence, and thus avoid the contact between sectarian and Orthodox communities. This decision made Tsarist

⁴⁵⁸ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 40-42. ⁴⁵⁹ RGIA, f. 1263, op. 1, d. 789, 478-479.

officials think about the remote borderland in the South Caucasus. N.M Sipiagin, the military governor of Tbilisi, opted for the Talysh khanate – the most Southern corner of the Caucasus periphery. Paskevich argued for another option: to settle in Karabakh and Shirvan. 460 In their final decision, Tsarist authorities opted generally for so-called Muslim provinces, which reinforced the empire-building aspect of the sectarian resettlement. While the religious factor (the isolation of sectarians) was an important element, 461 the choice of location – and the consideration of territories like Karabakh and Shirvan – showed that resettlement in the South Caucasus was undertaken with the view of strengthening the Russian presence in the imperial borderland. Later, in the 1840s, Russian sectarians were settled in Akhalkalaki (in today's Georgia) – the new Russian border with the Ottoman Empire. As the border shifted south after the Russia-Ottoman war of 1877-1878, sectarians were settled in Kars.

The decree of 1830 was focused on religious motivations, and sectarians were resettled as punishment for spreading heresy. As a result, the first groups of settlers were essentially neglected by the Russian administration, and a considerable number died due to hardship. Most sectarians came from the Russian inner governorates: the Tambov, Voronezh, Kharkov, Samara, Penza and Ryazan regions. 462 However, officials also (mostly forcibly) moved sectarians from other peripheries such as Bessarabia, Crimea,

⁴⁶⁰ Breyfogle, Heretics and Colonizers, 44.

⁴⁶¹ Breyfogle (*Heretics and Colonizers*) insists that the religious factor influenced the decision to opt for the South Caucasus as a location for sectarians, and opines that "their potential contribution as colonizers was a minor factor" (45-46). He further stresses that the protracted deliberations about the place of resettlement show that decision-making was haphazard and bureaucratic as opposed to being inspired by a preconceived vision. (47). Russian imperial scholars such as K.A. Borozdin wrote in 1891 that military and sectarian settlement was a process aimed at driving out "elements harmful" to the Orthodox faith away from the inner governorates, rather than targeting colonization goals: K.A. Borozdin, *Pereselentsy v* Zakavka'ye, (St. Petersburg, 1891), 131.

462 AKAK, vol. 10, doc. 293, 281-285; Ismailzade, Russkoye krest'yanstvo v Zakavkaz'ye, 34-35.

Orenburg and Enisey provinces. After the group of Dukhobors settled in Karabakh province, where they faced food shortages and climate adjustment problems. After the Settlers were stationed in the former Shirvan, Sheki and Talysh khanates. About 5,000 Dukhobors were resettled in today's Georgia between 1841 and 1845, mainly in the Akhalkalaki *uezd* (district) of the Tiflis and later in the Borchaly *uezd* of the same governorate. With the administrative reforms and the formation of the Elizavetpol governorate, sectarians were also spread there.

As noted, initially the Caucasus administration viewed the sectarian settlers very negatively, fearing their potential to spread heresy. Chief Administrator Baron Rosen expressed a view that they posed a danger to other Russians in the Caucasus such as soldiers and Cossacks, and urged to settle them in small groups – far from Russians and big cities. Acceptable Conversely, St. Petersburg downplayed the threat; perhaps seeing the benefits of the numerical increase of Russian elements (even flawed ones) in the borderland. However, to limit the "contamination of heresy," St. Petersburg issued a decree on 13 December 1832 which gave orders to settle sectarians in different places and in small numbers, not making them all settle "in any particular area, so that in time they could not become harmful." In 1836, the government forbade sectarians to live with Orthodox Russians or employ them in their husbandry. Especially harsh measures were adopted with regard to sectarians, who were sentenced and exiled to the South Caucasus. Government instructions stipulated that they ought to be settled in

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⁴⁶³ Verdiyeva, Pereselencheskaya politika, 173.

⁴⁶⁴ AKAK, vol. 10, doc. 293, 281.

Jonathan Kalmakoff, "Doukhobor Historical Maps", accessed on September 26, 2013. http://www.doukhobor.org/Maps.htm

A number of dispatches by Baron Rosen: AKAK, vol. 8: doc. 16, 36 and doc. 34, 61.

⁴⁶⁷ *Sobraniye postanovleniy po chasti raskola*. vol. 1: Postanoleniya Ministerstva vnutrennikh del. issue 1, 1863, (London: Trubner & Co, 1863), 94.

uncomfortable places with bad environments and closely monitored, and that various sects should be mixed – apparently in order to create tension between them.

Sources show that a number of sectarians died in the 1830s due to illnesses and hardship. In some regions such as Lankaran, deaths exceeded the number of births. 469 Responding to the "plague" of sectarian settlers, Caucasus officials decided to ease numerous restrictions, especially with regard to movement (as it hindered their economic activities). The Decree of 27 May 1835 allowed sectarians to move from their settlements to cities; however, the number of cities was limited by the Decree of 11 November 1835 to Sheki, Shemakha, Guba, Shusha, Lankaran, Ordubad and Nakhchiyan, 470 In 1836, the Caucasus administration began issuing passports and tickets to sectarians, which allowed them to temporarily change the place of residence to earn money.⁴⁷¹

In 1838, sectarians were allowed to assemble freely and perform their rites; this was the first legislation which eased religious restrictions.⁴⁷² Apparently both the St. Petersburg and the local administration eased their stance and as time passed, the Russian official attitude grew more positive toward sectarians. They began to understand the political and economic qualities of sectarians as empire-builders, especially after the arrival of Viceroy Mikhail Vorontsov to the Caucasus. In the 1840s, St. Petersburg provided various incentives for voluntary sectarian migration to the South Caucasus, and created favorable conditions. At the new place of settlement they were given monetary loans, agricultural tools, animals, and land plots as well as other privileges and tax

⁴⁶⁹ ARDTA, f. 36, op.1, d. 118, 1.

⁴⁷⁰ Sobraniye postanovleniy po chasti raskola, 125-126 and 130.

⁴⁷² *Ibid*, p. 207

exemptions. 473 These incentives and conditions resulted in a new influx of sectarians to the South Caucasus, many of whom rejoiced in their option to live in a new region – which they regarded as the "new Jerusalem." ⁴⁷⁴ In the 1840s, sectarians formed 15 settlements in today's Azerbaijan (Karabakh, Sheki, Talysh and Shirvan provinces)⁴⁷⁵ and 11 in Armenia (Erivan province). 476 The increase in the Russian population of the Caucasus led to the creation in 1847 of the Commission on the Organization of Settlements in Transcaucasia (*Komissiya po ustroystvu poseleniy v Zakavkazskom kraye*) under the Tiflis State Property Chamber – headed by A.M. Fadeev. He advocated for the resettlement of sectarians in cities and suburban areas in order to develop industries and crafts 477 and believed that sectarians fostered trade, postal services, communication and agriculture. 478 In 1849 the functions of the Commission were transferred to the newlycreated Expedition of State Property. This body was to regulate the inflow of settlers, the allocation of land and property, the registration of newcomers, and other related matters. 479 Due to the lack of state lands, the Caucasus officials proposed to limit the resettlement to 200-300 families annually. The most appropriate lands were assigned in Karabakh, Shirvan, Sheki and Talysh provinces. 480

The new administrator of the Caucasus, Mikhail Vorontsov (whose tenure I discussed briefly in the previous chapter) reinforced the primacy of ethnicity over sectarian differences. Moreover, he was not a strictly religious person and professed a

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⁴⁷³ RGIA, f. 1268, op. 2, d. 714, 12.

^{474 &}quot;Istoricheskiyi svedeniya o molokonskoy sekte", in *Pravoslavniy sbornik*, vol. 3, (Kazan, 1853), 301.

⁴⁷⁵ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 175-176.

⁴⁷⁶ Dolzhenko, "Perviye russkiye pereselentsy v Armenii", 58–66.

⁴⁷⁷ Dilara Ismayil-zade, *Naseleniye gorodov Zakavkaz'ye v XIX - nachale XX v.*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 75-76.

⁴⁷⁸ Quoted from Dolzhenko, *Khozyaystvenniy i obshchestvenniy byt*, 17.

⁴⁷⁹ PSZ, Compendium 2, (1825-1881), vol. 24, doc. 23753, (St. Petersburg. 1849), 329-334.

⁴⁸⁰ Bagirov, Pereselencheskaya politika, 47.

great degree of tolerance towards different religions and sects. ⁴⁸¹ Vorontsov embarked on the recruitment of sectarians for the fulfillment of various imperial duties, and advocated for their civil rights. ⁴⁸² Further, Vorontsov maintained (according to Rhinelander) that "ultimately all elements of Caucasian society – including Georgian peasants, Armenian shopkeepers, Azerbaijani [sic] shepherds, even the yet distrustful, not to say hostile, highlanders of Dagestan and Chechnya and Kabarda – had, in his view, to be made willing and contributing parts of imperial society." Russian bureaucrats already in 1845 clearly emphasized the benefit of sectarians to the development of industries and agriculture, as well as the need to spread Russian settlements in the Caucasus – as the latter assisted "in the consolidation of the Russian dominion there, and in the merger of the region with the empire." ⁴⁸⁴

In 1847, Vorontsov recommended granting eight years of tax exemption to Russian settlers in the Caucasus and allowed them to live in cities. In the same year, the Caucasus administration allowed the relocation of families with mixed sectarian-Orthodox composition and granted Dukhobors and Molokans permission to employ and be employed by the local population. Vorontsov also proposed to call these populations "migrants" (*pereselentsy*) rather than the pejorative *raskolniki* (sectarians). This trend later found strong support among the Russian elite. Alexander Kaufman saw the Caucasus as a Russian territory and regarded Russian settlers as migrants rather than colonists (*kolonisty*). Kaufman's work was written in the beginning of the 20th

⁴⁸¹ Rhinelander, *Prince Michael Vorontsov*, 162-163.

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, p. 86-87.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 169.

⁴⁸⁴ AKAK, vol. 10, doc. 97, 120.

⁴⁸⁵ AKAK, vol. 10, doc. 99, 124.

⁴⁸⁶ Alexander Kaufman, *Pereseleniye i kolonizatsiya*, (St. Petersburg: Tip. Tovarishestva Obshchetsvennaya pol'za, 1905).

century, when the Russian elite wanted to see its empire as a single organic territory, rather than treat the periphery as colonial lands. Therefore, such a transformation in imperial thinking caused a change of attitude towards colonists. Fifty years after the start of the resettlement, sectarians/heretics transformed into colonists and then to migrants; in the end, they constituted an important element for the Russian presence in the region.

To better understand the transformation of the Tsarist authorities towards Russian sectarians, it is imperative to remember the shift occurring in the Empire that was caused by the rise of Russian nationalism – which I have discussed in the previous chapter with regard to Armenian settlers. Breyfogle points out that while Tsarist authorities wished to get rid of sectarians, they at the same time sometimes rendered assistance to them. Here the psychology of "ours versus others" in the periphery prevailed over sectarian differences. Any Russian settler in the Muslim environment was perceived as someone close to the "heart" of Russian officials and bureaucrats in the Caucasus. Khajar Verdiyeva emphasizes that regardless of confessional differences, officials treated sectarians in the category of "ours" (nashi). 488

Moreover, the Russian administration believed that all settlers would contribute to the local economy and bring in more taxes. In 1890, A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov – chief administrator of the Caucasus – wrote to Alexander III that sectarian settlers attained considerable wealth, showed "their perfect qualities as colonizers and greatly contributed to the economic success of the country." Anatoliy Remnev remarks with regard to the sectarian settlement of Siberia (which, I argue, could be equally applied to the Caucasus) that "the autocracy could not but consider the high degree of survival of Russian Old

⁴⁸⁷ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 51.

⁴⁸⁸ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 178.

⁴⁸⁹ Quoted from Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 128.

Believers and Dukhobor peasants to assimilation in a foreign ethnic environment, the preservation of their Russianness in remote distances from Russian cultural centers."490 Dondukov-Korsukov, in the above-mentioned letter addressed to Alexander III, simultaneously underscored the "Russianess" of sectarians in terms of a potential benefit for the empire and their negative religious influence on Russian people. As Breyfogle writes, "the fate of Russia's imperialist project and geopolitical endeavours in the South Caucasus became intricately linked to the internal development of the sectarians' communities there." ⁴⁹¹ Over time, in the second half of the 19th century, sectarians themselves determined their identity more in terms of closeness to the "Russianness." On many occasions and for various purposes the Russian administration recruited sectarian settlers to fulfill administrative and other state functions. Tsarist officials also hoped that they would have influence on the local population in terms of boosting agricultural production.

During the Russian-Turkish wars (1877-1878) sectarians rendered logistical assistance to the Russian army. 492 The Vicerov of the Caucasus, Grand Duke Michael Nikolayevich (1862-1882), wrote:

Time and experience have demonstrated that the settlement of Russian colonists brings great benefit to the region in economic and industrial terms. Especially important is their settlement near our border both for political as well as military goals. Every settlement strengthens the Russian element there and increases convenient means of conveyance, so important during wartime. 493

⁴⁹⁰ Anatoliy Remnev, "Koloniya ili okraina? Sibir' v imperskom diskurse XIX veka", in *Rossiyskaya* imperiya: strategii stabilizatsii i opyt obnovleniya, ed. by Anatoliy Remney, (Voronezh: Izdatel'stvo Voronezhskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2004), 118--119.

⁴⁹¹ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 129

⁴⁹² Velichko, Kavkaz, 203, Verdiyeva, Pereselencheskaya politika, 182, Breyfogle, Heretics and *Colonizers*, 137-141.

493 Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 153.

Two successive administrators of the Caucasus – Grand Duke Michael

Nikolayevich and Dondukov-Korsakov – proposed to settle Russian sectarians in Kars as reinforcement against the Ottoman Empire. After Russia's conquest of Kars in 1878, some Dukhobors from the Tiflis and Elizavetpol governorates moved to the newlycreated Kars *Oblast*. Breyfogle notes that Russian sectarians proved their loyalty relative to other Christians of the region: "This was especially true at the end of the nineteenth century when the Tsarist opinion of Armenians – who, as Christians, had been Russia's traditional support in eastern Transcaucasia – had taken a negative turn because of the rise of Armenian nationalist-separatist groups." 494

Russian nationalists advocated for stronger bonds between the state and Russian sectarians. In 1900 *Novoye Vremya* wrote in this regard that the authorities allocated money to the Armenians – who were rich and did not need government support – while they neglected the needs of Russian sectarians who "will be genuine sons of our ancient Moscow in the new era, our ancient Muscovite order which gave us the one-sixth of the earth." In 1909, ethnographer I. Petrov emphasized the extremely important role sectarians played in the history of Russian colonization of the Caucasus: "Even the most fervent opponents of sectarians cannot but recognize them as excellent colonizers of the region." In general, the rise of nationalist sentiments at the second half of the 19th century among Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanis reinforced the sense of communality among ethnic Russians regardless of sectarian differences.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 157.

⁴⁹⁵ "Pereselencheskiy vopros v Zakavkaz'ye". *Novoye vremya*, no. 8842, (St. Petersburg, 1900).

⁴⁹⁶ I.E. Petrov. "Seleniya Novosaratovka i Novoivanovka Elizavetpol'skogo uyezda". *Izvestiya Kavkazskogo otdela Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva*. vol. 19, (Tiflis, 1909), 247.

The end of the 19th century – characterized by nationalism – provided the opportunity for both Russian officials and sectarians to reap benefits from one another. State policy-makers regarded sectarian resettlement as a means to control and regulate the multi-confessional nature of the Russian empire, and to re-enforce the empire-building process in the borderland. For "heretics" it was time to induce bureaucrats to change their attitude towards sectarians. Nationalism helped to transgress the rigidity of Orthodox identity and appeal to common "blood" – ethnic and linguistic affiliation. ⁴⁹⁷ The emergence of Pan-Slavism also helped to strengthen the Russianness of various religious and sub-ethnic groups in the empire.

In Breyfogle's opinion, however, Russianness did not lead to unconditional support from Russian authorities for sectarian settlers. After the 1850s, St. Petersburg contemplated how to improve relations between Tsarist authorities and sectarians, and began to reconsider the location for future resettlement of sectarians. More inclination was shown to resettle sectarians away from the South Caucasus, to Central Asia – a new borderland that Russia acquired in the 1860s. The period of 1885-1905 for sectarians was characterized by the rise of tension with local authorities – tensions that were partly caused by the spread of tenets propagated by renowned Russian writer Lev Tolstoy among sectarians. Tolstoy's ideas about pacifism and non-violence coupled with criticism against the Orthodox Church undermined the improvement of relations between

⁴⁹⁷ For discussion of nationalism in late Imperial Russia I benefited from: Kappeler, *The Russian Empire;* Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier*, 1863-1914, (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996); Astrid S. Tuminez, *Russian Nationalism since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy*, (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000); some other works partly cover the subject in question: Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁴⁹⁹ Bagirov, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 56.

tsarism and sectarians. After three decades of relatively stable relations (1850-1880) St. Petersburg launched another round of repressive measures against sectarians. As a result of this, many sectarians left Russia; about 8,000 Dukhobors migrated to North America in the end of the 19th century. ⁵⁰⁰ Other groups of sectarians, including Molokans, left the South Caucasus in the beginning of the 20th century. ⁵⁰¹

Overall, in the course of the 19th century the number of sectarians versus Orthodox Russians was steadily declining, though still remained a significant stratum in certain regions outside urban centers. Archival sources indicate that between 1830 and 1845, approximately 10.000 sectarians were settled in the region. 502 Khaiar Verdiyeva estimates that the total number of sectarians in the 1840s reached 9,284 people in what today constitutes Azerbaijan (Baku and Elizavetpol governorates of the Russian empire). 503 Irina Dolzhenko estimates that 343 families moved to the Armenian Oblast voluntarily in 1830s-1850s, 56 families were exiled and 3 families arrived illegally. ⁵⁰⁴ In the 1830-1850s the number of sectarians in the South Caucasus exceeded the number Russian Orthodox. For example, in 1859, 10,965 out of 12,604 Russians in the Baku governorate were sectarians (86 %). 505 The Emancipation of 1861 gave rise to the mobility of Russian Orthodox peasants, along with the inflow of Russian engineers and workers migrating to urban centers such as Baku and Tbilisi. As a result, the number of sectarians versus Orthodox has decreased significantly. In 1893 there were 24,668

⁵⁰⁰ For discussion of the sectarian insurgency and tsarist repression against them see: Breyfogle, *Heretics* and Colonizers, 217-299.

⁵⁰¹ Eduard Nitoburg, "Russkiyi religiozniyi sektanty i starovery v SSHA". *Novaya i noveyshaya istoriya*, 3 (1999): 34-51. 502 AKAK, vol. 10, doc. 97, 119.

⁵⁰³ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 236.

⁵⁰⁴ Dozhenko, "Pervye russkiyi pereselentsy v Armenii", 60.

⁵⁰⁵ TIEA, inv. 3013/4

sectarians in the Baku governorate⁵⁰⁶ and 10,404 in Elizavetpol.⁵⁰⁷ The 1897 imperial census indicated that in Baku the total number of Russians was 77,681 and that in Elizavetpol there were 17,875 Russians; this means that in the 1890s, sectarians comprised 31 and 58 percent, respectively.⁵⁰⁸

As a conclusion to the resettlement of sectarians between 1830-1914, I posit that Russian settlers clearly emerge in a category of colonists – and thus as contributors to the Russian empire-building process. Here, one must consider both the attitude of the Russian administration towards sectarian settlers and the settlers themselves in the context of the empire-building process. There was a period of negative perception about sectarians and uncoordinated chaotic resettlement practices, but ultimately the process was linear and each side (bureaucrats and settlers) drove the empire-building engine.

3.2 Russian Peasants as Colonizers

Tsarist authorities were on a constant quest to reorganize the administration of the Caucasus and management of the population. From 1853, St. Petersburg ceased resettling sectarians from Russia's inner provinces to the South Caucasus; however, some sectarians continued to move to the region on their own. ⁵⁰⁹ At the same time, by the

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⁵⁰⁶ TIEA, inv. 2361, 104.

⁵⁰⁷ TIEA, inv. 2361, 614.

⁵⁰⁸ Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiyskoy Imperii, 1897 g. Tsentral'nyy statisticheskiy komitet MVD, ed. by N.A. Troynitskiy. (St. Petersburg, 1899-1905). For the South Caucasus see vol. 61: Bakinskaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1905; vol. 63: Elizavetopol'skaya guberniya. St. Petersburg, 1904. ⁵⁰⁹ Sectarian resettlement to the South Caucasus contained three groups of people: those who were forcibly relocated, volunteers who were allowed to move, and illegal migrants without state permission. Until the reforms of 1861 and the liberation of serfs, mostly sectarians were allowed to move to the South Caucasus. For this reason, even in the 1890s most Russian settlers in the South Caucasus (except in Baku and Tbilisi) were sectarians (Svod statisticheskikh dannykh o naseleniyi Zakavkazskogo kraya, izvlechennykh iz posemeinykh spiskov 1886 goda. (Tiflis, 1893)) In the meantime, before 1861 some Russian peasants were

decree of 28 May 1858 all colonists were allowed to settle in the South Caucasus. 510

However, until the 1850s Russian non-sectarian colonists were a rare phenomenon. Partly this can be explained by serfdom, which existed until 1861 and severely limited the freedom of movement of Russian peasants. Such a system made migration within the empire technically possible only with government permission. Thus, the Russian state became a champion of various resettlement policies because the people's movement was almost exclusively a state-run business. In the South Caucasus the Russian administration closely monitored any movement of people, as this borderland was of particular importance for St. Petersburg due to its geopolitical situation – the proximity to Iran and Turkey.

Another reason for weak Russian colonization in the region is explained by the lack of routes and transportation infrastructure, ⁵¹¹ which began to be developed only in the second half of the 19th century – especially after the oil boom in Baku. In the period of 1872-1901 the government commissioned the construction of railroads connecting major cities in the South Caucasus: Baku, Tiflis, Erivan, Poti, Batumi and others. The total length of railroads reached 1812 km. ⁵¹² Furthermore, illnesses such as malaria were

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illegally moving to the region and then joined the sectarian settlers. Dilara Ismayil-zade opines that most sectarians were forcibly relocated to the South Caucasus (Dilara Ismayil-zade, *Russkoye krest'yanstvo v Zakavkaz'e. 30-e gody XIX – nachalo XX vv.*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1982)), while Irina Dolzhenko and Alexander Klibanov maintain (based on their study of settlers in today's territory of Armenia) that most sectarian colonizers voluntarily settled in the region (Dolzhenko, *Khozyaystvenniy i obshchestvenniy byt*; Alexpander Klibanov, *Istoriya religioznogo sekstanstva v Rossii (60-ye gody XIX veka - 1917)*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1965)). It should be noted that Soviet scholars tended to downplay the resettlement policy of tsarist authorities and for this reason they preferred to colour everything (from the "accession" of the South Caucasus to Russia to the resettlement) as a "voluntary" movement.

⁵¹⁰ PSZ, Compendium 2, (1825-1881), vol. 33, doc. 33213, St. Petersburg. 1858, p. 686; AKAK, vol. 12, doc. 22, 16.

⁵¹¹ Shavrov, Russkiy put', 24-26.

⁵¹² Ts. Agayan. "K voprosu o formirovanii rabochego klassa v Zakavkaz'ye". *Istoriko-filosofskiy zhurnal Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR*, 3 (1974): 57.

prevalent among colonists⁵¹³ and Russian officials took some steps to eradicate this plague only at the end of the 19th century.

The second half of the 19th century was also characterized by renewed efforts to settle Russian elements in the South Caucasus. In these efforts the policy of Russification played an important role. As compared to previously-conducted sectarian resettlement, the Russian authorities envisaged the settlement of *ordinary* (Orthodox) Russians. Firouzeh Mostashari points out that Russia had relied on Germans and Armenians since the conquest of the South Caucasus, and then on Russian sectarians to secure the imperial presence in the region. Later St. Petersburg opted for "its own Russian Orthodox peasants" to ensure that acquired Muslim territories in the Caucasus were strongly attached to the metropolis. ⁵¹⁴

Russian officials, experts and historians at the end of the 19th century advocated vigorously for a greater role of Russian colonization and resettlement in imperial peripheries. In 1883, Russian bureaucrat and scholar Nikolay Shavrov stressed the necessity of outnumbering local populations for Russian imperial design: "Our political goal in the newly-conquered countries is to fully pacify them, which can be only achieved by a numerical predominance of the Russian element over each ethnographic specimen (*osobey*)." In 1890 Grigoriy Golitsyn, chief of the Caucasus administration championing Russification policy in the Caucasus, ⁵¹⁶ was reporting that "one of the existing measures aimed at consolidating Russian power in the multi-tribal and multi-faith Transcaucasian borderland is to strengthen the composition of the local population

⁵¹³ KK, 1899, otd. 2, 40-46.

⁵¹⁴ Mostashari, On the Religious Frontier, 46.

⁵¹⁵ Shavrov, Russkiy put', 25.

⁵¹⁶ Ismavil-zade, *Russkove krestvanstvo*, 104.

with a loyal Russian element. This goal was understood by our government long ago, and for this purpose in the 1830s -1850s Russian sectarians were resettled here." The newspaper *Kavkaz* wrote in 1893 that "little is being done for the full cultural adaptation" of Transcaucasia to Russia. It can be done only through widely-implemented and wellorganized colonization." In 1895, the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Nikolay Bunge, emphasized that Russian colonization (similar to that experienced in the United States) could weaken racial differences in the peripheries. ⁵¹⁹ Historian Matvey Lyubavsky linked the strength of the Russian state in a given territory with the successes of Russian colonization, especially peasant settlement. 520 The Viceroy of the Caucasus, Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov (1905-1916), reinforced the importance of the Russian population presence in the region:

Each plot of land, occupied by a capable and sustainable Russian population, represents the colonial support for the cause of the Russian state, and therefore it is necessary to uninterruptedly conduct the resettlement of the Russian population on the territory under consideration in accordance with my plan and order. [R]ussian colonization of the region must serve to strengthen the imperial presence in the region, serve as a basis for a future stable state arrangement, and play a role in cementing a multi-tribal Caucasus within the Empire. 521

The measures undertaken by the government had positive results for St. Petersburg. The rapid growth of the non-sectarian Russian population was especially well-documented in Baku governorate. Before 1861, there were 721 Russians; by 1864 – three years after the

⁵¹⁷ RGVIA, f. 400, op. 261/911, d. 81/86b 1890, 10

⁵¹⁸ "O kolonizatsiyi Kavkaza". Kavkaz, no. 332, (Tiflis, 1893), 1.

⁵¹⁹ Nikolav Bunge, "Zagrobnyve zametki", in *Reka vremen (Kniga istorii i kul'tury)*. vol. 1. (Moscow:

⁵²⁰ Matyey Lubayskiy, *Istoricheskaya geografiya Rossii v svyazi s kolonizatsiyey*, (St. Petersburg: Lan', 2000 (re-print, Moscow, 1909)). ⁵²¹ Quoted in Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 199.

emancipation of the serfs – their number reached 7,802;⁵²² by 1893 – 41,672,⁵²³ with a majority living in Baku city. Symbolic in this process was the establishment of the Russian settlement in 1867 named *Pravoslavnoye* (Orthodox) in the Baku governorate. Such an increase of the Russian population was caused mostly by economic migration rather than by state-run resettlement.

Outside of state resettlement, two major causes of the rapid growth of the non-sectarian Russian population were the reforms of 1861 and the rise of the oil industry in Baku in the second half of the 19th century. Khajar Verdiyeva maintains that the turning point for the Russian colonization of the Caucasus was the 1870-1880s, caused by the uprising among Russian peasants in the empire's internal governorates due to the lack of lands available to the mass of liberated serfs after 1861. The oil industry especially was conducive to the inflow of a large number of entrepreneurs, engineers and workers. Various ethnic groups – Russians, Armenians, Jews, Poles, and others – moved to Baku to catch the golden opportunity caused by "oil fever." *Caucasus Calendar*, an annual published in 1899, wrote in this regard that "a lot of Russians arrived to the Caucasus, persecuted by poverty and seeking jobs. Between them there are people willing and able to take up the cause, and there are a variety of losers (*neudachniki*) from internal Russia." 525

However, there was another explanation of renewed efforts to settle Russians in the Caucasus – geopolitics. In 1877-1878, Russia had another war with the Ottoman Empire and acquired the territories of Kars. As in 1820-1830, St. Petersburg – having

⁵²² Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 189.

⁵²³ KK, 1899, otd. 2, 57.

⁵²⁴ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 191.

⁵²⁵ KK, 1899, otd. 2, 62.

conquered new lands – embarked on resettlement. The Kars region began receiving a significant number of Cossacks resettled from the North Caucasus and the Don. By the end of the 19th century, Kars had four Russian Orthodox villages: Mikhailovka, Olgovka, Khorosheye and Grenadyerskoye. ⁵²⁶ In addition, the Russian administration allowed sectarians from other settlements in the Caucasus to move to Kars. The total number of Russians reached 14,244 by 1896, out of which there were 12,107 sectarians – or 87 percent. ⁵²⁷ Furthermore, other ethnic groups – Greeks, Germans and even Estonians – were settled there, though in small numbers. The resettlement policy carried out by the Russian empire in Kars followed its general line in the southern borderland.

As soon as St. Petersburg acquired new territories, it launched the resettlement program and tried to fill the land with loyal elements. This was especially important when Tsarist Russia conquered regions with predominantly Muslim populations. The case with Kars, where the Tsarist state hastily moved Russians and other ethnic groups (all Christians, regardless of their modest number) manifests the imperial principle at play in approaching management of the population and land. The chief of the resettlement agency, Alexander Krivoshein, wrote in this regard: "Local Russian authorities by their own initiative called and settled Anatolian Armenians, Greeks, Czechs, Germans – anyone who was Christian and a hard-working person." Ultimately, however, as I mentioned earlier, Christianization was not a goal; rather, it was a tool to enforce the Russian imperial presence in the region.

⁵²⁶ S. M. Stepaniants, "Kazaki v Armenii. Konets XIX - nachalo XX veka", *Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal*, 6 (2007): 71.

⁵²⁷ KK, 1899, otd. 2, 48.

Zapiska glavnoupravlyayushchego zemleustroystvom i zemledeliyem o poyezdke v Muganskuyu step' v 1913 g. prilozheniye k vsepoddaneyshemu dokladu A.V. Krivosheina, (St. Petersburg, 1913), 26-27.

While Tsarist Russia continued to pursue its colonization policy in the periphery in the aftermath of 1861 – trying at the same time to resolve the domestic problem related to the lack of lands in internal governorates – St. Petersburg was preoccupied by the high mobility of the population and the need to control such movement of people. This dichotomy was reflected in the chain of controversial bills passed by the government. In 1881, Russia adopted a regulation that allowed peasants to freely resettle within the empire with the permission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, in 1889 St. Petersburg stifled the resettlement policy by putting forward various preconditions and making permits available only after long processing and scrutiny of each individual request. 529 While the law of 1889 stipulated some incentives to settlers – such as the 6-12 years leasing term of land, postponement of military service, some duties and payment exemptions – in Fikret Bagirov's opinion, overall the Tsarist authorities did not encourage resettlement and Russian peasants were not aware of many legal regulations which potentially gave them an advantage to settle in new places. 530 The main feature of restrictive measures was to forbid unauthorized resettlement; this policy remained throughout imperial Russia, even after the 1861 reforms. As a summary to the resettlement policy, in 1913 a Russian official in charge of land management wrote:

The whole second part of the 19th century and especially its end, after the abolition of the vicariate (*namestnichestvo*), was lost for the Russian resettlement. The lower level of administration gradually treated settlers in an unfriendly manner, and the common territorial arrangement of the region impeded heavily the process of allocation of free and convenient plots of lands. The experience with the organization of joint settlements with the aboriginal population caused only problems. The upper level of the local

⁵²⁹ PSZ, Compendium 3, (1881-1913), vol. 9, doc. 6198, St. Petersburg. 1889, 535-538; Ismayil-zade. *Russkoye krest'yanstvo*, 95-96.

⁵³⁰ Bagirov, Pereselencheskaya politika, 60.

administration and St. Petersburg almost forgot about the resettlement to Transcaucasia. 531

Fikret Bagirov, in his study of Russian resettlement policy in Azerbaijan from 1830 to the 1880s, points out that the Tsarist policy aimed at the economic development of the South Caucasus was closely intertwined with the political hegemony in the region and with military-strategic objectives. For the resolution of these problems, the Tsarist authorities relied on the resettlement policy – which was being implemented cautiously, taking into account the interests of the autocracy and local administration on the one hand, and the needs of peasantry on the other. Bagirov writes that it is difficult to speak about "the policy in a larger sense, because resettlement occurred without state participation – voluntarily and spontaneously."532 In 1912, Caucasus officials noted in this regard that the resettlement movement to the Caucasus "lacked a defined system, was sporadic in nature, and... [was] wholly dependent on local administration."533

I argue that Bagirov's analysis misses the larger picture of the empire-building process in the South Caucasus. With all its bureaucratic hurdles and uncertainties, St. Petersburg and the Caucasus administration were steadily advancing the Russian colonization of the region. Despite difficulties, the Russian administration of the Caucasus was advising St. Petersburg to continue the Russian colonization of the Caucasus. Their focus in the second half of the 19th century shifted towards the Guba region in the Eastern Caucasus, where officials advocated the settlement of Orthodox Russians rather than sectarians. "The enforcement of Orthodox belief, not sectarianism,

⁵³¹ Zapiska glavnoupravlyayushchego, 26 532 Bagirov, Pereselencheskaya politika, 19.

⁵³³ KK, "Pereselencheskoye delo na Kavkaze", 1913, 326.

among the local population has always been, and now serves, as the most active force for the strengthening of Russian autocracy (samoderzhavive) and power."534 Guba region was strategically important, as this territory was engulfed by the Shamil movement and previously the Russian army had to quell anti-Tsarist insurgency there.

To encourage Russian colonization, St. Petersburg adopted two key bills: one on the 13th of July 1889 "On the voluntary resettlement of rural and petty urban residents." (O dobrovolnom pereseleniyi sel'skikh obyvateley i meshan), and another on the 15th of April 1899, "On the permission of migration in the Transcaucasia" (O razresheniyi na pereseleniye v Zakavkaye). On 2 December 1896 the Resettlement Department (Pereselencheskoye Upravleniye) was established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and vested with large powers, such as the issuance of a permit for resettlement, the arrangement of migration and settlement, credits and various administrative measures. On 12 March 1901 the Minister of Agriculture and State Domains along with the Resettlement Department and the Caucasus Administration issued the "Instruction for the foundation of resettlement plots in the Caucasus", defining the size of the resettlement plot, its appropriateness for agricultural cultivation, and assigning various services – including medical services – to help settlers. 535

In essence, all these regulations were devised to transfer the rules and practices applied in the Russian colonization of Siberia to the Caucasus. 536 Here the numerous instructions and documents prioritized the necessity of the exclusively Russian colonization and resettlement. The Chief of the Resettlement Administration emphasized

⁵³⁴ ARDTA, f. 44, op. 2, d. 541, 1.

⁵³⁵ Sbornik uzakoneniy i rasporyazheniy o pereseleniyi. Spravochnoye izdaniye Pereselencheskogo upravleniya MVD, no. 8, (St. Petersburg, 1901), 154-157. Bagirov, Pereselencheskaya politika, 73.

in 1902 that Russian settlers in the Caucasus had better conditions than colonizers in Siberia 537

The Tsarist authorities were trying to advance ethnic Russians in order to balance the number of foreign settlers they had previously brought to the Caucasus in the 1820-1850s, which they regretted doing at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries. On 22 December 1900 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted regulations that assigned the Chief of the Civil Department of the Caucasus administration to advance the resettlement of exclusively ethnic Orthodox Russians. ⁵³⁸ On 4 June 1904, St. Petersburg passed a new law "Provisional rules on the voluntary migration of rural residents and middle class farmers" (*O dobrovol'nom pereselenii sel'skikh obyvateley i meshchan – zemledel'tsev*) which replaced all previous regulations of 1889, 1899, and 1901. ⁵³⁹

This new law specifically targeted the three important borderlands of Russian empire – the South Caucasus, Central Asia and the Far East. In the predominantly Muslim South Caucasus and Central Asia, only people of Russian origin and Orthodox faiths as well as sectarians upon the permission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the War Ministry and the Caucasus Chief of Civil Works were allowed to settle (article 5). As Dilara Ismayil-zade stresses, the resettlement was conducted not only to resolve land problems within Russian internal governorates, but also to increase the Russian population in the borderland of the empire. ⁵⁴⁰ However, she also underscores that due to the bureaucratic nature of the Russian empire, the mechanism of issuing permission

⁵³⁷ RGIA, f. 391, op. 2. d. 1078, 58-78.

⁵³⁸ Sbornik uzakoneniy i rasporyazheniy o pereseleniyi, 237.

⁵³⁹ PSZ, Compendium 3, (1881-1913), vol. 24, doc. 24701, (St. Petersburg. 1904), 603-607.

⁵⁴⁰ Ismayil-zade, Russkoye krest'yanstvo, 143.

remained complex and thus this regulation did not foster the resettlement as it was envisaged. 541

One of the most vivid examples of Russian colonization of this period in Azerbaijan is represented by the development of the Mugan and Mill steppes in the Baku governorate. Some Russian settlers had previously established colonies in Mugan, but after 1899 this became a state policy. Shavrov estimated that about 250,000-300,000 Russians could be settled in this region. 542 Krivoshein underlined that "the arid steppes of Eastern Transcaucasia by its characteristics better fits the needs of the Russian plowman, rather than mountains or the Black Sea's swampy valleys."⁵⁴³ On 18 March 1901 the Cabinet of Ministers instructed local bureaucrats in the Caucasus to colonize the Mugan-Mill steppes. This territory was poorly irrigated and prone to various diseases such as malaria. In this regard, St. Petersburg allocated funds for irrigation and dispatched experts to fight malaria. In 1905 three Russian settlements were established there: Pokrosvkoye, Mikhaylovskoye and Aleksandrovskoye, and by 1909 their number reached 15.544 In 1911, the State Duma adopted a recommendation to the government to foster the resettlement of the Caucasus from the Russian internal governorates. 545 By 1915-1917, the number of settlements reached 53-55 with a total population of 21,094. 546 The urge for the Russian colonization of the Mugan-Mill steppes was so acute that St.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid* 145

⁵⁴² Nikolay Shavrov, *Mugan i obrazovaniye yeyo orosheniya i vodnykh putey*, (St. Petersburg, 1909), 7.

⁵⁴³ Zapiska glavnoupravlyayushchego zemleustroystvom i zemledeliyem o poyezdke v Muganskuyu step' v 1913 g. prilozheniye k vsepoddanevshemu dokladu A.V. Krivosheina, (St. Ptersburg, 1913), 30.

⁵⁴⁴ M. Avdeyev, Mugan and Sal'yanskaya step', (Baku, 1925), 17.

⁵⁴⁵ KK, Pereselencheskoye delo na Kavkaze, 1913, 328.

⁵⁴⁶ Fikret Bagirov compares several contemporary sources and produces the abovementioned figure: Bagirov, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 28.

Petersburg allowed 300 sectarian families of Old Believers from Kuban to move to the region. 547

Khajar Verdiyeva maintains that the option for the Mugan-Mill steppes can be explained by economic interests. St. Petersburg fostered the cultivation of cotton and Orthodox peasants were instructed to grow cotton there. 548 Russian scholar L. Ruma saw three major goals in the Russian colonization of the Mugan steppes: first, political consolidation of the region within the Russian empire; second, economic development and especially agricultural growth; and third, a strategic presence in the borderland with Persia. 549 The political consideration was important, as a contemporary government source underlined that "the speedy and contiguous colonization" of the borderlands with Persia was "a matter of paramount and state importance." As discussed earlier, the Russian empire from its first days of acquisition of the South Caucasus paid attention to the colonial resettlement in the formerly Talysh khanate, and the Mugan steppes constituted a part of this khanate. Even as early as the Peter the Great's period of Russian penetration to the South Caucasus, St. Petersburg was constantly seeking the establishment of a firm presence in this borderland region. The Russian administration tried to create a "contiguous space" filled with Russian elements.

Despite changes made to facilitate the migration, the resettlement policy failed in many peripheries. Local administrations did not render enough assistance and care to new settlers. The Caucasus officials had been criticized years before the reforms for their inability to promote resettlement policy in the region. In 1899 the Ministry of Internal

⁵⁴⁷ ARDTA, f. 14, op. 1, d. 81, 27. ⁵⁴⁸ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 203.

⁵⁴⁹ L.Ruma. *Ocherki i issledovaniya. Vypusk 1: Iz zhizni i kolonizatsii Muganskoy stepi*, (St. Petersburg,

⁵⁵⁰ KK, Pereselencheskoye delo na Kavkaze, 1913, 329.

Affairs dispatched a bureaucrat, Rozalion-Soshalskiy, for the study of the situation with Russian colonization. Rozalion-Soshalskiy was faced with obstacles created by the local administration, which did not want to be overseen on this matter. 551 In a report by the chief of the Caucasus Administration, the problem of Russian colonization was summarized as follows:

While the resettlement of Persians and Armenians is not limited and not subjected to any control, the settlement of Russian peasants is a big ordeal. He [a Russian peasant] must find, first of all, a plot of land, which should be approved by the administration. The search for land is not an easy task, especially without proper direction, and a settler in the quest for land might spend all his money moving from one place to another... Let's assume he found a convenient spot and applied to the governor... Two, three, four, and more years are required to go through all instances and procedures... Thus, Russian settlers are filtered through various institutions, while Persians and Armenians come and settle easily. 552

In 1902, the Chief of Resettlement Administration Alexander Krivoshein revealed numerous problems in the work carried out by the local authorities in the Caucasus during his travel through the region. His report "Resettlement in Transcaucasia" highlighted the need to increase the number of bureaucrats responsible for resettlement, to improve mechanisms and procedures in issuing permits and credits, and to enhance state treasury land for new settlers. 553 Ten years later, Krivoshein still highlighted problems in his remarks about the resettlement work of the Caucasus administration; for example, a lack of coordination between bureaucrats, which negatively impacted the Russian colonization of the region. In turn, the Caucasus administration complained that

 ⁵⁵¹ Bagirov, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 91.
 ⁵⁵² RGVIA, f. 400, op. 261/911, d. 238, 5-33.
 ⁵⁵³ RGIA, f. 391, op. 3, d. 264, 157-170.

the Resettlement Administration ignored the situation on the ground and did not coordinate the direction and time of dispatch of settlers from Russia to the Caucasus. 554

The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), which resulted in the defeat of the Tsarist army, manifested, inter alia, the weakness of the logistical system. The poorly populated Russian Far East, with its underdeveloped roads and transportation system, contributed to the failure of Imperial Russia in the war. Therefore, the development of the borderlands became an acute priority for St. Petersburg. In 1905, St. Petersburg decided to consolidate all bureaucrats responsible for resettlement matters, including the abovementioned Resettlement Department of the MIA within one agency, and thus created the Main Administration of Land Arrangement and Agriculture (Glavnoye Upravleniye Zemleustroystva i Zemledeliya - GUZZ). 555 In the Caucasus administration, the whole colonization policy was overseen by the Chief of the Resettlement Department (Pereselencheskoye upravleniye) assigned with the task of undertaking a preliminary study on local agricultural practices, the allocation of lands for settlement, the provision of necessary conditions for agricultural development of settlers' farms, the distribution of funds and credits, and medical and veterinary services and other related matters. 556 The Resettlement Administration stressed that "Russian colonization of the region [Caucasus] was recognized as an important state priority. In 1908, Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov wrote to the Chief of Resettlement Administration Krivoshein that "special conditions of the Caucasus, where it is possible to grow cotton, wines and some other specific

⁵⁵⁴ RGIA, f. 391, op 3, d. 1124, 185.

⁵⁵⁵ Glavnoye upravleniye zemleustroystva i zemledeliya: Itogi raboty za posledneye pyatiletiye (1909—1913), (St. Petersburg, 1914).

⁵⁵⁶ KK, Pereselencheskoye delo na Kavkaze, 1913, 327-328.

agricultures, necessitate the cautious selection of colonizers", preferably ethnic Russians, and the making of preparations for particular cultivation and irrigation of lands. 557

In the empire's peripheries, agricultural consideration was intertwined with ideas of social change, popular among both nationalists and liberals albeit for different reasons – for the former to strengthen the empire, and for the latter to improve the empire.

Alberto Masoero points out,

[t]he concept of colonization as a strategy of both imperial rule and assimilation of the borderlands underwent a semantic shift, especially in some more specialized sectors of the administration, toward the older idea of an agricultural colony capable of progressing more rapidly than the metropolis. The regions of settlement now appeared not only as distant places in which to spread culture and institutions from the center – according to an authoritarian Russifying impetus to some or a desire for more prudent management of local interests to others – but also as the theater of a society in the making. ⁵⁵⁸

Prime-Minister Piotr Stolypin (1906-1911) tried to radically change the approach of the government to agrarian policy and the resettlement practices. He embarked on multilayered reforms aimed at strengthening the market economy and loosening regulations. Stolypin contemplated that a strong peasant class, a stratum of rich middle class land-owners, would increase the productivity of the agricultural industry. An integral part of the agrarian reform was resettlement policy, which should according to Stolypin's vision resolve the most pressing problems of the internal territories – rural overpopulation in European Russia. This was to be done by developing uninhabited

⁵⁵⁷ ARDTA, f. 13, op. 1, d. 1006, 12-24.

Masoero, "Territorial Colonization", 78.

⁵⁵⁹ For discussion of Stolypin's reforms see: Judith Pallot, Land Reform in Russia, 1906-1917: Peasant Responses to Stolypin's Project of Rural Transformation, (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1999); Stephen Williams, Liberal Reform in an Illiberal Regime. The Creation of Private Property in Russia, 1906 – 1915, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2006); Abraham Ascher, P.A. Stolypin: The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Andrey Anfimov, P.A. Stolypin i rossiyskoye krestyanstvo, (Moscow: Institute Rossiyskoy Istorii, 2002); Viktor Tukavkin. Velikorusskoye krestyenstvo i stolypinskaya reforma, (Moscow: Pamyatnik istoricheskoy mysli, 2001).

peripheral lands – especially in Siberia but also elsewhere on the empire's peripheries. The Census of 1897 indicated that 105 million people lived in European Russia, and only 5,8 million in Siberia, 7,7 million in Central Asia and 9,3 million in the Caucasus. ⁵⁶⁰ His critics believed that Stolypin's reforms were destroying the traditional Russian peasant community. As for resettlement practices, instead of an organized government-run and controlled colonization, Stolypin favoured voluntary internal migration supported by various incentives such as land distribution, tax exemption, credit allocation and services provision.

Resettlement was faced with big problems related to the lack of available plots. The state-owned lands were previously allocated to Germans, Armenians and sectarians. Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov urged Nicholas II to consider expedient measures to strengthen Russian colonization. (He also believed that it was a mistake to deport 8,000 Dukhobors to North America.) "Only the massive settlement of Armenians of Turkish citizenship in the 1890s drew the attention of the government to the possibility of losing completely the region for Russian colonization and forced to take measures to its [Russian colonization] development."⁵⁶¹

The lack of state lands did not stop the Russian administration from the colonization process. Caucasus officials moved to expropriate plots from Azerbaijani land-owners and nomads and distributed them among Russians. Judicial and administrative authorities were reluctant to act upon the complaints of Muslims. In one particular case in 1906, the local authorities forcefully moved the population of Alar in

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⁵⁶¹ Vorontsov-Dashkov, Vsepoddaneyshaya zapiska, 69.

⁵⁶⁰ Naselennyye mesta Rossiyskoy imperii v 500 i boleye zhiteley s ukazaniyem vsego nalichnogo v nikh naseleniya i chisla zhiteley preobladayushchikh veroispovedaniy, po dannym pervoy vseobshchey perepisi naseleniya 1897 g., (St. Petersburg: Tip. "Obshchestvennaya pol'za", 1905).

Lankaran *uezd* to Javad and settled the emptied land with Russians from the village of Pokrovka. Eventually St. Petersburg dispatched a commission led by Senator Kuzminskiy who produced a report on the problems associated with land distribution in the Caucasus. ⁵⁶² The report registered a number of complaints – particularly among Muslims – about the violation of their properties. A. Kaufman wrote in this regard that "Russian colonization encroached upon the rights and interests of the aboriginal population" and advocated the resolution of this problem "without harming locals". ⁵⁶³

Russian colonization and resettlement caused sporadic violent incidents between locals and settlers. Some Russian intellectuals, liberals and revolutionaries criticized the Tsarist policy in the borderland regions. Vladimir Lenin wrote that the resettlement fund was being formed with a flagrant violation of land rights of the indigenous population and "the resettlement from Russia is conducted with the nationalistic goal of Russification of the borderlands." Even Russian officials acknowledged the problem with the straightforward Russification policy in the Caucasus. Sergei Witte, Prime Minister from 1905-1906 and the Minister of Finance in 1892-1903, noted in his memoir that the main apologist of Russification policy and chief of the Caucasus administration Grigoriy Golitsyn "arrived to the Caucasus with a program to Russify it, which he carried passionately and chaotically as was inherent to his nature." Witte blamed Golitsyn and Stolypin for instigating insurgency in the Caucasus rather than pacifying it and creating bonds with the local population. 566

⁵⁶² Vsepoddanneyshiy otchet o proizvedennoy v 1905 g. po vysochayshemu poveleniyu senatorom Kuz'minskim revizii goroda Baku i Bakinskoy gubernii. (Baku, 1906).

⁵⁶³ Kaufman, *Pereseleniye i kolonizatsiya*, 266.

⁵⁶⁴ Vladimir Lenin. "Pereselencheskiy vopros." *PSS*, vol. 21, (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1968), 330.

⁵⁶⁵ Sergei Witte. Vospominaniya, vol. 1, (Berlin: Slovo, 1922), 186.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 408.

Contrary to such views, Russian nationalists such as Nikolay Shavroy pointed out that "Russian colonization was not implemented by force, with the artificial extermination of aboriginal population, as was done by enlightened Europeans: Britons in Australia, Americans in America and Germans in Alsace-Lorraine." 567 Yet the Russian administration occasionally resorted to force to ensure the allocation of lands to settlers, especially when St. Petersburg was implementing the resettlement of Armenians and Russians. Moreover, when Russia was faced with a strong resistance from North Caucasian Muslims in 1827-1864, the authorities decided to deport a large number of mountaineers to the Ottoman Empire in 1864-1865. 568 While Russian (and Soviet) scholars compare the different outcomes of British colonization in North America with the outcomes of Russian colonization in the empire's periphery, one should not ignore the resolution of the Tsarist administration to resort to force and expulsion when it dealt with the threat to its imperial domination in conquered territories. Many Tsarist and Soviet scholars credited Russian colonialism for its soft approach to the indigenous population. They believe that unlike European and especially North American colonization, the Russians did not exterminate the native population, nor did it encircle them into confined spaces. Russian authorities remained quite flexible in terms of regulation of relations between the indigenous population and sectarians, acting frequently as a mediator.

However, such assumptions should not be generalized. In the North Caucasus certain regions were ethnically cleansed from indigenous people through "voluntary" deportation in the 1860s and settled by Russian peasants and Cossacks. Russian Jews

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567 Shavrov, Russkiy put', 26.

⁵⁶⁸ Paul B. Henze, "The North Caucasus Barrier. Circassian Resistance to Russia", in *The North Caucasus Barrier*, ed. by Marie Bennigsen Broxup, (London, Hurst & Co. 2007); Antero Leitzinger, "The Circassian Genocide", *The Eurasian Politician*, 2 (2000); Richmond Walter, *The Circassian Genocide*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

were confined in the Pale of the Settlement – this was an example how the Tsarist authorities tried to limit the movement of undesired people.

Despite numerous problems, the intensification of Russian resettlement produced some positive results for St. Petersburg. In the period of 1905-1912 the increase of state lands allocated for resettlement had grown from 214,607 tithes (*desyatin*) to 511,972 – more than twofold. As a result of Russian colonization, by 1912 60 Russian settlements had been established in Baku, and 29 in Elizavetpol governorate. In 1897 the imperial census indicated that 119,551 Russians resided in three provinces (Baku, Elizavetpol and Erivan) and by 1916 that number reached 249,835 – a twofold increase.

Along with colonization, the return of Russian peasants to inner Russia was also observed in the South Caucasus. The main cause of the Russian outflow was the difficulties in adaptation to local climate and environment. Despite state efforts, Russians were the main victims of illnesses such as malaria, and their harvest was destroyed by locusts. For example, in Baku governorate 67 percent of the population infected with malaria was Russian. The Caucasus administration – plagued by corruption has also responsible for the lack of organization and management that characterized the resettlement process. The land distribution suffered from incoherency, indifference,

⁵⁶⁹ KK, Pereselencheskoye delo na Kavkaze, 1913, 331.

⁵⁷⁰ Verdiyeva, Pereselencheskaya politika, 207.

⁵⁷¹ *Pervaya vseobshaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiyskoy imperiyi 1897 goda*, (St. Petersburg, 1904): issue LXII, 60-61; issue LXI, 50-51, issue LXXI, 58-59.

⁵⁷² KK, 1917, 178, 182, 194, 218-219.

⁵⁷³ Part of this population resided in urban centers; this process of the urban migration is out of the scope of this study.

⁵⁷⁴ Obzor Bakinskoy guberniyi za 1904. (Baku, 1905), 60.

⁵⁷⁵ Witte, Vospominaniya, 186.

bureaucratic hurdles and chaos.⁵⁷⁶ In some regions of the Caucasus, the number of Russians was in decline.⁵⁷⁷ However, only 5-6 percent of the Russian population migrated back to Russia from the Caucasus.⁵⁷⁸ A Russian official insisted that despite different conditions and a difficult adaptation, "Russian peasants can settle well and durably in the Caucasus."⁵⁷⁹

By 1914 – the beginning of the First World War – St. Petersburg had already formed its colonization policy in the South Caucasus as well as elsewhere in the empire by enacting relevant legislation, establishing administrative institutions and (no less importantly) solidifying bonds with the Russian nationalists who were taking a stronger foothold in imperial society. The previously-cited works of Nikolay Shavrov and Vasiliy Velichko (who took active part in the discussion of the Russian policy in the Caucasus) are vivid examples of such cooperation.

While the Christian factor played an important role in Russian resettlement plans, the mere the practice of Christianity did not guarantee Russian favour; by the end of the 19th century, St. Petersburg and Russian imperial intellectuals became more nationalistic, criticizing German and Armenian settlers. In this period, St. Petersburg focused on Russian settlers only. For Russia it was important to link the periphery to the core, and population management was an instrument of uniting Russian possession. Russian ethnic migrants and settlers were used extensively by St. Petersburg in the strengthening of its foothold in the Caucasus.

⁵⁷⁶ Bagirov, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 142-160; Velichko, *Kavkaz*, 215.

⁵⁷⁷ Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika*, 201-202

⁵⁷⁸ KK, Pereselencheskoye delo na Kavkaze, 1913, 332.

⁵⁷⁹ RGVIA, f. 400, op. 2651/911, 1903, d. 71/738, 30.

CHAPTER 4

LOCALS AND SETTLERS: CONFLICTS UNDER RUSSIAN RULE

This chapter seeks to investigate the relationship between the local population and settlers with an emphasis on the conflicts that erupted in 1905-1906 between Azerbaijanis⁵⁸⁰ and Armenians. The clashes between two ethnic groups resulted in thousands of deaths, the destruction of properties and more importantly the implantation of the seeds of mutual hatred, which caused greater conflicts in the course of the 20th century.

Clashes between Azerbaijanis and Armenians related to various political, economic and social factors caused by imperial rule. For example, St. Petersburg's uneven distribution of land and privileges and poor management of resources, the greater presence of Armenians in the Russian bureaucracy as compared to Azerbaijanis, the wealth accumulated by Armenian businessmen in Baku, religious tension instigated by opportunists: these factors all contributed to the outburst of the massacres in 1905-1906. Moreover, the revolutionary situation of 1905 and the aspiration for independence added fuel to complicated inter-communal relationships in the Russian Caucasus. As I argue, political, economic and other factors (which definitely were present and instigated the clashes) were aggravated against the background of imperial colonial and resettlement policies in a confined borderland space.

⁵⁸⁰ As I mentioned in the Introduction, "Azerbaijanis" were identified in imperial sources as "Tatars" or in more general terms Muslims. In my quotation of archival sources in this chapter, I follow the original text. In my own analysis I use "Azerbaijanis".

In Western historiography, much more attention is paid to the rebellion movement of the North Caucasian tribes led by Sheikh Shamil than to the South Caucasus. The region had not witnessed a large scale anti-Russian campaign comparable to the Shamilled three decade-long resistance to Russian rule, nor had it had outbursts such as those in Poland in 1863; nevertheless, the region was not fully comfortable, either with Russian rule or the inflow of settlers, and for this reason there was occasional and significant resistance against St. Petersburg's policies. One such incident grew into a threatening movement against land and administrative reforms in the 1840s, which forced Russian authorities to reverse its decision.

The lack of attention in Russian and especially in Soviet historiography to anti-Russian movements in the South Caucasus can partly be explained by the fact that the conquest of the region was basically portrayed as a voluntary accession. First, this had applied to Georgia (the Georgiyevsk Treaty with Kartli-Kakheti), and then to the several Azerbaijani khanates – Karabakh, Sheki and Shirvan. As for the clashes between aboriginals and settlers, the scale of the resettlement was also diminished by Russian-Soviet historiography, as noted earlier. Sporadic resistance to Russian rule was characterized by the imperial historians as provocations organized by outside forces – Iran, Ottoman and even Britain – while Soviet historians, continuing a tradition of seeking the 'external enemy's hand', added the dimension of class struggle to the conflict.

Azerbaijanis and Armenians lived in the region for centuries, and for the most part in a peaceful manner. The resettlement of people was aimed at advancing imperial control, and St. Petersburg-managed colonization meant to solidify the domination of

"loyal" or "useful" ethnic groups. In the case of South Caucasus, imperial authorities began population control with the resettlement of foreign nationals. Baku had a handful of Armenian inhabitants before the Russian conquest, and other cities hosted a very small Armenian community. The Armenians were employed by St. Petersburg to advance its geopolitical projects, while the former also tried to reap benefits from territorial expansion. Their influx and the redistribution of space were imbalanced, and encroached on the rights and privileges which Muslim nobility enjoyed before the Russian conquest. However, Armenians – who were given a privileged position within the Tsarist empire – could enjoy this position only as much as it served the interests of St. Petersburg. Once the latter felt threatened by the growing influence of Armenians, it acted upon them in a resolute manner.

The linkage between resettlement policy and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is stressed by Western scholars. Stuart Kaufman notes that the century-long Tsarist migration policy resulted in a change of the ethnic composition of the regions, comprising most of modern Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan from predominantly Muslim to majority-Armenian areas. ⁵⁸¹

4.1 Locals and Settlers: An Evolving Relationship

In order to understand the clashes between Azerbaijanis and Armenians, it is necessary to look at the broader picture of the relationship between settlers and local Muslims. This relationship between Tsarist settlers and locals evolved over time, and was

⁵⁸¹ Stuart Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 50.

dependent on particular ethnic groups as Germans, Armenians, Russian sectarians and Russian Orthodox peasants took various niches. Nicholas Breyfogle identifies six types of interactions between Russian settlers and natives of the South Caucasus: land disputes, partial "enserfment", violent clashes, economic bonds, mutual aid and cultural exchange. 582 Initially, conflict prevailed especially over land distribution as Russian authorities resorted to the expropriation of territories from local nobles. Overall, the arrival of settlers en masse changed the demographic and economic landscape of the region; thus, it has altered and in some cases destabilized existing political and social systems. The mere presence of settlers was a new element in the ethnic, religious and cultural mosaics of the South Caucasus, in addition to a wide range of administrative reforms carried out by Tsarist authorities, which affected the relationship between the various strata of the indigenous population.

The environment also added a different colour to the relationship between locals and settlers. Urban centers such as Tbilisi, Baku, and to a lesser extent Erivan were fast developing, and attracted a large number of migrants. These migrants were moving without state management, while rural areas were tightly controlled by the administration. Wealthy Baku and Tbilisi became hotbeds for inter-communal tension between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and Armenians and Georgians, respectively. Rural areas were also affected by certain degree of tension over land ownership and use between Armenians and Muslims (e.g. Azerbaijanis and Kurds). Soviet historians emphasized the disagreement over land use in terms of class struggle, while (for example) Azerbaijani historian Orujev highlighted the policies of Tsarist authorities – i.e. the appropriation of lands from Muslims and their distribution among Russian

⁵⁸² Breyfogle, Heretics and Colonizers, 174.

sectarians. Sectarians. Sectarians Sectarian

In 1841, Russian authorities confiscated lands belonging to Muslim notables in the South Caucasus. While in 1842 Tsarist authorities retreated from such appropriation due to the rise of insurgency, the Caucasus administration continued to pursue the policy of weakening Muslim nobles and enforcing ethnic Russians in the region. This process was developed against the background of fierce fights between the Russian army and the Shamil movement in the North Caucasus. While the South Caucasus in general was relatively calm, suspicion against Muslims only rose among Russian officials. In 1857 Viceroy Alexander Bariatinskiy (1855-1862) allowed Russian sectarians who were previously settled on state-owned (or appropriated) lands to move to the estates of local nobles, though only with the permission of the latter. In general, the local Muslim

⁵⁸³ G. A. Orujev, "K istorii obrazovaniya russkikh poseleniy v Azerbaydzhane". *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk AzSSR*. 2 (1969).

⁵⁸⁴ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 178.

⁵⁸⁵ Dolzhenko, *Khozyaystvenniy i obshchestvenniy byt*, 63.

⁵⁸⁶ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 189.

nobility was deprived of many privileges and land rights. Azerbaijanis were denied entry into the bureaucracy and army. From a legal point of view, Azerbaijanis and the whole Muslim population of the Russian empire fell under the category of "aliens" or those of "foreign origin" (*inorodtsy*) along with many other non-Slavic ethnic groups, and were characterized by a "low level of civility" (*grazhdanstvennosti*). ⁵⁸⁷ As a result of several overlaying anti-Muslim policies, Muslims began migrating to Persia or the Ottoman Empire.

The Russian presence became a fact of life for Muslims, and despite occasional resistance to the rule the clashes with Russian settlers were not common. Even Russian sectarians found a comfortable niche in the South Caucasus. Speaking about the Azerbaijani-Russian sectarian co-existence, Nicholas Breyfogle points out that while initially violence was frequent, after the 1880s reports about the clashes between Muslims and Russian sectarians became rare. One reason was that over time, many disputes that had arisen from land distribution or property were settled. Secondly, locals became accustomed to the presence of Russians, and thirdly, sectarians defended themselves more successfully. ⁵⁸⁸ The relationship between German settlers and Azerbaijanis was also mostly peaceful and smooth. One incident in 1826 proved exceptional: in the context of an imminent war between Persia and Russia, Azerbaijanis in Borchali (in contemporary Georgia) attacked three German colonies. ⁵⁸⁹ My assumption is that Azerbaijanis did not perceive Germans as colonizers as much as they saw Russian settlers in this light. To be sure, the number of Germans was small and did

⁵⁸⁷ "Inorodtsy", in *The Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, vol. XIII, (St. Petersburg: Semenovskaya Tipolitografiya, 1894), 224.

⁵⁸⁸ Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, 199.

⁵⁸⁹ AKAK, vol. 7, doc. 188, 240.

not affect the habitation of Azerbaijanis to the extent that Russians did. Elsewhere in the empire, in Central Asia local nomads also clashed with Russian settlers over land, as the numbers of the latter rose. By 1907, the authorities in Turkestan accepted that land appropriation from nomads added greatly to social tension and reversed such a practice. However, such a late conclusion to this practice affected the local Muslims; for almost a century the Russian authorities had resorted to forced land distribution to advance the colonization of Russian and other "loyal" ethnic groups.

In the meantime, there were ongoing, mutually beneficial economic and cultural exchanges between settlers and natives. For example, around German and Russian sectarian settlements local Muslims exchanged agricultural products and learned some techniques and crafts from one other. However, overall the settlers remained isolated and not mixed with the natives – a phenomenon which also prevailed in other parts of the Russian empire; for example, in Siberia.

Separately from other settlers, the relationship between local Muslims (mostly Azerbaijanis) and Armenians developed within slightly different framework. Muslims did not perceive Armenians as a "foreign" entity since Armenians lived in the region before the Russian conquest (roughly a twenty percent minority in some regions like Erivan). For centuries Muslims – Persians, Turks (both Azerbaijani and Anatolian), and Kurds – had contact with Armenians and cultural exchange happened throughout the course of the history. Cuisine, music, folk songs, tales – many other shared cultural features emerged as a result of cohabitation. However, as discussed earlier over the 19th century the rich

⁵⁹⁰ Daniel Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 138-140.

See more on this in Ismayil-zade, *Russkoye krestyanstvo v Zakavkazye*; Zeynalova, *Nemetskiyi koloniyi v Azerbaydzhane*.

Armenians (especially in urban centers) became economic and political rivals to the Muslim elite.

The arrival of Armenians in 1828-1831 and their settlement on Muslim-populated lands created tensions, as discussed in Chapter 2. Russian authorities initially did not act to mitigate problems, but over time adopted certain administrative measures to avoid land conflicts. Clashes between Azerbaijanis and Armenians happened mostly in Erivan and Karabakh, where the number of settlers was also great. In 1844 in Shusha two communities collided over Armenians reportedly insulting a religious ground; some Armenians allegedly mocked a religious ritual *shakhsey-vakhsey*: the mourning of Imam Husein, revered by Shiite Muslims as a martyr. Government reports claimed that "for three days Shiites attacked the Armenians; however, the regional chief did not request soldiers to restrain people in order to show that the larger implications of the riots were that the role of Karabakh Muslims (especially Shiites) could clearly be seen to be that of robbers and bandits, and Armenians as humble and oppressed individuals." Some other small-scale incidents occurred between Azerbaijanis and Armenians, but these never assumed such a threatening dimension as in 1905-1906.

Overall, the period between 1828 and 1905 was relatively peaceful in terms of relationships between two ethnic groups. But the seeds of discord were sown as the imperial authorities advanced their policies aimed at consolidating the Caucasus borderland with the metropole, including through the greater presence of Christian population.

⁵⁹² Quoted in Ramis Yunusov, "Politika Rossiyskoy imperii v Azerbaydzhane", *Kaskad*, 7-187 (2003); *Kolonial'naya politika rossiyskogo tsarizma v Azerbaydzhane v 20-60-kh gg. XIX v: Feodal'nyye otnosheniya i kolonial'nyy rezhim, 1843-1868 gg.* vol. 2, ed. by N. Gorbunov and I. Petrushevskiy, (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSR, 1937).

4.2 Muslim Resistance to Russian Rule

The first uprising against Russian rule happened in 1826, on the eve of the Russian-Iranian war of 1826-1828. It began in Ganja and later engulfed the whole region to the extent that it forced the Russian army to retreat back to Tbilisi. Reports reaching St. Petersburg informed that local nobles, *beks*, instigated the insurgency in favour of the return of Qajars. The insurgency was suppressed and many *beks* were executed and exiled. ⁵⁹³ The participation of local nobles in the movement against Russian rule made St. Petersburg very skeptical about the possibility of obtaining the loyalty of the Muslim aristocrats for many decades afterwards.

The Tsarist policy towards Muslims requires some separate discussion; I will only attempt to frame the major research in this area and outline the main characteristics of St. Petersburg's policy. The whole "adventure" in the Caucasus was summarized by Russian imperial historian Rostislav Fadeyev in terms of the encounter with the Muslim world:

In the Caucasian isthmus and its inland water basin – the Caspian Sea, Russia came into direct contact with the whole mass of Muslim Asia. From the Caucasus isthmus Russia can get wherever she needs; here a half-century struggle against Muslim fanaticism [and Russia] created only an army that can stand, without disorder, the endless deprivation of Asian campaigns... For Russia, the Caucasus isthmus is both a bridge thrown from the Russian coast to the heart of the Asian continent, and the wall which protects Central Asia from hostile influence and from the outpost defending both seas: the Black and the Caspian. Occupation of this region was the first state necessity. ⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹³ ARDA, f. 63, op. 1, doc. 14, 574.

⁵⁹⁴ Rostislav A. Fadeyev, *60 let Kavkazskoy voyny. Pis'ma s Kavkaza. Zapiski o kavkazskikh delakh,* (Tiflis: Voyenno-Pokhodnaya Tip. Glavnogo Shtaba Kavkazskoy Armii, 1860), 15.

This passage demonstrates the importance of the region from a geostrategic perspective to St. Petersburg, and how the Russian authorities viewed the Muslims in the region. Justin McCarthy argues that the Muslim population represented an inherent threat to Christian powers such as Tsarist Russia, and they tried to get rid of non-loyal subjects to the maximum extent. Address Audrey Altstadt stresses that the non-Christian subjects of the Empire, including the Azerbaijani Turks in the Caucasus, were affected by more restrictions than others – such as Armenians and Georgians. This attests to the high degree of suspicion St. Petersburg had towards Muslim subjects. For example, Muslims were not recruited into the army, and their number in civil administration was always very modest. Altstadt concludes that except for Viceroy Grigoriy Golitsyn (1896-1904) "state policy was firmly anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish." Austin Jersild summarizes that in general, "Muslims and mountaineers were unfit for life in the Russian empire", or (in my opinion) the empire itself was not ready and was unfit to fully accommodate Islam and highlanders.

Austin Jersild, Firuzeh Mostashari and Peter Holquist also link the Russian resettlement policy in the Caucasus with the desire to Christianize the region and decrease the influence of the Muslim population. Contrary to such views, Robert Crews takes that St. Petersburg from the time of Catherine II tried to manage diversity and successfully engaged with the Muslim population of the empire. In his opinion, Tsarist officials presumed Islam to be useful to the imperial administration as a source

⁵⁹⁵ McCarthy, *Death and Exile*.

⁵⁹⁶ Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks*, 19.

⁵⁹⁷ Austin Jersild, "From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire", in *Russia's Orient*, 103.

⁵⁹⁸ Austin Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier,* 1845–1917. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier*; Holquist, "To Count, to Extract, to Exterminate", 111-144.

of stability and morality"; ⁵⁹⁹ however, many bureaucrats could not overcome suspicions about Muslim clerics as enemies of the state. Crews further maintains that at some point Russia became a "Muslim power" which, I believe, is an overstatement. The Russian Empire was working to accommodate the Muslim population and in certain cases it was quite successful, but it did not become a "Muslim power" – definitely not in the Caucasus. Dana Sherry argues that even if initially Russian authorities invoked the religious (Christian) solidarity – for example, in attracting Armenians to settle within Russian borders in 1828 – "the assumption that religious identity would necessitate political allegiance would be soon shaken," and the Armenians later were not enthusiastic about leaving Persia for Russia. 600 Furthermore, she opines that the Caucasus administration acted quite independently from St. Petersburg and desired to accommodate Muslims and engage them into local governance and the economy, while St. Petersburg had a more suspicious approach. Daniel Brower, studying a different region – Turkestan – argues that the Russian empire had two competing approaches for the treatment of Muslims: Conservative officials relied primarily on religion to point out the impossibility of "civilizing" Muslims due to the inherent backwardness of Islam. Socalled liberal thinkers believed in the principles of the Enlightenment to promote progress, diversity and civility. 601 Michael Khodarkovsky stresses that the suspicion towards Muslims emanated from the time of the Crimean conquest, and the rivalry with the Ottoman Empire caused aggressiveness against Islam within the empire. 602 Alex Marshall takes a different stance in his study of the Caucasus. He believes that "Tsarist

⁵⁹⁹ Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, 62. ⁶⁰⁰ Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy," 38.

⁶⁰¹ Brower, *Turkestan*.

⁶⁰² Khodarkovsky, Russia's Steppe Frontier, 192.

Russia itself entirely lacked advanced racial theories" and that "there was no equivalent in Moscow or St. Petersburg, for example, of the explicit warning notices posted outside certain clubs regarding 'No dogs or Chinamen' that once characterized British imperial rule. Russian rule by contrast was relatively egalitarian, and Armenian and Georgian officers swelled the ranks of whole generations of the Russian armies that fought in the Caucasus." 603 However, Alex Marshall makes this assumption based on the Christian population, and disregards the status of Muslims.

My study of the resettlement in the South Caucasus, discussed in two previous chapters, shows that St. Petersburg preferred Christian subjects to Muslims. Initially, before the conquest of the Caucasus, animosity towards Islam initially stemmed from religious beliefs such as the necessity of rescuing Christians from the Persian and Ottoman yoke (and other similar considerations), present from Peter and Catherine the Great's rule. Later when Russia took control of the territories populated by Muslims – and thus confronted the Porte and Iran – St. Petersburg was simultaneously advancing two policies: to accommodate Muslims in order to secure control over the conquered territories, and to diminish their physical presence relative to the Christian population. The first aspect involved cooperation, but the second was related to forced measures. In the South Caucasus, Tsarist Russia continued this pattern of its relationship with local Muslims: when they obeyed, the Russian administration distributed some privileges and secured peaceful co-habitation, but in case of resistance, Tsarist rule manifested its resoluteness and cruelty. Russia always lived with the fear that Muslims would rise up against Russian rule at the opportune moment to support co-religionists in the Ottoman Empire or Iran.

⁶⁰³ Alex Marshall, *The Caucasus under the Soviet Rule*, (New-York – London: Routledge, 2010), 20.

On two occasions, the population in the territory of modern Azerbaijan became involved in the North Caucasian movement that Russian generals sought to suppress so brutally. In 1830 in the so-called Djaro-Belakan jamaat⁶⁰⁴ the population rose up against Russian rule. Djaro-Belakan jamaats, which was populated mainly by Avars, 605 had internal autonomy, which St. Petersburg decided to abolish. In February 1830, General Paskevich installed troops in the *jamaats*, and appealed to the locals with a message that informed them of a decision to administer the territory on the basis of new Russian rules. The local nobility was deprived of any meaningful voice in the administration of the region. The uprising began on 12 June 1830 and was supported by North Caucasian tribes, and by October 1830 the *jamaats* went under the control of the rebels. Tsarist military leaders decided to bribe the two main leaders of the insurgency, and after that the army easily defeated the rebel forces. By 14 November the Russian army restored full control of the region and executed 32 leaders of the rebels.

Much more threatening was the insurgency that erupted in Kuba in 1837. The reason for the revolt is related to the decision of the Russian authorities to recruit Muslims for the imperial cavalry. The local leaders demanded this recruitment cease, and also demanded a reduction in taxes and duties. In April 1837 the insurgency erupted, and seemingly the Russian authorities decided to satisfy the demands of rebels. However, the movement spread throughout the Kuba region. Sheikh Shamil sent a letter to the leaders of the revolt, Haji Muhammad and Yar-Ali, appealing to them to join his larger fight against the Russians.

 ⁶⁰⁴ Jamaat – congregation, people
 605 Ethnic group, which populates the territory of today's Azerbaijan and Dagestan. It was once a powerful tribe among mountaineers. Sheikh Shamil was an ethnic Avar.

The superior organization of the Tsarist army combined with divisions among the rebels weakened the uprising. One of the leaders of the movement, Muhammad Mirza Gazikumykh, defected to the Russian side. By September, Tsarist forces managed to defeat the major rebel forces, but instability lasted for another two years. All leaders of the insurgency were executed. 606 As Shamil's resistance grew in the North Caucasus. Tsarist authorities became more brutal and less ready for compromise. Shamil's reference to Islam as his movement – muridism – assumed a radical religious dimension, related to *jihad*; at the same time, St. Petersburg's action also took (in the eyes of some) a religious character against Islam. 607 Caucasian Viceroy Alexander Bariatinskiy (1855-1862) called St. Petersburg to strengthen Orthodox influence and the spread of Christianity in the region. 608

In 1838, another insurgency broke out in Sheki where the local nobility tried to restore the Sheki khanate. North Caucasian tribes also supported the rebels led by Meshadi Muhammaed, who presented himself as an heir of the Sheki's khan. The leaders also used popular discontent over increases in taxes and duties. The rebels managed to take Sheki in the summer of 1838, but on 3 September the Russian troops ousted them.

The most serious uprising in the 1840s was the resistance to the Russian administrative and land reforms, which impacted the entire Caucasus region. The Russian authorities, as noted previously, retreated from the reforms – and by appointing Viceroy Mikhail Vorontsov sought to accommodate locals, including Muslim nobility through inclusion into the imperial system of administration.

⁶⁰⁶ A detailed account of the insurgency is given in Ali Sumbatzade, *Kubinskoye vosstaniye*, (Baku: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Azerbadzhanskoy SSR, 1961).

⁶⁰⁷ Quoted in Moshe Gammer, Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnya and *Dagestan,* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), 44. 608 Hamburg, "War of Worlds", 176.

In the meantime, the resistance caused St. Petersburg to advance the Russian colonization and Russification policy in the second half of the 19th century. Even formerly "loyal" ethnic groups – Armenians and Germans – became the subject of suspicion, and St. Petersburg began to embark in fits and starts on a Russian nationalist policy. This was complicated by the rise of liberal and revolutionary ideas, which would eventually turn the region into a boiling pot. Increasingly, growing numbers of Russian entrepreneurs also saw local wealthy businessmen as their rivals.

Thus, from the 1840s, the attitude towards Armenians changed in various ways. The Azerbaijani nobility was partially co-opted into the administration, but remained disenfranchised overall as compared to Georgians and Armenians. 609

The last decades of the nineteenth century in the South Caucasus were characterized by the "gachag" (runner) movement among the Muslim population. Some of those gachags were ordinary robbers while some other posed as "Robin Hood" figures. Some gachags gathered hundreds of people, and appealed to unleash jihad against Russian rule. 610

However, these anti-Russian movements remained weak and did not produce significant resistance to the imperial administration. The weakness of Muslim resistance in the South Caucasus can be explained by several factors: repressive measures, cooperation and cooptation as well as deportation and outmigration of Muslims from the region in the second half of the 19th century. The Russian administration exiled gachags to Siberia and encouraged the outmigration of troubled settlements abroad. In some

⁶⁰⁹ An excellent overview of the presence of various ethnic groups in the Russian administration and economy is given in Liliana Riga, The Bolshevik and the Russian Empire (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 193-197.

⁶¹⁰ Shamil Farajov, "Azerbaycanda Partizan Herekatini Doguran Sebebler ve Gachag Herekati," Baki Universitetin Kheberleri, 2 (2010): 163-165.

places, such as the Baku governorate, the Tsarist authorities settled Russians in the villages inhabited by deported people. According to an imperial document on the reasons of banditry in the Caucasus:

this practice rendered excellent results in terms of eradicating robbery and plunder. Thus, the development of Russian settlements in the region promotes the planting of Russian civility (*grazhdansvennosti*) among a semi-wild population on the one hand, and on the other creates in the population itself a reliable basis for the Russian administrative authorities which entail a softening of manners.⁶¹¹

The combination of factors – suppression and accommodation of Muslims – played a role in diminishing the anti-Tsarist resistance movement. In the meantime, the discontent over the imperial rule was waiting for its opportune moment. The revolutionary era brought hope that the Russian administration could be changed. However, the inter-ethnic clashes which had derailed the anti-Tsarist movement in the South Caucasus played into hands of St. Petersburg.

4.3. The Armenian-Azerbaijani Massacres of 1905-1906

The violent clashes of 1905-1906 between Armenians and Azerbaijanis were the first in a series of incidents in the 20th century which later turned into the protracted interstate conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. According to imperial sources, the clashes were described as "the Armenian-Tatar massacres" or "Armenian-Muslim massacres." The first description purely reflects the mistaken identity that the Russians gave to the Azerbaijani Turks, while the second has to do with the perception of

⁶¹¹ TIEA, inv. 4028, doc. 4: "Prichiny razboynichestva na Kavkaze i sposoby bor'by s nim", 686-688.

Azerbaijanis. The latter identified themselves as Muslims, which was an important signifier for people of Islamic faith in imperial Russia. At the same time, Russians and Westerners also put emphasis on the religious affiliation of two colliding groups to show a "civilizational divide" as a cause of the conflict, rather than the colonial policies. 612

The massacres began at the dawn of the Russian revolution of 1905 on February 6 in Baku, and then spread in May to Nakhichevan, in August to Karabakh and to Elizavetopol (today Ganja) and Tbilisi in November. This massacre claimed thousands of lives, heavily damaging the cities and the Baku oil industry. Initially it was crowds who attacked respectively Armenian and Azerbaijani quarters in Baku and other settlements in the region, and later some local nobles, businessmen and revolutionary groups organized and helped to mobilize people and criminal gangs to launch offensives against each other. The massacres were instigated by a quite ordinary criminal incident involving businessmen and their supporting gang members, but the causes reflect the deep and complex socio-economic situation in the imperial Russian South Caucasus. Ultimately, the main reason for the Armenian-Azerbaijani massacres was Russian colonial policy, which caused uneven development in the South Caucasus within different ethnic communities (characterized by discrimination and coupled by social tension and rising nationalist and revolutionary sentiments, prevalent in the region as well as in the empire as a whole).

Against this background of the revolutionary era, the Russian resettlement policy was also one of the factors that made the tension between Armenians and Azerbaijanis acute. The creation of spaces with a strongly prevailing Armenian population sparked ideas of the establishment of independent Armenia – free from other ethnic groups.

⁶¹² All these issues with relevant references will be discussed below in this chapter.

Revolutionary parties such as *Dashnaktsutsyun* were instrumental in propelling the grassroot massacres into an organized armed conflict. In the meantime, religious antagonism
was exploited by some Muslim Azerbaijani nobles and gangs, though it played a lesser
role than other factors. In places where Armenians dominated – either as a result of
imperial resettlement policies such as in Erivan and Karabakh, or by natural migration
like in Baku – the massacres were particularly severe as the discontent of Azerbaijanis
was directed against the Armenians rather than the imperial administration. The latter did
not act efficiently to stop the massacres, which gave rise to numerous conspiracy theories
about St. Petersburg's potential instigating role. The study of the 1905-1906 massacres
brings me to the conclusion that the Russian administration did not abet the ArmenianAzerbaijani violence, but reaped the benefit of the previous divide-and-conquer policy
which helped to divert the anti-Tsarist revolutionary movement in the South Caucasus
into inter-ethnic clashes. The ineffectiveness and inaction of the imperial authorities
should be understood in the context of the revolutionary chaos and imperial demise.

Before delving into detailed analysis, I will discuss sources and historiography, especially in the light of controversies among scholars and contemporary observers on the causes of the massacres. This chapter, first of all, is based on Russian imperial archival sources, which provide information on the massacres and contain opinions of imperial officials on the causes of violence. As these sources privilege the government's vision of events, I have drawn extensively from contemporary observers – for example, British diplomats and European journalists – in order to have a more complete picture of the situation. I found very useful a study dedicated to the massacres written in 1906 by

Luigi Villari, an Italian historian, traveler and diplomat. However, Villari acknowledged that he compiled information through the assistance of Armenian clerics, leading to on many occasions a pro-Armenian version of the event. For a balanced picture I have resorted to another special study of massacres written by Azerbaijani writer Mammad Seyid Ordubadi in 1911⁶¹⁴ as well as articles and books of Armenian publicists along with numerous local bureaucrats, journalists and public activists.

The overall tone of contemporary observers – except Azerbaijanis – was anti-Muslim and anti-Azerbaijani as they blamed religious fanatics and "ignorant Muslims" for attacking Armenians. Tadeusz Swietochowski noted that, "the events were reported in the world press generally with a tone of partiality towards the Armenians." Audrey Altstadt stressed that the media displayed an anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim tone and observers nearly always blamed Muslims for the violence. During the massacres the right-liberal newspaper *Slovo* blamed nationalism; the left-liberal *Russkie Vedomosti* blamed pan-Islamism. Conservative *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* only blamed the Azerbaijanis. In response, Azerbaijani publicist Rahim Bek Melikov blamed *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* for insinuation and abetting. He wrote in "*Kaspii*": "It is a futile attempt to prove to these newspapers that the ongoing hostility between the Armenians and the Muslims is not caused by pan-Islamism, but by other factors. Because these conservative and pro-government newspapers want to increase the ethnic hatred in the Caucasus while all forces of society try to stop violence."

⁶¹³ Villari, Fire and Sword.

⁶¹⁴ Mammad Seid Ordubadi. *Ganli Iller (senedler)*. 1905-1906-ci illerde Gafgazda bash veren ermenimusulman davasinin tarihi. (Baku: Qafqaz, 1991 (reprint of 1911 edition)).

⁶¹⁵ I. Alibekov, *Elisovetpolskiyi krovaviyi dni pred sudom obshestva*, (Tiflis: Tip. Kozlovskogo, 1906).

⁶¹⁶ Swietochowski, Russian Azerbaijan, 41-42.

⁶¹⁷ Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks*, 41.

⁶¹⁸ Kaspiy, no. 14, January 18, 1906.

tended to blame Muslim fanaticism as well. However, they sometimes acknowledged that the Armenians shared some responsibility for the massacres. An American-Armenian publication *Armenia* wrote in 1906:

The view of the Armenians as harmless sheep uncomplainingly stretching their necks to the slaughter is nor borne out by the facts... It is also untrue that the Armenians have always been the chief sufferers. Although in Baku and Nakhichevan this was the case, at Erivan and Etchmiadzin they remained the victors. At Shusha and Baku in September they suffered heavy material losses, but otherwise they fully held their own and paid the Tatars in their own coin. 619

Western and Russian media of that time often described the interethnic violence as a clash between "civilized Armenians and wild Tatars." Russian texts are replete with classic "Oriental" (in the Saidian sense) perceptions of the Muslim population of the Caucasus. "Azerbaijani Tatars" according to Dr. E. Erikson's medical publication on the Murders and Robbery in the Caucasus, "are the most robber-prone tribe in the Caucasus."621 The 1894 imperial Encyclopedia of Brokgauz and Efron described the Azerbaijanis in the following manner:

Caucasian Tatars, especially those that have a semi-nomadic lifestyle, represent, together with the Kurds (in Erivan, Elizavetpol and Kars region), the most restless inhabitants of the Caucasus; they are vindictive and ignorant, prone to fraud, theft and robbery, which often occur during their migrations and which plague the sedentary population on their way. 622

⁶¹⁹ Quoted from Swietochowski, Russian Azerbaijan, 42.

⁶²⁰ Le Matin, September 20, 1905, Le Temps, September 15, 1905.

⁶²¹ E.V. Erikson. « Ob ubiystvakh i razboyakh na Kavkaze », Vestnik psikhologii, kriminal'noy antropologii *i gipnotizma*, ed. by V.M. Bekhtereva. (St. Petersburg, 1906).

622 Vladislav I. Masal'skiy, "Kavkazskiy Kray", in *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, vol. 26.

⁽St. Petersburg: Tip. I.A. Efrona, 1894), 838.

Luigi Villari maintained that the clash was "also part of that wider feud between modern ideas and Asiatic barbarism."623 Modern Russian scholar Pavel Shekhtman, known for his anti-Azerbaijan research on the massacres in Flame of Old Fires, put this forward as his central argument. 624 Such myths were well-developed and established in Western and Russian media, and many perceived the massacres as a fight between Christian Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijanis. This perception continues sometimes even today to play a dominant role in depicting the current conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. 625 This view of the conflict as a fight between religions or, as it was put by contemporary observers, as "progress and barbarism" barely merits discussion. Firstly, much evidence shows that the Azerbaijanis developed ideas of modernity and experienced a cultural renaissance. 626 Even according to the racist imperial viewpoint, the accusation of "barbarism" (or to put it softly, the accusation that Azerbaijanis were prone to violence and crime) was not as applicable to the urban population, where violence began. The above-cited Encyclopedia of Brokgauz and Efron noted that while nomadic Tatars are wild, the urban population has much better manners (nravy). In a report dated 1869, Baku Governor Kulyebakin wrote:

Tatars perceive the authority to be a force of suppression, cruel and merciless; however, at the same time they respect it. If the authority is just they abide it in their deep conscience. Cases of disobedience are rare. In general, they are kind, humble and satisfied with small benefits. They could give false evidence against Christians for the

⁶²³ Villari, Fire and Sword, 191.

⁶²⁴ Pavel Shekhtman, *Plamya davnix pojarov*, (Moscow: "Pro Armenia", 1992-1993), accessed on September 21, 2013, http://www.armenianhouse.org/shekhtman/docs-ru/reason.html

⁶²⁵ Approved by many schools in the North America, including Toronto School Board *Human Geography* textbook (7th edition, Wiley Press, 2003) authored by H.J. de Blij and Alexander Murthy assert that the conflict is result of "Armenian-Christian memories of Islamic oppression" and "Azerbaijani Muslim disdain of Christian unbelievers."

⁶²⁶ See the above-mentioned works of Audrey Alstatdt and Tadeusz Swietochowski. Also see: I.S. Bagirova, *Politicheskiyi partiyi i organizatsiyi Azerbaydzhana v nachale XX veka (1900-1917)*, (Baku: Elm, 1997).

benefit of their coreligionists but this is regarded as an excusable crime. A few people resort to robbery due to laziness but those are exceptional cases. 627

Another popular view blamed pan-Islamist ideas, which were propelled by agents from the Persian and Ottoman states. Pan-Islamism, which fomented in Afghanistan, India, Iran and the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century, advocated the unity of all Muslims under one rule. Although initially it was championed by Afghani thinker Jamal al-Din al-Afghani as an ideology to fight colonial occupation of Muslim lands, in the Ottoman Empire the movement was employed by some officials and intellectuals to solidify the Ottoman rule against European pressure. A majority of the Azerbaijani population, particularly in rural areas, was strongly religious and could ostensibly serve as fertile ground for activities encouraged by foreign, e.g. Ottoman, emissaries. However, in the South Caucasus many other Christian groups lived next to Azerbaijanis and their co-existence continued during and after the massacres. Russian bureaucrat Vladimir Mayevski commented with respect to this:

If one assumes that there is a strong basis for the pan-Islamist idea in the Caucasus, it is then difficult to comprehend why these ideas manifested themselves among the Tatars in the form of hostility exclusively against the Armenians, leaving aside all other peoples of the Caucasus. In this case a Russian element, against which Pan-Islamist ideas should work, must have become a major target. However, the reality was the opposite. Why did the Tatars only attack the Armenians and not attack Georgians, Kurds-Yezids [Christian Kurds], and Greeks?

⁶²⁷ Quoted from Tamara Gumbatova, "Kak Baku stal stolitsey: 1859-1869 – 10 burnykh let istoriyi", *Echo*, Baku, March 14, 2007.

⁶²⁸ A.V. Amfiteatrov, *Armyanskiy vopros*, (St. Petersburg, 1906), 53.

⁶²⁹ Vladimir Mayevskiy, *Armyano-tatarskaya smuta na Kavkaze, kak odin iz fazisov armenskoogo voprosa,* (Baku: Shur, 1993 (re-print of Tiflis: Tip. Shchtaba Kavkazskogo Voyennogo Okruga, 1915)), 11-12.

Moreover, an inter-communal divide between Sunnis (Ottomans were Sunnis) and Shiites (Azerbaijanis were largely Shiite) was not conducive to the circulation of Pan-Islamist ideas. Luigi Villari referred to a conversation he had with one of the local *beks* about the theory of Pan-Islamism as a cause for the massacres. The *bek* said, "there is more chance of a union between Tartars and Armenians than between Sunnis and Shiahs. He concluded by stating that the government was largely to blame. This is the one point on which Tartars and Armenians agree."

Along with the above-mentioned factors, Russian authorities were widely blamed for inaction and even the instigation of the conflict. A British diplomatic source reported that the authorities armed the Tatars against Armenians. ⁶³¹ Writing in 1906, Luigi Villari reported:

In the meanwhile a number of murders of Armenians attributed to Tartars had been committed on Shemakhinka street; on the other hand, several mutilated corpses of Tartars supposedly murdered by Armenians were discovered under the snow which had just melted away. There is a strong presumption that the police were at the bottom of these affairs, having instigated them with a view to promoting Tartar-Armenian hatred, but I cannot say whether or not the suspicion is well-founded. The authorities were perpetually telling the Tartars that the Armenians were meditating a massacre of Muslims and that they should be on the *qui vive*. 633

My analysis does not confirm the theories implicating the Russia authorities in direct abetting of the massacres. For example, two officials – Tsarist Finance Minister Vladimir Kokovtsev and Baku Governor Mikhail Nakashidze – expressed clear concern

630 Villari, Fire and Sword, 283.

⁶³¹ British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print. Part 1: From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the First World War. Series A, Russia 1859-1914, Vol. 3: 1905—1906, ed. by Dominic Lieven, Kenneth Bourne, Cameron Watt, (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983), 186.

⁶³² Street in Baku city.

⁶³³ Villari, Fire and Sword, 193.

about the massacre and the need to take active measures to stop violence. The Minister of Finance reported to Nicholas II in 1905 that urgent measures needed to be taken to restore stability. Governor Nakashidze urged St. Petersburg to supply greater assistance from the army and reported that the police force was weak and numerically insufficient to contain violence. American scholar Tadeusz Swietochowski also opines that widespread speculation about the intention of Nakashidze and other local bureaucrats to exploit the enmity between the Muslims and the Armenians had "no incontrovertible proof of official connivance." Rather, as I stressed earlier, it was Tsarist colonial policy, ineffective bureaucracy and the revolutionary situation which made possible the perpetuation and the spread of the violence in the region. To understand this situation, it is first of all necessary to look at the relationship between the Tsarist administration and the respective ethnic groups.

As discussed in Chapter 2, St. Petersburg exploited the Armenians in the Caucasus to advance militarily and then through the resettlement policy to strengthen the presence in the Muslim borderland. Tadeusz Swietochowski noted that Armenians enjoyed a Russian protective shield that enabled them to advance at a fast pace and to capture important economic positions in the region. Twenty-nine per cent of enterprises in the Baku governorate belonged to Armenians, while the Azerbaijanis had control over eighteen percent. Many industries, such as fisheries, tobacco and winemaking, passed into the hands of Armenians who had driven the Azerbaijanis out of

⁶³⁴ RGIA, f. 1405, op. 107, doc. 11393, 16.

⁶³⁵ RGIA, f. 857, op. 1, doc. 1477, 8, 14, 56.

⁶³⁶ Swietochowski, Russian Azerbaijan, 41.

⁶³⁷ Ihid. 39

⁶³⁸ Dilara Seyidzade, *Iz istoriyi azerbaydzhanskoy burzhuaziyi v nachale 20-go veka*, (Baku: Elm, 1978), 25.

competition. Armenians held skilled jobs, while the Azerbaijanis were employed in low-paid labour. The Armenians were present in large numbers within the state apparatus, while Muslims were almost non-existent in the civil and military administration. The oil boom that began in the Absheron peninsula around Baku in the mid-nineteenth century attracted a large number of workers – Armenians, Russians and Azerbaijanis, including from Persia. Many Armenian oil tycoons emerged in Baku – Mantashev, Gukasov and others. Audrey Altstadt also acknowledged that the Armenians were a wealthy minority who enjoyed a special relationship with the Russians. Imperial administrative laws benefited the Armenians more than the Azerbaijanis. On the other hand, Altstadt noted that the Azerbaijanis, being the largest indigenous group in Baku with their network of extended families throughout Northern and Southern Azerbaijan, commanded wealth. Growing competition created a basis for conflict, particularly in agricultural areas.

The success of Armenian entrepreneurs should not be solely attributed to the preferential treatment by tsarist authorities but also to individual and communal business practices as well as traditional support within ethnic kinship. Villari summarized the status of Armenians in the Russian empire thusly:

Under Russian auspices the Armenians flourished and progressed in every way, and from the status of miserable *rayahs* of Moslem taskmasters they rose rapidly to that of a wealthy and active *bourgeoisie*. We find them as bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, manufacturers, lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, and officials all over the Caucasus, and even in European Russia. The Baku oil industry is largely due to Armenian enterprise; at Tiflis, the ancient capital of Georgia, the Armenians form over a third of the population, have practically all the business of the town in their hands, own most of the house property, and constitute 80 per cent, of the town council... Even in the Russian army Armenians occupied high positions; the commander-in-chief of the Russian forces

⁶³⁹ Altstadt, The Azerbaijani Turks, 40.

in the Asiatic campaign of 1877 was General Loris Melikoff, an Armenian from Lori, and one of his ablest lieutenants was General Ter-Gukassoff, also an Armenian. The same Loris Melikoff afterwards became chief Minister to Alexander II. 640

As I have discussed in Chapter 2, at the end of the 19th century, against the background of growing Russian and Armenian nationalism, imperial officials acted against the Armenian Church and schools. Viceroy Grigoriy Golitsyn tried to balance the Armenian-Muslim presence, and increased the total number of Muslims employed within administrative structures. He also ordered the confiscation of the property and lands of the Armenian Church and closed Armenian schools in 1903. Golitsyn reported to the tsar in 1897 that Armenians took all key position in the region, making racially pejorative remarks that Armenians were historically prone to the exploitation of neighboring peoples.⁶⁴¹ In a similar racist manner, Dr. E. Erikson described Armenians with typical imperial overtone:

Armenians are the smartest people in the Caucasus, capable of striving for education and having had their science and literature already established in the distant past, about which Russian history does not yet have information. The geographic location of ancient Armenia – with harsh living conditions in the grip of stronger peoples – developed in Armenians a particular ethno-psychology which was the most profitable for them in their millennia-long struggle for independence. Armenians are quick-tempered, persistent, hardworking, resourceful, careful and absorbed by the interests of trade and profit. Seeing power in money, they are greedy, envious and extremely frugal. In cases where they obtain skills or power in any field they become unbearably daring and violent, especially in relation to the weak or subordinates of other tribes.

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⁶⁴⁰ Villari, Fire and Sword, 148-149.

⁶⁴¹ Jörg Baberowski, "Tsivilizatorskaya missiya i natsionalizm v Zakavkaz'ye: 1828—1914 gg.", in *Novaya imperskaya istoriya postsovetskogo prostranstva: Sbornik statey (Biblioteka zhurnala "Ab Imperio")*, ed. by I. V. Gerasimova, S. V. Glebova. L. P. Kaplunovskogo, M. B. Mogil'ner, and L. M. Semonova, (Kazan': Tsentr Issledovaniy Natsionalizma i Imperii, 2004), 345.

Contemporary Russian officer colonel N. Bigayev in his memoir, however, blamed not so much Golitsyn but Tsarist policy overall for the instigation of inter-ethnic clashes in the South Caucasus. He stressed that Golitsyn is "guilty to the extent that the Russian empire is guilty" and that he "did his best to install peace and consent among all three Caucasian people" [Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis]. As for Golitsyn's successor, Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov, Bigayev highlighted that he "is a well-known Armenophile, and his wife... a Christianized Armenian, and was accused of being "only interested in the recreation of the Great Armenia." ⁶⁴² However, Bigayev opined that the viceroy had an equal predisposition to all peoples of the Caucasus. Bigayev's quite frank opinion about the episode in the Armenian-Azerbaijani massacres of 1905-1906 illustrates in the best way the attitude of the imperial administration:

In those revolutionary days the Armenian -Tatar massacres erupted. Tatar hordes went to the Armenian villages, which were armed with outdated weapons. Armenians met them in an organized manner and with 'mausers' [a type of semi-automatic pistols]. Intervention by the authorities and peace talks led to nowhere. Then it was decided to equip the Armenian villages with rifles from artillery warehouses... It seemed to me that something bad happened. If we are going to arm, I believe, the best option is to arm both sides of the massacres. Let them cut each other if they love to do it so much. This idea I immediately expressed aloud...⁶⁴³

The tension between the Caucasus administration and Armenians added to the growing revolutionary and nationalistic sentiments among Armenians. Moreover, the Tsarist court promised an independent Armenia on the territory of Erivan khanate, but later abandoned this idea. Expectation was high among Armenian nobles and clerics, but

⁶⁴² N.A. Bigayev, "Posledniye namestniki Kavkaza (v svete lichnykh vospominaniy) (1902—1917)", in Rossiyskiy Arkhiv: Istoriya Otechestva v svidetel'stvakh i dokumentakh XVIII—XX vv, vol. 12, (Moscow: Studiya TRITE: Rossiyskiy Arkhiv, 2003), 404, 412. ⁶⁴³ Bigayev, "Posledniye namestniki Kavkaza", 411.

soon disappointment prevailed among them. Several contemporary observations help to understand this evolution of Russian imperial policy in the region with regard to Armenians and Azerbaijanis. British diplomat Charles Harding noted in his 1905 dispatches to London:

Unfortunately the Russian authorities, instead of trying to improve the relations of the two races by impartial administration, have endeavoured to save themselves trouble by acting on the ancient principle of *divide et impera* so dear to oriental governments. For some time they favoured the Armenians at the expense of the Tatars. All small offices were given to the former, who thus gained further ascendancy over the Tatars, whom they exasperated more and more by their corruption and extractions. The Russian authorities later changed their policy, thinking perhaps that the Armenians were becoming too predominant, or possibly because they became alarmed at the growing activity of the Armenian revolutionary societies, ⁶⁴⁴ whose propaganda has undoubtedly been encouraged by the progress of events in other parts of the empire. ⁶⁴⁵

Here, it is important to understand the dynamic of the events in the empire as a whole and in the region in particular, especially with regard to the evolving revolution that had begun in January 1905. The growing discontent over the Russian autocracy and the state of affairs in the empire gave rise to various liberal and revolutionary movements. The Russian economy suffered from the global economic crisis in 1899-1900, and due to its weakness the consequences were felt beyond 1905. The condition of the working class remained poor and was lagging much behind European countries. Agrarian reforms proved to be ineffective and the peasant class suffered from famine and debts. The revolution, accompanied by strikes, armed clashes between the army and

⁶⁴⁴ "Armenian Revolutionary Societies (Committees)" was a term used for the Armenian nationalist party "Dashnaktsutsun" – Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

⁶⁴⁵ British Documents on Foreign Affairs, 185-186.

⁶⁴⁶ More on the pre-revolutionary situation and the Russian revolution of 1905-1907 can be found in Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997),

workers, military mutinies, peasants' uprising against rich landowners and arsons of mansions, resulted in the creation of the limited constitutional monarchy – the multi-party system, an elective organ – the Duma, trade unions, and alleviation of some conditions of workers and peasants.

The Caucasus was also embroiled in the revolutionary movement. Baku, as a large industrial oil city, was replete with revolutionary ideas – particularly among lowerwage workers. Renowned Russian writer Maksim Gorkiy described the city's oil industry as "a brilliantly drawn picture of a gloomy hell." ⁶⁴⁷ In December 1904 Baku oil workers - including both Armenians and Azerbaijanis - staged a huge strike, which appalled the Russian administration. However, the unfolding events in the South Caucasus showed that nationalist sentiments prevailed over the anti-Tsarist mood. The peculiar character of the revolutionary activities prevented a united front against the imperial rule.

One of the prominent groups was the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutun) the party founded in Tbilisi in 1890 with the aim of creating an independent Armenia – a goal for which they envisaged both political and armed struggle, including terror. 648 As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the main target of the Dashnaks was Turkey, but after failures there this party also became engaged in antiimperial activities in the Russian Caucasus – especially during the administration of Golitsyn. Moreover, the Turkish-Armenian clashes in the Ottoman Empire in the 1890s affected the degree of hostility in the Caucasus in 1905-1906 between Armenians and

^{398-423;} Sidney Harcave, The Russian Revolution of 1905, (London: Collier Books, 1970); Abraham Ascher, The Revolution of 1905: A Short History, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

⁶⁴⁷ Maksim Gorkiv, *Po Soyuzu Sovetov. Sobraniye sochineniy*, vol. 17, (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye izdatel'stvo khudozhetsvennoy literatury, 1949), 23.

⁶⁴⁸ Gerard Libaridian, "Revolution and Liberation in the 1982 and 1907 Programs of the Dashnaktsutun", in Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, ed. by Ronald Suny, (Ann Arbor, Michigan University Press, 1996), 166-167.

Azerbaijanis, who identified themselves as Turks or Muslims. In this regard, the Armenians led by the nationalist *Dashnaktsutun* considered the Azerbaijani Turks as their enemy too. Armenian revolutionary aspirations were channeled to narrow chauvinistic ideas aimed against the Turkic population of the South Caucasus and the creation of an independent state in the territories where the Azerbaijani Turks lived. 649

Ronald Suny maintains that "the intensification of national ill-will" among Armenians worked in favor of national identification rather than unification based on liberal and social-democratic ideas, and the ethnic appeal prevailed over other considerations. 650 Russian Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov acknowledged that the Dashnaks bore a major portion of responsibility for the massacres of 1905-1906. He wrote to Tsar Nicholas II in 1907 that the *Dashnak* squads had attacked Azerbaijanis and exterminated the entire population of settlements.

For the Armenian population it is no secret that the *Dahsnaktsutun* played a significant role in the Armenian-Tatar massacres. Frequently they [the Dashnaks] resorted to provocations to prove their necessity [as defenders of Armenians] in such tactical assault of 'fidayees' [Armenian fighters] on neighbouring Tatar populations which, certainly, responded in due manner. The Dashnaks' tactics were explained by a plan to create territories with a homogenous Armenian population in order to establish a future Armenian autonomy. 651

Georgian socialist P. Goleishvili in his 1920 book on the revolutionary events in the Caucasus said:

⁶⁴⁹ I leave aside the question of "historic" affiliation of these territories. Places like Baku were clearly outside of the claimed Armenian homeland, while Karabakh, Nakhichevan and Erivan were turned into disputable pieces.

⁶⁵⁰ Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, 93. 651 Vorontsov-Dashkov, *Vsepodaneyshaya zapiska*, 12-13.

Before the emergence of Armenian revolutionary activists, particularly the *Dashnaks*, Transcaucasia lived in peace and safety. No one remembers anything similar to what we witnessed in the Armenian-Tatar massacres. [A]s the *Dashnaks* came with their propaganda of the creation of homogenous Armenian territory for the Armenian autonomy in the future, hatred and animosity penetrated the lives of Transcaucasian villages. 652

The Tsarist resettlement policy resulted in the creation of such homogenous spaces in Erivan and Karabakh especially. Vorontsov-Dashkov made an important observation on the *Dashnaks*' tactics in mobilizing Armenians around the idea of autonomy, where anti-Armenian violence is used to spread international awareness of the necessity to grant freedom to the Armenian people.

I cannot but note that similar methods of operation – of Armenian politicians living in Western Europe and from there dictating the tactics of "ARF" [*Dashnaktsutyun*], have been already observed in Turkey, where anti-Armenian pogroms were organized in order to draw Europe's attention and call for international action to release Armenians from the Turkish yoke. However, in Turkey, it harmed only Armenians themselves and nothing came out of this policy. 653

Naturally, the Russian officials wished to downplay the desire of Armenians for autonomy and independence, and blame revolutionary activists for disturbances. However, in the South Caucasus – unlike Turkey – Armenian revolutionary activities were turned against another ethnic group under Russian colonial rule (rather than against the government per se).

Karibi (P.Goleishvili), Krasnaya kniga, (Tiflis: Izd. Gruzinskogo Tovarishchestva Pechati, 1920), 49-50.
 Vorontsov-Dashkov, Vsepodanevshava zapiska, 13.

In the meantime, the Azerbaijani intelligentsia also developed ideas of autonomy. 654 Audrey Alstadt noted that both ethnic groups experienced a political renaissance, which carried political implications and caused the establishment of organizations to pursue national goals (though the Armenians operated on a larger scale for this). The difference was the following: the Azerbaijanis wanted to reach their goals at the Russians' expense, the Armenians at the Azerbaijanis'. 655 According to the contemporary Azerbaijani newspaper *Hayat* in 1905, the Armenian aspiration of autonomy was directed against the Azerbaijanis because the latter was the largest ethnic group in the Caucasus. If they could be defeated, no other ethnic group in the region would be able to stand up against the Armenians. Secondly, war with the Muslims could easily be portrayed as long-term animosity. Thirdly, because of the religious factor, the Armenians would be able to play on existing biases to claim that they had been attacked and would use an alleged threat as an excuse to stockpile weapons. 656

As noted earlier, the massacres began with an incident – an individual murder involving a motive of revenge. In the fall of 1904 an Armenian, Misak Yengoyev, attacked the shop of an Azerbaijani, Gashim-bek, and killed one of his customers. Yengoyev was rumoured to be connected with *Dashnaks* and the Armenian millionaire Lalayev, who had been insulted by Gashim-bek and wanted revenge for it. According to the report of the governor of Baku Nakashidze, Lalayev hired Yengoyev to assassinate Gashim-bek, but after this plan failed Yengoyev was murdered by an 18-year old

⁶⁵⁴ See the above-mentioned works of Audrey Alstatdt and Tadeusz Swietochowski. Also see: Bagirova, *Politicheskiyi partiyi i organizatsiyi Azerbaydzhana v nachale XX veka*.

⁶⁵⁵ Altstadt, The Azerbaijani Turks, 43.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 42

Azerbaijani named Bala-aga Reza oglu as revenge for attacking Gashim-bek. ⁶⁵⁷ Bala-ga Reza oglu was arrested, and on January 2 two soldiers of Armenian origin killed him when he attempted to escape from a guard. The murder of the young Azerbaijani shocked the Azerbaijani community, and rumors spread that the Armenian escort intentionally killed the Azerbaijani. Villari asserted that the Armenian killer was a member of the Armenian revolutionary party, the *Dashnak*. Some other rumors were spread in the city with regard to murders and possible attacks of respective groups, as well as with some extra-marital sexual and even homosexual relationships between Azerbaijanis and Armenians, which was the cause of assassinations. ⁶⁵⁸ It is clear that vendetta grew to assume political weight.

Soon, on February 6 according to Russian media, a relative of the deceased Aga Rza Babayev hunted down an Armenian escort soldier near an Armenian Church and opened fire to kill him. He failed, and was then shot dead by other Armenians, who reportedly were members of the *Dashnak* party. The Governor Nakashidze stated in his report that the corpse contained 200 stab wounds, and that the Muslims carried the body through the city. Massacres began immediately and continued for three days, while police forces in the city did not act upon perpetrators. A telegram from prosecutor Voronov to the Russian Minister of Justice dated 7 February 1905 illustrates that clashes were chaotic and unorganized, and thus resembled a typical grass-roots riot. In the meantime, it also shows that the military forces were passive, but that such inactivity was condemned by Russian officials: "Tatars looted several Armenian shops in the downtown; the shootings and shelling continued, and it was impossible to pick up

⁶⁵⁷ RGIA, f. 857, op. 1, doc. 1477, 22-24.

⁶⁵⁸ Villari, *Fire and Sword*, 193-194.

⁶⁵⁹ RGIA, f. 857, op. 1, doc. 1477, 1.

corpses. Driving through the city I personally witnessed that in front of inactive Cossacks, Tatars robbed the goods from shops."⁶⁶⁰ British writer James Henry points out that Cossacks took this opportunity to rob people, and demanded money – especially from Armenians – for providing them with shelter or allowing them to escape. ⁶⁶¹

Nakashidze reported that 231 people died; 153 Armenians and 78 Azerbaijanis, though the number of Azerbaijanis killed might have been more since they tended to conceal bodies⁶⁶² or bury them at the same day, according to Islamic traditions. On February 9 Nakashidze himself led the peaceful procession that included the Muslim spiritual leader Sheikh Ul-Islam and the Armenian bishop, calling the two communities together for peace and reconciliation. Nevertheless, the *Dashnaks* passed a death sentence on the governor and on May 11 the *Dashnak* Dro Kanayan threw a bomb on a Nakashidze's carriage, killing him.

In May 1905, Nakhichevan became the battleground as several Armenians and Azerbaijanis were killed in various incidents. The newly-appointed Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov ordered the army to open fire at anyone involved in armed clashes. However, the situation did not calm and in June violence broke out in Jebrail. In July 1905, peace committees were established to facilitate reconciliation – but no success had been achieved. In the summer of 1905, the armed activities took an unprecedented dimension in Karabakh and Zangezur, particularly in Shusha. The events started with the murder of an Azerbaijani lamplighter on August 6. On August 16 Cossacks killed several Armenians after a quarrel, but Azerbaijanis were blamed for this. The violence started

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⁶⁶⁰ RGIA, f. 1405, op. 107, doc. 11393, 2.

⁶⁶¹ James D. Henry, *Baku: an Eventful History (With many illustrations and a map),* (London: Archibald Constable & Co. Ltd, 1905), 163.

⁶⁶² RGIA, f. 857, op. 1, doc. 1477, 16.

immediately. The next day the Azerbaijanis were successful in ousting the Armenian gang members from the city. Two Armenian attempts to storm Shusha failed. On August 21 an armistice was concluded, and in November the two ethnic groups clashed in Elizavetpol. Armenian publicist Alibegov reported that on the night of November 18, two Azerbaijani corpses were thrown into an Armenian quarter. The next morning an Azerbaijani opened fire on Armenians. This signaled the assault on the Armenian quarter, and the Armenians quickly organized a defense. Alibegov blamed municipal authorities for inaction; he believed that the Elizavetpol Governor Takaishvili abetted the massacres. 663 Takaishvili was replaced by Fleischer, but violence continued despite numerous attempts to reach peace. Order was restored with the arrival of General Malama.

Russian authorities became quite seriously concerned in the course of the massacres by the economic consequences. The Minister of Finance reported to Nicholas II that Baku is "a hub of our petroleum industry where a lot of Russian and foreign capitals invested in Baku" and requested the imposition of additional measures to stop violence. 664 However, armed clashes continued and the second turn of violence in Baku started in August 1905 with a bell ringing at an Armenian Church, and soon the Armenians attacked the Azerbaijanis. The latter, outnumbered and defeated in the city, burnt Armenian-owned oil fields on the outskirts of Baku in revenge. Vorontosov-Dashkov took immediate and stringent measures to suppress the violence. Troops bombed any house from which fire had opened. By September 14, order was restored.

⁶⁶³ Alibekov, *Elisovetpolskiyi krovaviyi dni*, 1-6. ⁶⁶⁴ RGIA, f. 1405, op. 107, doc. 11393, 16.

Many Azerbaijanis and Armenians, led by their respective nobility and clergy, walked along the streets and celebrated a peace accord. 665

In 1906, sporadic and sometimes fierce fights continued between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Karabakh and Zangezur, and extended to new places like Tbilisi.

Azerbaijani violence was frequently spontaneous and initiated among the grassroots with the involvement of local nobility – the *beks*. The massacres usually began in response to individual murders, which were reportedly committed by the *Dashnaks*. British diplomat Charles Harding wrote about a similar accusation, but held the Russian authorities responsible for "playing off one portion of the population against another."

The massacres of 1905-1906 claimed thousands of lives and destroyed hundreds of settlements. According to Armenian writer Aknouni, 158 Azerbaijani and 128 Armenian villages were destroyed and pillaged. The same source acknowledged that more Azerbaijani were killed than Armenians, and their total of victims might be greater because of, as mentioned earlier, the Muslim custom of burying the dead on the same day. Moreover, the Azerbaijanis – unlike the Armenians – did not cooperate closely with the authorities, and probably did not report their losses. Another Armenian source says that overall 3,000 to 10,000 people died during the interethnic clashes.

Unfortunately, the tragedy of 1905-1906 was repeated on an even larger scale in 1918-1921 and in 1988-1994. Prophetically, though in a somewhat racist manner, the British newspaper *Morning Leader* wrote in 1905 that "judging by the temper of both

⁶⁶⁵ Ordubadi, Qanli Iller, 69.

⁶⁶⁶ British Documents on Foreign Affairs, part 1, vol. 3, 78.

⁶⁶⁷ E. Aknouni, *Political Persecutions: Armenian Prisoners of the Caucasus*, (New York, 1911), 30. Richard Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 264.

Tartars and Armenians, no real reconciliation is likely to take place. Enough bitterness has been awakened to last for a generation."

The events of 1905-1906 became strongly imprinted in the memory of the two peoples. The massacres were caused by the Russian imperial policy – manipulation with ethnic groups, unfair treatment, repressions – these all were contributing factors, which were picked up by revolutionary and nationalist groups to pursue the goals of autonomy and independence. The territories, which became the battleground such as Karabakh, Zangezur, Nakhichevan, represented the attempt of respective groups to solidify their physical dominance, while cities such as Baku, Elizavetpol and Tbilisi were the subject of economic competition. St. Petersburg's century-long resettlement policy had contributed to the ethnic tension by creating regions where the relations between locals and settlers were exacerbated by the above-mentioned social and economic factors.

⁶⁶⁹ Quoted in James Henry, Baku: Eventful Story, 172-173.

CHAPTER 5

SOVIET POPULATION MANAGEMENT AND DEPORTATIONS

This chapter deals with the Soviet resettlement practices in the post-1917 period and discusses how the Bolsheviks conceptualized population control and resettlement. This discussion is followed in this and the next chapter by the history of three projects implemented in the South Caucasus during the Second World War and immediately afterwards. These population movements: the deportation of Germans from the South Caucasus in 1941, repatriation of Armenians from abroad to Armenia in 1946-1949 and the resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia in 1948-1953 should be, first of all, understood in the context of the geopolitical environment – the war and the attempts of Soviet territorial expansion into Turkey. As an extension of this geopolitical consideration, the problem with security in the borderland was also conducive to the deportation of peoples from the South Caucasus to Kazakhstan and Siberia. The perceived threat from the "enemy elements" in the Soviet Union caused the resettlement of Germans, Greeks, Poles, Finns, Koreans and others from Western Ukraine, Crimea, Far East and the Caucasus. Another important factor was present in the consideration of the above-mentioned resettlement projects: the Soviet management of the nationality issues and relevant territorial arrangements between republics.

This chapter will discuss in particular the deportation of Germans from

Azerbaijan. I endeavour to locate the German population movement within the larger

narrative of Russian and Soviet empire building. Moreover, the fate of Germans helps us

to appreciate what place this ethnic group played in the imperial resettlement projects implemented in the South Caucasus along with Armenians, Azerbaijanis (and generally Muslims) and other ethnic groups. As Germans were brought for economic reasons and a useful element in the Muslim borderland, their "usefulness" ceased to exist in the eyes of both Tsarist and Soviet officials as the war with Germany broke out on two occasions. Germans along with Armenians were seen by Tsarist bureaucrats in the mid-19th century as reliable Christian elements; however, faith did not ensure the continuity of paternalism on the part of imperial policy-makers in the South Caucasus.

In dealing with these population movements, it is imperative to consider Soviet practices with regard to the resettlement – how the Bolsheviks from their first day of rule handled the issue of population management and how it evolved in the other few decades before the war. In this context, the issue of continuity across 1917 is vital to understanding how both entities – the Russian Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union – managed the Caucasus borderland and whether there are parallels in the administration and resettlements of people.

I fully agree with Alexei Miller that one of the important achievements of the post-Cold war historiography is the destruction of the "hypnotic influence" of 1917 as a watershed between Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. Laura Engelstein stresses in this regard: "Indeed, the Bolshevik triumph is now sooner seen as continuous with practices of 'modernity' already activated by the outgoing regime than as the vestige of an unsurmounted past." Dominic Lieven maintains that the USSR was an empire, and

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⁶⁷⁰ Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism. Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 215

⁶⁷¹ Laura Engelstein, "New Thinking about the Old Empire: Post-Soviet Reflections." *Russian Review*, vol. 60, no. 4, (2001): 496.

continued the tradition of the Tsarist state but differed in three aspects: Communist bureaucracy, the economy (state-controlled versus private in the Russian empire) and federalism. And Beissinger opines that the Soviet Union was a new form of empire, which based itself on the nation-state system but nevertheless was imperial in essence. However, for Beissinger the importance of scholarly analysis lies not in drawing parallels in the context of a transhistorical approach, but in understanding the nature of new empire. Rather than 'the last empire,' the Soviet Union should be understood instead as one of the first of a new form of empire whose crucial contributions were its denial of its imperial quality and its use of the very cornerstones of the modern nation-state system—the norms of state sovereignty and national self-determination—as instruments of nonconsensual control over culturally distinct populations, thereby blurring the line between state and empire.

The continuities between Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union can be observed in tackling resettlement practices – from the same imperial angle and safety in the borderland. These questions bring us to another important aspect of the imperial management – the issue of nationality. The resettlement projects which I consider in this dissertation during 1941-1953 are linked with the movement of loyal and the removal of the non-loyal population, which in its turn were pinned to the question of ethnicity. This is especially clearly seen in post-war Soviet territorial claims. The repatriation of Armenians and the deportation of Azerbaijanis were caused by the imperial expansion; Stalin wanted to obtain territories from Turkey and used as the pretext the "historical"

⁶⁷² Lieven, The Russian Empire, 288-320.

⁶⁷³ Mark Beissinger, "Rethinking Empire in the Wake of Soviet Collapse," in *Ethnic Politics and Post-Communism: Theories and Practice*, ed. by Zoltan Barany and Robert Moser, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 14-45.

⁶⁷⁴ Beissinger, "Rethinking Empire", 17.

borders of Armenia and Georgia. These borders encompassed the eastern part of the Republic of Turkey. Moscow demanded from Turkey the territories which Tsarist Russia conquered in 1877-1878. Then Moscow announced the invitation to Armenians from abroad to migrate to Soviet Armenia, to whom the territories in Turkey were promised by the Soviets. When Stalin (under US pressure) retreated from this ambition, he decided to soothe Armenian grievances by deporting Azerbaijanis from Armenia to vacate places for Armenian repatriates to strengthen the borderland with Turkey. In this plan, Azerbaijanis (as a Turkic-speaking ethnic group), were considered less loyal to the Soviet regime than Armenians.

The Soviet approach toward the issue of nationalities was at the core of studies that aimed to identify the parallel or the lack thereof between Tsarist and Soviet state formations. Two distinguished explanations of the Soviet policy towards nationalities were put forward in the last fifteen years by Francine Hirsch and Terry Martin. Martin argues that the Soviet Union was a new state, distinct from the Tsarist Empire by "affirmative action" policies towards ethnic minorities. Francine Hirsch points out that the imperial bureaucrats greatly contributed to the formation of the Soviet and influenced the imperial ambitions of the Bolsheviks. Hirsch's focus on the relationship between the Soviet leadership and former colonial subjects is an important contribution to the understanding of the nature of the Soviet Union.

Analyzing these two approaches, I would like to stress that one of the mistakes in the methodology of the analysis on the question of Russian or Soviet studies is narrowing the scope of analysis. If one takes the period of 1920s, when Soviet leaders tried to forge

⁶⁷⁵ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union,* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

the Soviet federation, it is easy to conclude that the USSR was an "affirmative action empire." Even further on, the Soviet Union encouraged the process of korenizatsiva and the creation of national histories for newly-created Soviet republics. Moscow desired to address problems related to nationalism and self-determination, and thus was ready to make compromises (though not all Soviet leaders had a unified position on this matter). However, the final goal was to preserve the imperial space inherited from the Russian Empire. If we go further to the 1930s and much later to the post-Stalinist period, one can witness that Russian domination was strengthened and that the "respect" for the national identity of the Soviet ethnic groups became formalized. Under Stalin the Russians assumed the status of an "elder brother." When during the "thaw" in the 1960s, some republics moved to expand the space for national language and culture – including Azerbaijan – the Soviet leader Khrushchev was quick to suppress them. I would otherwise agree with Terry Martin that in its initial period, the Soviet Union was different - namely, that it was an "affirmative action" state - but in essence over a longer period of time, Moscow continued the tradition of its imperial predecessor.

Many works, along with Francine Hirsch's study, show the continuity among bureaucratic traditions across 1917. Jeff Sahadeo in Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent shows that imperial liberals and modernizers and Soviet "social engineers" had strong parallels in their paternalist attitudes as "enlighteners" in the Central Asian peripheries. ⁶⁷⁶ Austin Jersild in *Orientalism and Empire* points out that Soviet ethnographers employed greatly the work of Tsarist experts. ⁶⁷⁷ Peter Holquist's study "To Count, to Extract, to Exterminate. Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet

⁶⁷⁶ Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Empire in Tashkent*, 235. ⁶⁷⁷ Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire*, 153.

Russia" – which is primarily related to the present research on resettlement – shows that the Soviets continued the population policy that had been developed in Imperial Russia, including its associated violence. In another study Peter Holquist highlights that the Tsarist major resettlement institution, the GUZZ apparatus was basically inherited by the Soviet bureaucracy. Alberto Masoero underlines that "it is not surprising that ideas and people that participated in the Tsarist colonization experience passed to the Soviet context." Many imperial bureaucrats, who became Soviet ones, advocated that "the theories and practices of the late imperial experience" can be employed similarly for the purposes of colonization and other economic goals. 80

The Soviet state needed trained bureaucrats and could not to replace all Tsarist workers overnight. Similarly, in post-Soviet countries even today – twenty four years after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 – historians, experts and policy-makers acknowledge the Communist legacy and the role of *apparatchiks*. Naturally, in the 1920s the Soviet system was dependent on the skills of technocrats employed by the previous regime. Especially in the peripheries, Soviet leaders needed social scientists and bureaucrats to regain territories which seceded from Moscow in 1917-1921. While the revolutionaries established military and "political control over the former Tsarist state's lands and peoples, expert consultants to the new regime (ethnographers, economists, and other holdovers from the imperial government) began the vital work of conceptual conquest." ⁶⁸¹ Both states employed the movement of populations, including forced

⁶⁷⁸ Holquist. "To Count, to Extract".

⁶⁷⁹ Peter Holquist, "In Accord with State Interests and the People's Wishes": The Technocratic Ideology of Imperial Russia's Resettlement Administration." *Slavic Review*, vol. 69, no. 1, (2010): 151-179. ⁶⁸⁰ Masoero, "Territorial Colonization", 86-87.

⁶⁸¹ Francine Hirsch, "State and Evolution: Ethnographic Knowledge, Economic Expediency, and the Making of the USSR, 1917–1924", in *Russian Empire. Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, 139.

movements to control space and people. The Soviets resorted to violence at an even higher level than did Imperial Russia. Terry Martin and Peter Holquist in their respective works show how violence was widely used by the Soviets to fashion society according to their own needs and vision. In this regard the study of deportation of the population of the North Caucasus in the 1860s and in the 1940s represents a clear-cut example of similar tradition on the removal of perceived non-loyal and dangerous ethnic groups.

Another type of continuity can be observed with the so-called "civilizing missions" albeit with a different ideological context. This continuity explains why the Soviets continued in general the policy of mistrust towards Muslims and tried to Russify the borderland in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The "civilizing mission" of the Soviet Union can be understood from two perspectives. One is related to the attempt of modernization; in this regard, the continuity between imperial Russia and the Soviet endeavours to improve the state is vividly present and well-researched in studies such as one by Theodore Weeks. Stephen Kotkin advanced the term "Stalinist civilization" as the implementation of a monstrous social engineering project based on the ideas of Enlightenment, and the use brutal power to transform backward and patriarchal societies into industrial and socialist ones. According to this school of thought, new superior civilization ought to be imposed on citizens of the Soviet empire, including various ethnic groups. E. A. Rees remarks on the connection of Soviet civilization and empire:

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⁶⁸² Terry Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing", *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 70, no. 4 (1998), 813-861; Peter Holquist, "State Violence as Technique: the Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism", in *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, ed. by David Hoffmann, (New-York: Blackwell, 2003), 129-156.

⁶⁸³ Theodore R. Weeks, *Across the Revolutionary Divide: Russia and the USSR, 1861–1945*, (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2011).

⁶⁸⁴ Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, (Berkeley and Los-Angeles, University of California Press, 1995).

Sovietization as an imperial project, and as the negation and antithesis of western imperialism, was inseparable from the projection of Soviet civilization as being superior both in its capacities and in its moral claims. Sovietization, in terms of relations between states, and between states and regions, should also be seen as part of an imperialistic conception, whereby a system of domination and subjugation was effected and rationalized, and whereby a subaltern identity was ascribed to the subjected peoples. 685

The second goal of the "civilizing mission" was more subtle, rooted in the Russification policy of the imperial past. This mission aimed to transform Soviet borderlands, especially Islamic and other Asian peripheries, to be closer to the Russian and Soviet core. It did not imply straightforwardly the injection of Russians into peripheries, but certainly advanced the migration of more "enlightened and modernized" groups of people to national republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus. For example, in the 1930s the Kremlin encouraged the movement of the Russian people in the borderland regions. Though officially the banner of resettlement was either agricultural development or industrialization, it was primarily the Russians who were moving en masse to the other republics. From 1928-1932 the population of Baku doubled from 400,000 to 800,000; 380,000 of the new residents were from the RSFSR. From 1926-1939 the whole population of Azerbaijan grew by 32,2 percent, mostly due to internal Soviet migration. 686 This dynamic in Azerbaijan, especially in industrial Baku, affected the capital of the republic for many decades ahead. 687 The Russification of the borderland

⁶⁸⁵ E. A. Rees, introduction to *The Sovietization of Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on the Postwar* Period, ed by Balázs Apor, Péter Apor and E.A. Rees, (Washington, DC: New Academia Pub., 2008), 10-

⁶⁸⁶ Eldar Ismayilov, Vlast' i narod. Poslevoyennyy stalinizm v Azerbaydzhane (1945-1953), (Baku: Izd-vo Adil'oglu, 2003), 12. ⁶⁸⁷ It was not until 1979 that the number of Azerbaijanis in Baku was equal to other ethnic groups.

regions was conducted in other sensitive areas. Alfred Rieber refers to the imperial projects of colonization launched under Catherine II and transformed in the 19th century "as a means of enhancing Russia's power and prestige" in the imperial periphery, which by the late nineteenth century took on the form of rational planning. This "utopian impulse was taken up by Soviet authorities as social experimentation in a variety of forms, albeit with very mixed results." The idea was to resolve political and economic problems, including "some of the persistent problems of domestic as well as foreign policy."

One of such persistent problems inherited from Tsarist Russia was the issue of Islam and the neighboring countries – Iran and Turkey – which had much in common with the population of the South Caucasus. One of these commonalities was the Turkic language which united Azerbaijanis (who until 1936 were called "Turks" by the Soviets, instead of "Tatars" during Imperial Russia) with Turks; secondly, Shiism, which was professed by the majority of people in Azerbaijan and Iran. During the Soviet period, especially until the Second World War, the ties between the population of Iran and Soviet Azerbaijan were close to the extent that Moscow in the mid-1930s installed tight security control along the border to prevent the movement of people. Thus, Azerbaijan represented for the Soviets a troubled borderland with an unreliable population.

The Islamic challenge in the Soviet Union was serious. The population of Central Asia and the Caucasus rose against Moscow on numerous occasions. This time, Muslims challenged not only foreign rule but also the atheistic nature of the Bolshevik regime.

Robert Crews opines that Soviets and Muslims continued the Tsarist search for

⁶⁸⁸ See Lallukka Seppo, "Shtrikhi k etnicheskoy karte Severo-Zapada Rossii (1926–1959 gg.)", in *V sem'ye yedinoy*, ed. by T. Vikhavaynena and I. Takala, (Petrozavodsk, 1998), 51-54.
⁶⁸⁹ Rieber, "Colonizing Eurasia", 270.

congruencies – but in a new ideological context – and that the Soviets continued many Tsarist practices. ⁶⁹⁰ Austin Jersild emphasizes that the Soviets perceived Islam as an obstacle to progress (in the Communist understanding) and just like in the 19th century, the Soviets continued the policy of containment and control of Islamic institutions. ⁶⁹¹ For example, the religious boards (dukhovniye upravleniya) created by the Tsarist authorities to supervise the activities of Islamic clerics were reintroduced by the Soviets. ⁶⁹² However, Moscow was also determined to use violence to suppress Islam and install "progress" in the peripheries. Jorg Baberowski illustrated how the Soviet style "civilizing" mission" was implemented in Azerbaijan in the mid-1930s. 693 Baberowski uncovers the wide range of recipes of the Soviet treatment of "backward" Muslim society – administrative measures, educational policy, anti-Islamic campaign, collectivization and terror. Azerbaijani historian Eldar Ismayilov notes that "the authorities of that period had the character of viceroyalty (namestnicheskiy). Their main goal was to serve the interests of the imperial state which the Soviet Union was." ⁶⁹⁴ Thus, in the Muslim borderland, the Soviet policies especially resembled that of Tsarist Russia.

⁶⁹⁰ Crews, For Prophet and Tsar, 365.

⁶⁹¹ Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire*, 156.

 ⁶⁹² On Islam in the USSR see: Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, (London - New York: Praeger, 1967); Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*, (London - Canberra, Croom Helm Ltd, 1983); Michael Kemper, *Studying Islam in the Soviet Union*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009); Yaacov Ro'I, *Islam in the Soviet Union: from the Second World War to Gorbachev*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 2000); Uyama Tomohiko, ed., *Empire, Islam and Politics in Central Eurasia*, (Sapporo: Hokkaido University 2007); Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow*, *Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia*, 1917-1941, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).
 ⁶⁹³ Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall. Stalinismus im Kaukasus*, (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt,

⁶⁹³ Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall. Stalinismus im Kaukasus*, (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003). I have used the Russian translation of this book: *Vrag est' vezde. Stalinizm na Kavkaze*, (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010).

⁶⁹⁴ Ismayilov, *Vlast' i narod*, 7.

5.1 Soviet Population Control and Movement

Before embarking on the resettlement in the Caucasus borderland, it is important to understand the evolution of Soviet resettlement practices. Pavel Polian highlights the Soviet experience as follows: "Throughout its existence the USSR was a country of intensive population mobility. However, this mobility was not due to citizens' free choice of their place of residence, based on their individual preferences, market situations or variations in living standards. Rather, it was a different type of mobility characterized by its planned, large-scale and coercive – or, in short, forced – nature." Though many Soviet citizens moved voluntarily to other parts of the state, seeking economic opportunities or sometimes because of the ideological belief, I would still support Polian's view since the planned economy coupled with the coercive and totalitarian nature of the Communist state was the underlying reason even for voluntarily settlers.

Violence and forced control of the population movement in the USSR surpassed the experience of other empires. The severe class fight unleashed by the Bolsheviks against the aristocrats and the bourgeoisie led to massive immigration from the Soviet Union. During the civil war and in its immediate aftermath, the outflow of population was not state-controlled. However, later Moscow closely managed population movement. Then, in the 1930s, as Stalin embarked on a terror campaign against the peasant class (especially wealthy ones, *kulaks*), the Soviet bureaucracy practiced the deportation or conversely, the containment of the population in limited spaces; this happened during the Great Famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933. Alvin W. Gouldner stresses that the Stalinist state was an internal colonizer which confined the peasant class spatially and exploited it in a

⁶⁹⁵ Polian, Against Their Will, 2.

cruel manner. 696 The prisoner camps, GULAGs, and "special settlements" imprisoned millions of people during the 1930s. Lynne Viola remarks that "the special settlements were vast laboratories of experimentation, replete with the most exquisitely detailed plans of control, regimentation, and order, designed to isolate noxious elements from healthy Soviet society, to keep them under constant observation and surveillance, and to reeducate through labor those who could be reeducated". 697

Foucault's model of governmentality helps us to better understand the rationale of Soviet population control. The Panopticon, designed by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, was aimed at observing inmates and ultimately controlling their behavior. The Foucaldian "Panopticon" was invoked as a metaphor for modern state machinery with a goal to discipline citizens. Population resettlement was one of the techniques employed by many states for spatial discipline. Due to the authoritarian and imperial nature of the Soviet Union as well as the creation of the mechanisms for total controls, the Stalinist state was able to raise resettlement coupled with social engineering to a new level – unprecedented mass deportation of both class and ethnic-based groups. The Soviets implemented the Foucauldian Panopticon on a state-wide scale, but despite mass terror, as I will illustrate in Chapter 6, the Soviet bureaucracy turned out to be inefficient and failed to implement the aspirational model of governmentality, especially in peripheries.

Kussian Peripnery, 189-190.

⁶⁹⁶ Alvin W. Gouldner, "Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism", *Telos*, 34 (1977-1978): 5-48. ⁶⁹⁷ Lynne Viola, "The Aesthetic of Stalinist planning and the world of the special villages", in *Peopling Russian Periphery*, 189-190.

⁶⁹⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
699 More on the resettlement from Foucaldian perspective of governmentality: Donald Moore, *Suffering for Territory: Race, Place and Power in Zimbabwe*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Renu Modi, ed., *Beyond Relocation: The Imperative of Sustainable Relocation*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009); Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz, eds., *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

Lynne Viola suggests a slightly different view of governmentality based on James Scott's notion of "high modernism" – the mastery of nature and humans based on efficiently and rationally organized space. Cities and villages, which "in combination with an authoritarian state and a weak or nonexistent civil society, could transform modern techniques in social engineering into societal disaster as was the case in Nazi Germany, communist China, and the Soviet Union."⁷⁰⁰ As other governments, the Soviets tried to produce the citizen best suited to fulfill state policies. ⁷⁰¹ In the situation of total control, the Soviets wished their citizens follow the communist ideologicallydriven goals. Peter Holquist argues that the Soviets used violence to remove "harmful elements" not only for "the health and integrity of the society" but also to finesse "the aesthetic image" of their envisioned communist state. 702 In the 1930s Moscow launched the massive campaign of industrialization and collectivization (the forced incorporation of peasants in Soviet managed kolkhozes). Both industrialization and collectivization caused the massive movement of people – forced and voluntary – across the Soviet Union.

The Soviet practices of the population resettlement began mostly with the deportation of enemy classes and then targeted particular ethnic groups. ⁷⁰³ The following is a brief summary of prewar policies followed by the discussion of ethnic cleansing in the Caucasus borderland.

⁷⁰⁰ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998), 4.

Michel Foucault, "Governmentality", in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87–104.

⁷⁰² Peter Holquist, "State Violence as Technique: the Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism", in *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, ed. by David Hoffmann, (New-York: Blackwell, 2003) 134. ⁷⁰³ The Soviets had already practiced ethnic cleansing during the civil war, when they ordered the deportation and massacre of the White Russians and Cossacks. But overall, the pre-Stalinist period was about fighting class enemies – *klassovikh vragov*.

The 1920s marked the various forced actions against "class enemies." In the second half of the 1920s the Kremlin began pondering the economic benefits of the resettlement policy, and like imperial Russia launched the colonization project aimed at developing new agricultural areas in Kazakhstan, the Urals, Siberia and the Far East. This was basically the continuation of the Tsarist policy, which began at the end of the 19th century and was enforced by Stolypin's reforms but was interrupted by the First World War and the Revolution of 1917. Moscow conducted a series of studies to identify the target territories, to define their economic and agricultural profile and to determine the available population ready to move. ⁷⁰⁴

In 1924 the Union Resettlement Committee of the Central Executive of the Communist Party of the USSR was established. In 1929 many of the matters dealt with by the Union Resettlement Committee (URC) were transferred to Narkomzem (*Narodniy komissariat zemledeliya* – The People's Commissariat of Agriculture), and in 1933 the URC was created under the Council of People's Commissars, a Soviet version of the Cabinet of Ministers. Further, in 1936 many issues dealt with by the URC went under the supervision of GULAG. This structural transformation attests to the fact that resettlement transformed from an economic exercise to a measure of control and punishment. In 1939 the Resettlement Administration was founded within the Sovnarkom (the Council of People's Commissars).

In 1930 the Soviet government temporarily ceased so-called planned resettlement, and, at the same time, the colonization of "the sparsely populated areas" and the problem of returnees were resolved through the eviction of "political unreliable elements" and

⁷⁰⁴ Here and in other areas I benefited from Nikolay Platunov, *Pereselencheskaya politika sovetskogo gosudarstva i yeye osushchestvleniye v SSSR (1917 - iyun 1941 gg.)*, (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo Universiteta, 1976).

prisoners. Since the Soviets strictly controlled the movement of the people, and especially enforced close surveillance on the peasant class, the settlers could only resettle if they had "the resettlement ticket" (*pereselencheskiy billet*). ⁷⁰⁵

In the meantime, the Kremlin issued financial and material assistance to settlers, but the conditions in the new places were usually harsh, and due to bureaucratic hurdles and embezzlement the process of adaptation was challenging – which caused the emergence of returnees (*vozvrashchentsev*). The policy of collectivization had a very negative impact on the population movement – it had uprooted millions of people. The most affected stratum was wealthy peasants – *kulaks*. Russian scholar Zelenin estimates that during the heyday of collectivization in 1930-1932, approximately 381,026 families were deported to the Urals and Siberia from European part of the USSR. Most deportees were confined to the special settlement under close supervision of the state security apparatus. Places of the special settlements were selected in remote areas and regions of the Soviet Union. According to a secret decree of the Communist Party "On Measures on the Elimination of *Kulak* Farms in Areas of Collectivization" of 30 January 1930, the deportees were settled in small groups in uninhabited areas and supervised by

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⁷⁰⁵ Decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars dated 17 November 1937, No. 115/2043 "On Benefits for Agricultural Resettlement." The Stalinist policy of the control of the peasants' movement resembled the tsarist pre-1861 serfdom institute. An excellent study on the parallels in the movement restriction in tsarist and Soviet Russia is Cynthia Jane Buckley, "Rural-Urban Migration in a Centrally Planned Economy: The Case of the Soviet Union," (PhD diss. University of Michigan, 1991).

⁷⁰⁶ I. Zelenin. "Revolyutsiya sverkhu": zaversheniye i tragicheskiye posledstviya," *Voprosy istorii*, 10, (1994): 31.

More on repressive measures against peasants can be found in Lynne Viola et al. (eds). *The War Against the Peasantry, 1927–1930: The Tragedy of the Soviet Countryside*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); M.G Stepanov, "Istoriya deportatsii krest'yan perioda nasil'stvennoy kollektivizatsii v SSSR (1929–1933 gody) v postsovetskoy istoriografii", *Vestnik Chelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 4 (142) (2009): 158–163.

appointed superintendents⁷⁰⁸. The settlements were placed under the supervision of the Interior Ministry, which controlled all movements in and out of the special settlements.

5.2 Dealing with Troubled Borderlands

As mentioned earlier, the resettlement in the Soviet Union had strong linkages with the previous Tsarist traditions. This continuity is especially visible in two well-developed strategies: agricultural colonization and the resettlement of the non-loyal population. For the purpose of this dissertation I will focus on the second aspect.

One of the important data sets the Soviets continued to employ was the study conducted by imperial experts on territorial zonings with loyal and non-loyal populations (nadezhniye elementy). Under the broader scope of colonization at the end of the 19th century, Tsarist military experts further developed the contingency strategy on the eviction of undesirable groups, and described "the properties of the area under the popular uprising." The territories where more than 50 percent of the population was Russian were marked as reliable. During World War I the Tsarist authorities removed thousands of Germans, Jews and other "unreliable" groups from the front-line areas. Looking at World War I and beyond, Holquist remarked that "measures against the population cannot be explained by military necessity alone. Their meaning will become clear only if we seriously consider the concept of the possible transformation of the

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⁷⁰⁸ The text of this decree was published in *Bulletin of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation*, no. 7, 1999 and is also available at http://www.memorial.krsk.ru/DOKUMENT/USSR/300130.htm

⁷⁰⁹ Peter Holquist, "Rossiyskaya katastrofa (1914 - 1921) v yevropeyskom kontekste: total'naya mobilizatsiya i "politika naseleniya", *Rossiya XXI: Obshchestvenno-politicheskiy i nauchnyy zhurnal,* 11-12 (1998): 26-54, accessed November 17, 2013, http://www.russia-

^{21.}ru/xxi/rus_21/ARXIV/1998/holkvist_11-12_1998.htm#_ftn1

⁷¹⁰ Gatrell, A Whole Empire Walking. See also: Eric Lohr, Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

structure of the population, or by introducing into the population certain elements or by removing them from it. The aim of these measures was to change the composition of the population, 'cleansing' areas of well-defined elements."⁷¹¹

We should consider some other elements in order to understand Soviet actions in the Caucasus borderland, such as geopolitics and religion. The region was one of such sensitive peripheries with a Muslim population that the Soviets had regained. Therefore, it was important to maintain good relations with Iran and Turkey, even at the expense of turning a blind eye to the destruction of the revolutionary movement in Iran or the Communist party in Turkey. Until the geopolitical situation was relatively stable around Iran and Turkey, the Kremlin was focused on the destruction of class enemies in the region. 712 Many people being accused of counter-revolutionary activities on an individual basis in Azerbaijan were thrown in jails or deported to Siberia. 713 Once the situation had changed at the threshold of the Second World War, population resettlement based on the ethnicity was enacted with full force.

As Peter Holquist notes, the Bolsheviks regularly exercised the "filtering" of a population to jettison unreliable elements. 714 What began in the Soviet Union as classbased repression and forced population movement transformed during the Stalinist era into deportation of entire ethnic groups. Terry Martin notes that Soviet ethnic cleansing was professionalized to an unprecedented degree. 715 He stresses the paradox of ethnicbased population management, taking into account that the Soviet state tried to create

⁷¹¹ The translation from Russian language article of Peter Holquist, "Rossiyskaya katastrofa" is mine.

⁷¹² In Central Asia however there was overlap between national and class divisions (more accurately, leaders of Muslim opposition and nationalist movements were classified as class enemies).

⁷¹³ Among them was my great-grandfather Novruz Shafiyey, who was exiled to Siberia as a "bourgeoisie element" despite his completely apolitical life. However, his pre-revolutionary wealth – he was a merchant - sufficed for the Soviet authorities to include him in the class of disloyal citizens.

⁷¹⁴ Holquist, "State Violence as Technique", 141. 715 Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," 823.

nations and destroy them simultaneously. Martin explains this transformation by three factors: commitment to ethnic resettlement in order to create ethnic territorial units, popular ethnic hostility (especially against Poles, Finns, Germans), and the so-called "Piedmont principle" which Martin explains as the desire to exploit the cross-border ethnic ties to project influence abroad. In my view, the Soviet ethnic-based population movement should be considered within the context of geopolitical factors, and Martin's two last factors fall into this paradigm. In particular, the geopolitical consideration was in the borderland regions — which once again proves the continuity of the Tsarist and Soviet policy on territorial control. Employing what Martin dubbed "Piedmont principle" the Soviets blessed the repatriation of Armenians in 1946-1949.

Viktor Denninghaus maintains that the ethnic cleansing of borderland regions can be explained within the Soviet strategy developed in the 1920s exactly for the purpose of using the ethnic factor to exert influence across borders. This same factor caused the fear that those countries might use "ethnic leverage" for their own benefit. Terry Martin sees the reason behind Soviet ideological fear in "Soviet xenophobia" with regard to national minorities – especially those whose 'kin' resided across borders because they might have infected the Soviet space with alien propaganda. The Yet, one more motive for the suspicion toward some ethnic groups might be explained by Stalin's belief that each

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⁷¹⁶ Viktor Denninghaus, "Politbyuro TsK VKP(b) i profilakticheskiye deportatsii natsmen'shinstv Zapada v 1930-ye gg," in *Nachal'niy period Velikoy Otechetsvennoy Voyny i deportatsiya rossiyskikh nemtsev: vzglyady i otsenki cherez 70 let. (Materialy 3-ye mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii, Saratov, 26-28 August, 2011)*, (Moscow: MSNK-press, 2011), 69-70.

⁷¹⁷ Terry Martin. "Terror protiv natsiy v Sovetskom Soyuze", in *Kommunizm, terror, chelovek:* Diskussionnyye stat'i na temu "Chernoy knigi kommunizma", ed. by Stefan Kroytsberger, Ingo Manntoyfel' and Aleksandr Shteyninger (Kiyev: Optima, 2001), 37.

ethnic group has some inherent features; and, accordingly, those features might pose a danger to the Soviet authorities in a time of emergency. 718

The decade of the 1930s marked a significant transformation in the Soviet resettlement policies. By the mid-1930s, when the Kremlin began targeting particular ethnic groups, it had developed a "coherent" system of mass deportation, which was designed to comply with the Soviet Panopticon. However, what was developed in the Soviet Union had a precedent in the Tsarist Empire, and the Bolsheviks fitted these experiences to serve their own ends. 719 The Soviets recreated what the Tsarist authorities exercised against the highlanders in the North Caucasus and "the enemy nations" during World War I. Polian argues that "[i]t was Tsarist Russia (although it was not only Russia) that initiated and implemented the policy of "preventive ethnic cleansing" and deportations."⁷²⁰

Already in 1925 the Bureau of VKP (b) adopted a decision underlining "the exceptional situation and the importance of the borderland areas both in terms of military-strategic and political significance." ⁷²¹ Viktor Denninghaus opines that in the beginning of 1930s the Kremlin – under the banner of the fight against kulaks – removed some ethnic groups from the Western borderland. 722 In 1930 the Bureau of VKP (b) adopted a secret decision with regard to Polish settlements in the borderland areas of Belorussia and Ukraine, which stipulated the resettlement of "harmful elements" or "class enemies."⁷²³ In 1935 the Soviets removed Finns, Germans, Poles, Latvians, Estonians,

⁷¹⁸ Terry Martin, "Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism" in Stalinism. New Directions, ed. by Sheila Fitzpatrick, (London, Routledge, 2000), 348–367.

⁷¹⁹ Holquist, "State Violence as Technique", 135. ⁷²⁰ Polian, *Against Their Will*, 21-22.

⁷²¹ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 113, d. 171, 126-127.

⁷²² Denninghaus, "Politbyuro TsK VKP(b)", 76.
723 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 8. 109–110.

and Lithuanians from the northern-western frontiers. Germans and Poles were also deported from the Western borders of today's Ukraine. In September 1937 Koreans were deported from the Far East borderland to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The whole prewar experience with the deportation of certain ethnic groups proves, as Peter Holquist underlines, that the use of violence and coercive measures by the Soviets was aimed not only at the removal of classes but also of people based on their ethnicity. In general, ethnicity was an important signifier in the Soviet concept of citizenship. A Soviet passport had a "nationality" section identifying who was Russian, Jewish, Kalmyk, Azerbaijani, Armenian, etc. The mere use of the term "nationality" by Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union was conceptually different than in other countries, especially from those in Europe – where the concept of citizenship and the nationality was invented. In the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union "nationality" was linked to ethnicity, while in Western Europe it was about denoting a person's membership in a state and the political relationship between a person and state. 724

As mentioned above, Terry Martin explains the origin of ethnic cleansing as stemming from three factors, which are all related directly or indirectly to the geopolitics of the Soviet expansionism and borderland security. What I am going to discuss further in this and next chapter is that the deportation of "enemies", the repatriation of Armenians and the resettlement of Azerbaijanis are all projects related to the geopolitical considerations of the Soviet empire.

⁷²⁴ On the subject of the citizenship in Imperial Russia and the USSR, see the whole issues of *Kritika*, vol. 7, no. 2, (2006): "Special Issue: Subjecthood and Citizenship, Part I – Intellectual Biographies and Late Imperial Russia" and vol. 7, no. 3, (2006): "Part II – From Alexander II to Brezhnev" as well as Alexander Morrison, "Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 13, no. 2, (2012): 327-364.

5.3. Deportation of Germans, 1941

The beginning of the Second World War marked the massive deportation of population based on their ethnicity. The Soviet Union was not alone in this exercise, as Germany and Japan were also engaged in different resettlement projects – most of which were conducted brutally and resulted in high mortality. The liberal democracies such as the United States pursued the resettlement of the population as well; in the US, thousands of Japanese were interned into special camps and their settlements were supervised. However, Soviet and American resettlement policies differ significantly in terms of rationale – the Soviets along with the security issue were influenced by imperial considerations. The German population was thrown in and out of the borderland; this territorial characteristic of the area they inhabited was always present in the view of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Moreover, the fate of Germans in the South Caucasus in the 20th century manifests how closely the population movement in the USSR was linked with geopolitics.

The destiny of the Germans in Azerbaijan (and elsewhere in the Soviet Union) brought about first by Alexander I in 1817-1821 was predetermined as war broke out in 1941. On 28 August 1941 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree on the resettlement of Germans living in Volga region. The deportees were allowed to take personal belongings, some equipment, and a one-month food supply – the total weight being 1 ton per family within extremely short period – in 24 hours. ⁷²⁵ Family members

⁷²⁵ For deportation of Germans from Volga region see: Polian, *Against Their Will*, 123-140; T. Chebykina, "Deportatsiya nemetskogo naseleniya iz yevropeyskoy chasti SSSR v Zapadnuyu Sibir' (1941-1945 gg.)", accessed on January 12, 2014, http://www.memo.ru/history/nem/Chapter14.htm; A.A. German, *Istoriya Respubliki nemtsev Povolzh'ya v sobytiyakh, faktakh, dokumentakh*, (Moscow: Gotika, 1996); "Nakazannyy

who were not ethnically German could stay in their places of residence. Various figures are given with regard to the resettled Germans, but the most cited is around 438 000. The country of the resettled Germans, but the most cited is around 438 000. The country of the country of Germans from Georgia, 22,471 from Azerbaijan and 212 from the country of the

Archival sources point out that prior to the war, the Soviet NKVD kept close eyes on the life of German colonies in Azerbaijan. As early as November 1934 the republic's NKVD reported that anti-Soviet leaflets were distributed in the front of the local office of the Communist party of Helenendorf. (Helenendorf, as with other German settlements, was renamed during the First World War by the Tsarist authorities to the more Russified "Yelenino", and in 1938 to Khanlar – the name of an Azerbaijani communist). The

narod. Repressii protiv rossiyskikh nemtsev. (Po materialam konferentsii "Repressii protiv rossiyskikh nemtsev v Sovetskom Soyuze v kontekste sovetskoy natsional'noy politiki", provedennoy Nemetskim kul'turnym tsentrom im. Gote v Moskve sovmestno s Obshchestvom "Memorial" 18-20 noyabrya 1998 g). Moscow, 1999; Nachal'niy period Velikoy Otechetsvennoy Voyny i deportatsiya rossiyskikh nemtsev: vzglyady i otsenki cherez 70 let. (Materialy 3-ye mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii, Saratov, 26-28 August, 2011). (Moscow: MSNK-press, 2011).

⁷²⁶ V. I. Brul', "Deportirovannyye narody v Sibiri (1935—1965 gg.). Sravnitel'nyy analiz", in *Nakazannyy narod. Repressii protiv rossiyskikh nemtsev*, 101; Polian, *Against Their Will*, 134.

⁷²⁷ A.N. Yakovleva, N.L. Pobol' and P.M. Polian, eds., *Stalinskiye deportatsii. 1928-1953*, (Moscow: MFD: Materik, 2005), 354-357; Chernova-Deke, *Nemetskiyi poseleniya*, 8. ⁷²⁸ MTNA, inv. 657, 30.

NKVD advised the republican authorities that some German settlements hosted a considerable number of individuals with anti-Soviet "inclinations." It should be noted that by the 1930s all Germans in settlements were forced to join a Soviet *kolkhoz*. Only one special cooperative "Konkordiya" in Yelenino existed until 1935, at which time it was shut down. Mamed Jafarli notes that the German settlements had only a small number of Communist party members, which apparently added to greater suspicion of the Soviets toward Germans. Table 1930 Initially the main target of Soviet law-enforcement measures were clerics — many of them were arrested and all churches were shut down by 1937. However, this campaign had a Union-wide character, and Lutheran pastors were not exclusively targeted.

After closing churches, the Soviets moved to reform German schools (as one can remember that one of the main concerns of the imperial Russian experts were German schools, accused of being aloof from a sense of imperial patriotism). Instruction in German was prohibited and replaced by the Russian language, and German teachers were fired. Similar steps were undertaken with regard to other ethnic groups in the USSR based on the decision "On National Schools" adopted by the Organizational Bureau of the CCCP in 1937, and on another joint decision by the CCCP and the *Sovnarkom* entitled "Compulsory study of Russian language in schools of national republics and areas" of 1938 – whereby all German schools, colleges and technical schools were reorganized accordingly. ⁷³¹

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⁷²⁹ MTNA, inv. 657, 45.

⁷³⁰ Mamed Jafarli, *Nemtsy v Azerbaydzhane*, (Baku: Izdatel'stvo Bakinskogo universiteta, 1998), 26-27.

In the meantime, the NKVD arrested several Germans, charging them in anti-Soviet activities; some of them were executed in 1937. Mainly they were Germans who were born in Germany and moved to the settlement during their lifetime.

Apparently, the Soviet authorities were more suspicious of "new" German settlers, who they thought might have stronger linkages with the homeland. One of the NKVD documents highlights the external influence on German colonies:

Anti-Soviet behavior of German *kulachestvo* in colonies is expressed in the form of active resistance against the policies carried out by the authorities, the dissemination of the ideas of Pan-Germanism among German youth, national discord between German colonists and Armenians, the lack of the growth of the Komsomol [Soviet youth organization] and professional organizations [...] articles in the German media describing subjectively the situation of German colonies in Azerbaijan – all these are the result of Pan-Germanic espionage and anti-Soviet activities by individuals managed from abroad and the German consulate in Tbilisi. 733

This document also notes the tension between Germans and Armenians. Mamed Jafarli asserts that the Soviet authorities brought in Armenians to replace repressed and exiled Germans in the Shamkhor and Khanlar regions of Azerbaijan. ⁷³⁴ In October 1940 German colonists of Shamkhor region complained to Mirjafar Bagirov, the Communist leader of Azerbaijan, that the Armenians dominated in the management structures of the region. The letter stressed that while in the region Armenians constituted only 10 percent of the population, they occupied 90 percent of leadership positions. ⁷³⁵ The NKVD suspected two German colonists – Yevgeniy Genrikhovich Reitenbakh and Verner

⁷³² MTNA, inv. 674, 3-6 and PR-33864, 158-163.

⁷³³ MTNA, inv. 671, 47-48.

⁷³⁴ Jafarli, Nemtsy v Azerbaydzhane, 43

⁷³⁵ MTNA, inv. 680, 10.

Vilgel'movich Lecheka – as possible authors of the "nationalistic letter", but their handwriting did not match the letter.

As a result of repressions, some Germans expressed the desire to move to Germany and even contacted the diplomatic mission in Moscow. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 eased for a moment the tension around the Germans and gave them hope that they would be able to move to Germany. Tamara Chernova-Deke believes that this movement was very limited and few Germans in reality expressed desire to move to Germany from Azerbaijan. The public hysteria around German migration was an artificial exaggeration by the NKVD in order to accuse them of collaboration with the Nazis. 736 The Soviets continued the repression against Germans in Azerbaijan, and in 1940-1941 a group of German students in Baku was arrested and charged with treason. 737 Moscow instructed the Azerbaijani NKVD to arrest all "instigators" of the migration to Germany, paying special attention to Lutherans and other possible "elements" which might have had links with the German embassy. 738 Some Azerbaijanis, especially those who studied in Germany during the Musavat government in 1918-1920, were also arrested and charged as "spies" and as proponents of the establishment of Azerbaijani independence. 739 Accusations of pan-Germanism and pan-Turkism became frequent motives in the repressive measures of the Stalinist regime in Azerbaijan.

Despite the "prophylactic" measures implemented by the Soviets, Pavel Polian believes that the total deportation of Germans was not planned prior to the eruption of the

⁷³⁶ Tamara Chernova-Deke, "Deportatsiya nemetskogo naseleniya s Kavkaza: chast' sud'by naroda", in *Nachal'niy period Velikoy Otechetsvennoy Voyny i deportatsiya rossiyskikh nemtsev*, 533-534.

⁷³⁷ Mamed Jafarli, Politicheskiy terror i sud'by azerbaydzhanskikh nemtsev, (Baku: Vatan, 2003), 57-58.

⁷³⁸ MTNA, inv. 681, 34-38.

⁷³⁹ Jafarli, *Politicheskiy terror*, 124-135.

war. ⁷⁴⁰ One reason for such an attitude, according to Polian, was the desire of the Soviets to use the "exemplary life of Soviet Germans" as a propaganda tool against the Wehrmacht army. Polian opines also that another motivation might have been of an economic nature – the Soviets wished to obtain a harvest from the German peasants; however, the speedy advance of Germans changed Stalin's plan. In my opinion, the reason can be found in Stalin's belief that the Nazis, after the 1939 Pact, were not contemplating an attack on the Soviet Union. Moscow carried out the cleansing of certain border regions – especially in the West – from Germans in the 1930s, and after the rapprochement with Berlin felt assured that no war would break out between the parties.

The deportation of Germans, however, was a logical continuation of the Soviet policy of the previous two decades. First of all, the Soviet state developed the concept of the "enemy of the people", which initially targeted individuals: bourgeois, *kulaks*, counterrevolutionaries and others. Then it gradually expanded and simultaneously focused on foreign "spies" and "agents" as well as various nationalist movements. The prophylactic deportations in the pre-war period should be considered within the Soviet campaign against "non-reliable and harmful elements." When the war broke out, the Soviet system (and people in terms of popular support) was ready to "grind" entire ethnic groups. This evolution occurred primarily under the influence of geopolitical factors rather than domestic ones. For the Soviets the primacy of the territorial hold of the borderland became acute and subdued other, even economic considerations; this once more underlines the imperial nature of the USSR and puts this entity along with other empires. Nikolay Bugay emphasizes that the ethnic cleansing and deportation during the war undermined the ideas of friendship and brotherhood of the Soviet people, the

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⁷⁴⁰ Polian, Against Their Will, 126.

principles of internationalism and tenets which Lenin tried to install in the Soviet Union with regard to non-Russian nationalities.⁷⁴¹ In the meantime, the precedent of German deportation was created by Imperial Russia during the previous World War. Robert Conquest views the ethnic deportations during the Second World War with Germany as a logical extension of Tsarist Russia's colonial policy, continued by the USSR in the context of land empires.⁷⁴² Detlef Brandes argues that this policy evolved from the ethnic cleansing of Muslims by the Tsarist authorities.⁷⁴³ Brian Williams, studying the cleansing of Crimean Tatars, makes a similar argument.⁷⁴⁴ As I mentioned earlier, in the 1860s the Circassian population of the Western North Caucasus was deported to the Ottoman Empire.

Unlike many other ethnic groups deported during the war, the Germans were not allowed to return back to Azerbaijan in the 1950s when Moscow rehabilitated most ethnic groups. Interestingly enough, in the 1940s some Germans made an attempt to return to Azerbaijan but were identified, arrested and deported again. After Stalin's death a few Germans managed to return, and along with those who were married to non-Germans, by 1989 Azerbaijan had 748 Germans. Only in 1989 did the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopt a declaration on the full rehabilitation of the peoples repressed and exiled in the Soviet Union.

⁷⁴¹ Nikolay Bugay, "K voprosu o deportatsii narodov SSSR v 30-kh-40-kh godakh", *Istoriya SSSR*, 6 (1989): 142.

⁷⁴² Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers. Soviet Deportations of Nationalities*, (London: MacMillan Press, 1970).

⁷⁴³ Detlef Brandes, "Deportatsiya sovetskikh nemtsev v 1941 g. kak oprobovannyy instrument vnutrenney i pretsedent mezhdunarodnoy politiki", in *Nachal'niy period Velikoy Otechetsvennoy Voyny i deportatsiya rossiyskikh nemtsev*, 124.

⁷⁴⁴ Brian Williams, "The Hidden Ethnic Cleansing of Muslims in the Soviet Union: The Exile and Repatriation of the Crimean Tatars", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 37, no. 3, (2002): 326. ⁷⁴⁵ ARPIISSA, f. 1, op. 222, d. 108, 242-245.

⁷⁴⁶ Zeynalova, *Nemetskiyi kolonii*, 149.

Preventive deportation also was imposed upon other ethnic groups – Greeks, Bulgarians, Kurds, Crimean Tatars and others. The 1943 Stalin began cleansing the Crimea, and then moved to the Caucasus. The second wave of the deportation in the USSR, in 1943-1944, affected a wide range of ethnic groups in the North Caucasus too: Chechens, Ingushes, Karachayevs, Balkars and Kalmyks. In 1944 Moscow decided to deport the entire community of the Meskhetian Turks from Georgia. Allegedly, the Meskhetian Turks were suspected of plotting with Turkey, and Stalin saw the latter as a possible German ally – though Ankara remained neutral throughout the war. From Georgia, Stalin also deported about 3,000 Kurd and Azerbaijani as well as Khemshin (Muslim Armenian) families. While people were deported from urban centers like Tbilisi, the main target was the borderland with Turkey. Pavel Polian remarks in this regard that "deportations from South Georgia actually made little pragmatic sense for the state, while the economic disarray caused by the banishment of people who were working the lands was quite obvious." The state of th

Some scholars, mainly Russian nationalists, currently attempt to justify the wartime deportations by citing the necessity to secure the territory due to facts related to the collaboration of representatives of the ethnic groups concerned with the Nazis.⁷⁴⁹ In

⁷⁴⁷ Some accounts of deportations are: Otto Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR*, *1937-1949*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999); Ann Sheehy, *The Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans, and Meskhetians: Soviet Treatment of Some National Minorities*, (London: Minority Rights Group, 1973); Brian Glyn Williams, "Hidden Ethnocide in the Soviet Muslim Borderlands: the Ethnic Cleansing of the Crimean Tatars", *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4, no. 3, (2002): 357-373; Hovann Simonian, "The Vanished Khemshins: Return from the Brink", *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4, no. 3, (2002): 375-385; Ayşegül Baydar Aydingün, "A Deported Nationality: The Ahiska Turks", *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 4, (1998 – 1999): 120-129; Emil Payin, "Population Transfer: The Tragedy of the Meskhetian Turks", *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 1, (1992), accessed on September 24, 2013, http://www.culturalsurvival.org/ourpublications/csq/article/population-transfer-the-tragedy-meskhetian-turks.

⁷⁴⁸ Polian, Against Their Will, p. 156.

⁷⁴⁹ For example, Oleg Platonov, *Taynaya istoriya Rossii. XX vek. Epokha Stalina*, (Moscow, 1997); Arsen Martirosyan, *Stalin posle voyny. 1945–1953 gody*, (Moscow, 2007), 39–40.

the 1950-1960s the Soviet authorities condemned Stalin's collective punishment. It is symptomatic that such historiography emerged in the 2000s, which was characterized by the rise (or more precisely, the re-emergence) of Russian nationalism and anti-Western sentiments.

The deportation of Germans fits in general the narrative of the Soviet ethnic cleansing, especially borderland regions. The removal of "non-loyal" elements which were perceived as a possible ally of the enemy was the exercise which many states resorted to. My choice of the inclusion of German deportation into this research body is different. While Armenians continued to be seen by the Soviets (just like by many Tsarist officials in the 19th century) as reliable elements which could be employed for geopolitical purposes, the deportation of Germans shows that through the imperial looking glass there was no inherent reliable ethnic group due to its religion affiliation or other factors; the "merits" of ethnicity and co-religionism were tied to their empirebuilding qualities.

CHAPTER 6

SOVIET POST-WAR RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS IN SOUTH CAUCASUS

The victory in the Second World War allowed the Soviet Union to assert its power and even extend its influence beyond borders, especially in Eastern and Central Europe. Stalin decided also to push south to gain territorial concessions from Iran and Turkey. The pressure exerted on Turkey caused a chain reaction within the USSR in terms of possible rearrangement of ethnic republics, namely Armenia and Azerbaijan. Stalin launched a series of diplomatic steps to ensure the enlargement of Armenia at the expense of Turkey and blessed the repatriation of Armenians from abroad. The policy of repatriation was launched with regard to Russians as well, but the Armenian project in 1946-1949 had a narrow geopolitical goal – to obtain territories from Turkey. This was followed also by the resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia to vacate places for Armenian newcomers.

The repatriation of Armenians saw the resurfacing of many ethno-territorial problems which were caused by Tsarist policies in the 19th century. Like Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union used an ethnic Armenian card to expand territorially. However, in doing so Moscow unleashed nationalistic sentiments and made tensions rise again between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The relationship between two ethnic groups (as I have discussed in Chapter 4) was exacerbated by the imperial legacy. The inter-ethnic clashes of 1905-1906 were echoed during the existence of independent of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1918-1920, and mutually exclusive territorial claims led to the full scale war over certain regions – Karabakh, Nakhichevan, and Zangezur. The Soviet resolution

of the territorial issues between Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1921-1923 remained partial and unfair in the eyes of both nationalists in emigration and respective Communist leaders in republics.

As Moscow advanced its territorial claim towards Turkey in 1945-1946, multiple questions entered the equation, which the Soviets were unable to resolve: Armenian "historical" borders, the territorial division between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the place of Turkic-speaking Azerbaijanis in the South Caucasian borderland. Like their Tsarist predecessors, the Soviets cooperated with the Armenian religious leaders – throwing the Christian-Muslim religious issue into an already complex geopolitical environment.

I intend to place these resettlement projects within the study of the Tsarist-Soviet traditions and the study of the region of the South Caucasus as a whole, especially tracing its connection to Azerbaijan. My contribution to this subject is around four questions which are, in general, the highlights of the present study: state and local actors, the geopolitical factors surrounding the resettlement projects, the role of religious institutions, and the impact on the ethno-territorial conflict. I will sketch the Armenian repatriation with the view of juxtaposing it to the Tsarist Armenian resettlement projects during the 19th century, as well as analyzing the connection with the deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia in 1948-1953. In addition, I will touch on some highly debatable issues in local Azerbaijani, Armenian, and Western historiography – such as Stalin's territorial arrangement in the South Caucasus in 1921-1923 and his post-war resettlement plans.

6.1. The Soviets and the Issue of Nationalities

The post-war population movements in Armenia and Azerbaijan are better understood with the knowledge of events that unfolded in 1917-1920, when both countries existed as independent entities and fought for territories. Even more important in terms of understanding Moscow's rationale for repatriating Armenians in 1946-1949 and the resettlement of Azerbaijanis in 1948-1953 is the period of 1921-1923 when the Bolsheviks were engaged in resolving the territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The rearrangement of disputed territories between Armenia and Azerbaijan – namely Karabakh, Nakhichevan and Zangezur and in general mutual territorial claims during this period – will resurface in the post-war period and affect the resettlement process in 1946-1953.

After the collapse of the Tsarist Empire in 1917, many ethnic groups strove for the achievement of independence. In the Caucasus, Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians had a variety of political movements that originated few decades ago; most aimed to tackle economic and social issues within Imperial Russia. The most prominent of these were the *Dashnaks*, *Musavat* and Mensheviks among Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians respectively. As the Bolsheviks seized power in St. Petersburg, the national leaders of Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians initially formed the Transcaucasian Federation – but later in May 1918 declared independence. During independence, from 1918-1921, these three republics were embroiled in territorial disputes. Especially severe was the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh, Nakhichevan and Zangezur regions which were parts of the former Elizavetpol

governorate of the Russian Empire. Armenian nationalist forces such as the *Dashnak* party allied with the Bolsheviks. Azerbaijani leaders and intellectuals favoured strong ties with the Ottoman Empire.

The life of the independent republics was troubled economically and challenged politically, as many countries did not recognize them officially – though they established diplomatic offices there. After the end of the First World War until August 1919 the territory of Azerbaijan and Armenia was controlled by Britain, which tried to resolve the territorial disputes. For example, one of the disputed regions – Karabakh – was assigned to Azerbaijani control and was led by Khosrov Sultanov, while the British High Commissioner Admiral Somerset Arthur Gough-Calthorpe abolished the South West Caucasian Republic (formed on the territory of Kars) in April 1919 and attached it to the Armenian Republic. By the summer of 1919, the Azerbaijani troops took full control over Karabakh and Nakhichevan. The local Armenians in Karabakh temporarily recognized the Sultanov administration.

On January 12, 1920, the countries of Entente – the Allied Supreme Council – extended *de facto* recognition to Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. However, the Red Army appeared in the region a few months later and ultimately demanded their surrender; first Azerbaijan and then Armenia in 1920, followed by Georgia in 1921. In the final days of independence, in the spring of 1920, Azerbaijan and Armenia once again was embroiled in a bitter dispute over Karabakh, Nakhichevan and Zangezur. In the summerfall of 1920, Armenia was at another war with Turkey and lost the territory of Kars, which Armenia gained in 1919. The League of Nations – which had begun to consider

applications from the three republics in the fall of 1920 – declined all, as these countries had lost effective control of their territories to the Bolsheviks.

Thus, the South Caucasus was once again embraced by the Russians, who then came under a different ideological banner – Communism. However, as I discussed very briefly above, the three South Caucasian countries for two years of independence went through a very complicated and tragic experience, aggravated even more by Turkish-Armenian animosity. Much controversy surrounds the issue of territorial arrangement installed by the Bolsheviks in the South Caucasus. 750 Armenian historiography, supported by many Western academicians, has advanced the idea that Stalin gave Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan to Azerbaijan, while it rightfully belonged to Armenia. 751 Azerbaijani historians claim that the Bolsheviks were inclined toward Armenian aspirations and moved accordingly. 752 The perception of a "vicious dictator" Stalin plotting with Muslim Azerbaijanis and "genocidal" Turks against Christian Armenians is rather convenient and a well-designed propaganda cliché – influenced to a certain extent by what Edward Said described as *Orientalism*. Such a view is, for example, prevalent in James Forsyth's book on the history of the Caucasus, who used mostly Armenian authors on the history of the period under consideration. 753

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⁷⁵⁰ A good overview of the competing historical narratives is given in Takayuki Yoshimura, "Some Arguments on the Nagorno-Karabagh History", in *Istoriograficheskiy dialog vokrug nepriznannykh gosudarstv: Pridnestrov'e, Nagornyy Karabakh, Armeniya, Yuzhnaya Osetiya i Gruziya*, ed. by Kimitaki Matsuzato, (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2007), 52-60.

⁷⁵¹ See for example: James Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History*, (Cambridge: University Printing House, 2013); De Waal, *The Caucasus*; Alexei Zverev, "Nagorno-Karabakh and the Azeri-Armenian Conflict (1988-94)", in *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, ed. by Bruno Coppieters, (Brussels, VUB University Press, 1996).

⁷⁵² Musa Marjanli, Armenians, Russia, The Caucasus, Dubai, Khazar University Press, 2011.

⁷⁵³ Forsyth, *The Caucasus*, 405-412. Another example is Bernard Cook. "Nagorno-Karabakh", in *Europe Since 1945*. *An Encyclopedia*. vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2001), 891-892.

The idea of Stalin's favouritism towards Azerbaijan does not stand up to historical facts, as later – in the 1940s – Stalin ordered the deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia and the repatriation of Armenians from abroad, and put forward a territorial claim toward Turkey to gain "Western Armenia." Stalin, as a typical imperial ruler, was first of all preoccupied with the enlargement and strengthening of the territorial domain. Moreover, in 1921 Stalin did not possess sole authority, and was one voice (though an influential one) among few others – who together were dealing with the territorial issues in the South Caucasus. The main purpose of the Bolsheviks, including Stalin, was to accommodate all ethnic groups so that Moscow could strengthen its grip on the region. Lenin, Stalin and other leaders of the soon-to-be Soviet Union had to reconcile with Turkey – which had its own vision for the region – but agreed to recognize the South Caucasus as a Soviet domain.

On 13 October 1921, Turkey and the Soviet republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia ("supervised" by the Russian Socialist Republic) signed the Treaty of Kars, putting an end to violence and conflicts. Turkey had another agreement with Soviet Russia: the "Treaty on Friendship and Brotherhood" (the so-called the Treaty of Moscow), signed on 16 March 1921. As noted, much is written about the territorial concession given by Moscow to Turkey and also about the arrangement made in favour of Azerbaijan to appease Kemalist Turkey.⁷⁵⁴ However, the treaty and the arrangement, made by the Bolsheviks in 1921 between Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as Georgia, shows the balance exercised by Bolshevik leaders. By the Treaty of Kars, Turkey

⁷⁵⁴ For example: Yuriy G. Barsegov, *Genotsid armyan*. *Otvetstvennost' Turtsii i obyazatel'stva mirovogo soobshchestva*, vol. 1-2, (Moscow, 2005); Moorad Mooradian and Daniel Druckman, "Hurting Stalemate or Mediation? The Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, 1990-95", *Journal of Peace Research* vol. 36, no. 6, (1999): 709.

retained Kars, while Batum was given to Georgia – where the Adjar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was established. Nakhichevan was granted the status of an autonomous region within Azerbaijan, while Turkey and Soviet Russia became guarantors of Nakhichevan's status. Turkey agreed to return Alexandropol to Armenia. This treaty also nullified all previous legal agreements imposed on Turkey by the Allied powers, such as the Treaty of Sevres, and declared all its provisions null and void. Additionally, in 1923 Turkey signed the Treaty of Lausanne with the Allied powers, which affirmed the territory of Turkey within modern borders.

As for the arrangement of other contentious issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Bolsheviks also attempted to balance their approach. Initially, in 1920 Moscow decided to postpone any resolution of disputed territorial issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Grigoriy Chicherin wrote to Grigol Ordzhonikidze – Chairman of the Caucasian Bureau (an organ of Soviet authority in the region) that "the questions of affiliation of these territories should be delayed until a favorable political situation." Chicherin believed that adherence to the territorial arrangement of the previous *Musavat* government meant the appeasement of the nationalist Muslim forces, and thought that Karabakh should be attached to Armenia. Stalin thought differently: "My opinion is that we should definitely protect one of the parties; in this case, Azerbaijan together with Turkey." Apparently, the Soviet authorities in 1920 – before firm establishment of their rule – did not want to show adherence to either party. As soon as Armenia was taken by the Red Army, the Soviet

⁷⁵⁵ The text of the Treaty of Kars in *Dokumenty vneshney politiki SSSR*, vol. 4, (Moscow: Gosudartsvennoye izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1960), 420-426.

⁷⁵⁶ GARF, f. 130, op. 4, doc. 496, 115. ⁷⁵⁷ GARF, f. 130, op. 4, doc. 496, 144.

authorities in order to appease the Armenian population announced that Karabakh and Zangezur were part of Armenia. Azerbaijani communists had to sign a declaration renouncing any claim on those territories on 20 November 1920. Grigol Ordzhonikidze told the Armenians: "Soviet Azerbaijan, speaking today through Narimanov [the Communist leader of Azerbaijan], proved to the world and especially the workers and peasants of Armenia that only the Soviet power can solve all the vexed questions related to ethnic strife."

However, such a one-sided decision did not please the Azerbaijanis. The situation became tense among the Azerbaijani Bolsheviks as well. Nariman Narimanov suddenly changed his position and demanded the return of territories under the Azerbaijani jurisdiction, which probably signifies that his previous statement was made under pressure. He informed Moscow that such a transfer might be used by anti-Soviet forces to stir up anti-government sentiment. On 16 March 1921 the Soviets signed the The Treaty of Moscow with Turkey, and one of the demands of the Kemalist government was to retain Nakhichevan within Azerbaijan – which was honoured by the Bolsheviks. In June 1921 the issue of the territorial distribution between Armenia and Azerbaijan became the main topic of the Caucasian Bureau. The focus was on the association of the mountainous part of Karabakh – populated mainly by Armenians – either to Armenia or Azerbaijan. Ordzhonikidze and Sergei Kirov, members of the Bureau, sent a telegram to Narimanov informing him that their opinion rested on a principle that "no Armenian village should be connected to Azerbaijan, and no Muslim village can be attached to

⁷⁵⁸ Grigol Ordzhonikidze, *Stat'i i rechi*, vol. 1, (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1956), 140—141.

⁷⁵⁹ Baberowski, Vrag est' vezde, 237.

⁷⁶⁰ RGASPI, f. 64, op. 2, d. 7, 13.

Armenia." However, further events manifested that the Soviet authorities acted contrary to the opinion of the two influential Communists. In the meantime, on 3 June 1921 the Bolsheviks transferred Zangezur to Armenia by a secret decision. ⁷⁶² In the same decision, the Caucasian Bureau advised the transfer of mountainous part of Karabakh to Armenia. On 12 June 1921, Soviet Armenia moved to officially declare mountainous Karabakh to be part of Armenia, and appointed Askanaz Mravian as a representative there. Narimanov objected to such a unilateral decision, and on 27 June the Azerbaijani Communists informed that the status of the mountainous part of Karabakh needed additional discussions with the participation of the Azerbaijani and Armenian population of the region. One of the Azerbaijani Communists sent a telegram to Tbilisi, informing that,

comrade Narimanov asked to convey that the issue should be resolved only in this context [further and broader discussion], otherwise Sovnarkom [the Soviet People's Commissariat] relinquishes its responsibility – because if Soviet Armenia by adopting this act wishes to make a certain impression on the *Dashnak* Armenians and non-Party [non-communist] masses, then we should not forget that thereby we resurrect in Azerbaijan similar anti-Soviet groups as *Dashnaks*."⁷⁶³

On 4 July 1921 in Tbilisi the members of the Soviet Caucasian Bureau along with Josef Stalin gathered to discuss the issue of the mountainous part of Karabakh. The decision was to "include" (*vklyuchit'*) mountainous Karabakh in Armenia; this was supported by Ordzhonikidze, Myasnikov, Kirov and Figatner, while Narimanov, Maharadze and Nazaretian voted against this motion. Narimanov strongly objected to the

⁷⁶¹ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 18, d. 229, 1-2.

⁷⁶² RGASPI, f. 64, op.1, d.1, 76-77.

⁷⁶³ RGASPI, f. 64, op.1, d. 215, 14.

decision and demanded that this issue be brought to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, which was also agreed upon by the Caucasian Bureau. Stalin himself did not vote, as he was not a member of the Caucasian Bureau. The next day the Caucasian Bureau continued the discussion and this time the decision was opposite – to retain (*ostavit'*) the mountainous part of Karabakh in Azerbaijan. This milestone decision is still highly debated in Azerbaijani, Armenian and Western historiography on the question of whether Stalin influenced this decision about the transfer of Karabakh to Azerbaijan. As a matter of fact, the decision was "to retain" Karabakh within Azerbaijan. This means that Stalin essentially agreed to keep Karabakh in Azerbaijan instead of transferring it to Armenia. Ilgar Niftaliyev points out that "For Stalin, the Azerbaijani territories were a bargaining chip in a wider strategic game, the essence of which was the speedy creation of Soviet republics in the South Caucasus with the prospect of their subsequent inclusion into a single, multi-ethnic and effectively unitary Soviet state."

Overall, the Bolsheviks approached the distribution of three contentious territories with a sense of balance: Zangezur was given to Armenia, and Karabakh and Nakhichevan were given the status of an autonomous oblast and republic respectively within Azerbaijan. Thomas De Waal argues that the Bolsheviks, besides pleasing Turkey, also took into consideration the economic benefits of mountainous Karabakh being united with the rest of the historical region. "The move has been called a case of imperialist divide-and-rule politics, but the Bolsheviks were actually more interested in what could be called 'combine and rule' in making Azerbaijan a single unit in which farmers could

⁷⁶⁴ RGASPI, f. 64, op.1, d. 215, 118.

⁷⁶⁵ RGASPI, f. 64, op.1, d. 215, 122.

⁷⁶⁶ Ilqar Niftaliyev, "Stalin on the Territorial Integrity of the Azerbaijani SSR", *Vision of Azerbaijan*, May-June (2010): 32-36.

move their flocks between the plains and highlands of Karabakh without crossing a republican border." Alex Marshall maintains that two main factors influenced the change in the decision: firstly, a probable "Bolshevik suspicion toward Armenian 'great power chauvinism' in the region", and secondly, the fear of Georgian leaders that the precedent with Karabakh "would have set for the secession of rebellious territories, given the implications this would also have carried over even at the time for their own struggles with Adzharia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia."768

Jorg Baberowski remarks that the Soviet authorities, after the conquest of Azerbaijan, were puzzled by the question of how to deal with the Muslim population. ⁷⁶⁹ The Bolshevik, ethnically Russian A. Serebrovskiy was a proponent of strict military rule and the extraction of such needed resources as oil. However, at the same time, they faced national aspirations voiced by Nariman Narimanov and few other local Communists. The territorial disputes made Moscow aware of the necessity to buy the loyalty of local Communists in order to control the periphery. Such loyalty was dependent on many interdependent issues, such as national identity, autonomy and foreign policy.

Another important factor one should consider, which is frequently missing in the picture of the territorial rearrangement in the Soviet Caucasus and the influence of Turkey, is that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk had a negative attitude toward an independent Azerbaijan. Tadeusz Swietichoswki notes in this regard that for Turkey the strategic objective was the suppression of Armenia, the replacement of *Musavat* government in Azerbaijan with a Soviet one, and the neutrality of Georgia. Ataturk viewed the Caucasian republics as a possible barrier to its closeness with Bolshevik Russia and was

⁷⁶⁷ De Waal, *The Caucasus*, 105. ⁷⁶⁸ Marshall, *The Caucasus*, 143-144.

⁷⁶⁹ Baberowski, Vrag est' vezde, 239-240.

ready to launch a "coordinated offensive against them." ⁷⁷⁰ For Turkey, at the critical moment of the struggle against the Entente, the ethnic brotherhood with the Azerbaijani Turks was of secondary importance. Modern historiography in the West tends to see strong bonds between Azerbaijan and Turkey, ⁷⁷¹ which is more of a modern phenomenon. The issue surrounding the events of 1915 and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (accompanied by fierce ideological fights at all levels – political, academic, and media) interferes today with a more in-depth understanding of the complexities of the regional history.

In 1923 Moscow took the territories of Karabakh – which included areas with Armenian populations as well as the Azerbaijani-populated city Shusha – and created the Nagorno (in Russian this means Mountainous) Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (province) within Soviet Azerbaijan. This last step was supposed to end all territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Between 1922 and 1937, the three Caucasian republics formed the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, and then, according to the Constitution of 1936, they existed separately within the USSR.

The period of independence, war, and the Soviet takeover caused the movement of people due to deportations and ethnic cleansing. This in turn affected the demography of the region as well. The historiography of 1918-1920 contains conflicting narratives: on one side, depicting sufferings of Armenians at the hands of both Anatolian and Azerbaijani Turks; on another side, the massacres of Muslims from the Armenian gangs and revolutionaries. The story of the First World War and many other local and civil wars

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⁷⁷⁰ Swietochowski, Russian and Azerbaijan, 86-87.

⁷⁷¹ See for example Levon Chorbajian, *The Making of Nagorno-Karabakh: From Secession to Republic*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); Michael Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*, (Westport: Praeger, 1998); De Waal, *Black Garden*.

was one where people died en masse. In addition to Armenian deaths in the Ottoman Empire, attacks on Muslims in Zangezur, Nakhichevan and Karabakh occurred as well. The Russian authorities – both the Tsarist and Provisional Government – viewed the Azerbaijani Turks as natural allies of the Porte, and thus harassed and murdered them. The Azerbaijani population shrunk significantly in the former Erivan governorate – which became the core of the Armenian state in 1918. One of the officials of the Armenian government wrote in 1920:

The bloody events in Erivan province, which began in February 1918 and continued until the present time, led to the unfortunate result that almost half a million Muslims in the province were driven into absolute poverty (except for those living in Nakhichevan county, Sharur area, part of the 2nd and 3rd units of Surmali county and Zangibasarskiy district). They lost all their movable and immovable property, livestock and agricultural equipment. In these areas there are no more than 200,000 surviving Muslims. Expelled by fire and sword... the mass of the Muslim peasants has repeatedly been attacked by Armenian gangs in the past two years [...] They are not getting sufficient help and die by the thousands from hunger, cold and disease [...] Currently it is impossible to determine exactly how many out of the three hundred thousand Muslim population died. Without exaggeration one can say that the death toll is 100,000-120,000 and that about 50,000 surviving souls moved to Azerbaijan. ⁷⁷³

The Muslim population of Zangezur had declined drastically as well – from 51,7 percent (71, 2 thousand) in 1897 to 10,2 percent (6,5 thousand). At the same time, in 1918 along with the retreat of Armenian forces from Turkey, 30,000 Armenians moved to

⁷⁷² Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks*, 103.

⁷⁷³ ARDA, f. 970, op. 10, d. 114, 10—11.

N. G. Volkova, "Etnicheskiye protsessy v Zakavkaz'ye v XIX—XX vekakh", in *Kavkazskiy Etnograficheskiy Sbornik*, vol 4, ed. by V. Gardanov, (Moscow: Nauka, 1969), 10.

Zangezur and other adjacent regions. The Armenian population in several Azerbaijani regions such as Shamakha (17,000) and Sheki (20,000) was ousted.⁷⁷⁵

The most affected areas of the demographic changes were regions – Erivan,

Zangezur, and to a lesser extent Karabakh – which were designed by the Russian officials in 1828-1831 as areas to receive Armenian settlers. The First World War caused another tectonic division in the region aggravated by the mass exodus and poverty. The Soviets inherited the ethno-territorial problems from their Tsarist predecessors, and in managing these problems, were first of all preoccupied with a quick solution to satisfy their geostrategic objectives (namely, peace with Turkey), and imperial acquisition – to regain the territories once belonged to Russian Empire. Moscow's ethno-territorial solution did not satisfy either sides – Armenia or Azerbaijan – but made it possible to reach relative stability in the area and formed the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. The three republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia continued their existence almost within the same borders until the collapse of the USSR. However, the Second World War and the Soviet victory brought new imperial ambition in the southern flank which caused another wave of the resettlement in the region.

6. 2. Repatriation of Armenians, 1946-1949.

To understand the causes of the Armenian repatriation project, one should not only study the Russian imperial and Soviet history of the region, but another dimension: geopolitics and the role of Armenian Church and diaspora, and their relationship with the Soviet authorities. These issues will be discussed in this section. In this regard, it is

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⁷⁷⁵ Bloxham, *The Great Game*, 103 – 110.

important to evaluate the Soviet-Turkish relationship in the 1930-1940s and Stalin's personal vision of the region where he was born, grew up and began his revolutionary activity. The Further on, the evolving relationship between Bolshevik central and local leadership with the religious establishment and the resolution of ethnic issues from the perspective of the borderland security during the war are other elements of the puzzle.

There are several studies conducted about the repatriation of Armenians from abroad in 1946-1949, including a recent PhD dissertation by Stevan Yousefian focusing on the relationship between Soviet Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. ⁷⁷⁷ I differ with Sevan Yousefian's assumption that the repatriation was driven by forces outside the USSR— that the diaspora was able to influence the Soviet authorities. Rather it was Moscow's imperial ambitions that made possible the Armenian repatriation – one of the peculiar resettlement projects of the Soviet Union. Joanne Laycock highlights that the study of the Armenian repatriation is still mainly in the field of Armenian studies with two main themes: the enthusiasm of the Armenians to return, and the betrayal and repression of the repatriates by the Soviet regime. ⁷⁷⁸ I intend to highlight the geopolitical dimension of this resettlement process.

The term 'repatriation' is not a correct definition of this project, as it applies to the restitution of citizenship and the process of returning a person to his/her place of origin or

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⁷⁷⁶ He spent a considerable amount of time in Tbilisi and Baku before the revolution of 1917.

⁷⁷⁷ Sevan N. Yousefian, "The Postwar Repatriation Movement of Armenians to Soviet Armenia, 1945-1948", (PhD diss., University of California, 2011). Heavily based on Armenian Soviet archival documents, this dissertation is a good source for the study of the Armenian repatriation. However, it lacks discussion of various opinions on the subject, and other dimensions of the resettlement outside the Armenian state—Diaspora relations.

⁷⁷⁸ Joanne Laycock, "The Repatriation of Armenians to Soviet Armenia, 1945-49", in *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50*, ed. by Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 140-141.

citizenship. 779 Many Armenians who moved to Soviet Armenia from 1946-1949 never lived in the USSR or in Imperial Russia. They were the citizens of many European countries, the United States, Egypt, Lebanon and other Middle Eastern states. However, by and large, they and their parents were the subjects of the former Ottoman Empire, and only a tiny portion of them might have lived in Kars region – which the Russian Empire occupied as a result of the war of 1877-1878 and controlled until the collapse in 1917. Thus, the resettlement of 1946-1949 was not a "return" their transfer to Soviet Armenia is repatriation in the spiritual sense only."⁷⁸¹ The term 'repatriation' was intentionally put forward by Moscow and Soviet Armenia to manifest that the Turkish territories, which Moscow claimed in the 1940s, were a part of historical Armenia; in the Kremlin's vision, these territories rightfully belonged to the Soviet Union via Soviet Armenia. I use the term 'repatriation' to avoid confusion with historical documents – ideally this project should be termed the resettlement or solicited migration, which the Soviet Union carried out in resemblance with the Armenian resettlement by Tsarist Russia in 1828-1831. 782 The difference was that Tsarist Russia resettled Armenians from particular territories – namely Iranian and Turkish territories conquered during the wars

⁷⁷⁹ For discussion of terminology of citizenship and various instances of repatriation see: George Gmelch, "Return Migration", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 9 (1980): 135-159; Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Olga Zeveleva, "Political Aspects of Repatriation: Germany, Russia, Kazakhstan. A Comparative Analysis", *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, vol. 42, no. 5, (2014): 808-827.

⁷⁸⁰ See Kari S. Neely, "Diasporic Representations: A Study of Circassian and Armenian Identities in Greater Syria", (PhD diss. University of Michigan, 2008), 249.

⁷⁸¹ Joseph B. Schechtman, *Population Transfers in Asia*, (New-York: Hallsby Press, 1949), 53.
⁷⁸² Susan Pattie also warns about inaccuracy of the term "repatriation" and "repatriates" and suggest the use of "newcomers." See: Susan Pattie, "From the Centers to the Periphery: "Repatriation" to an Armenian homeland in the Twentieth Century", in *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*, ed. by Fran Markowitz and Anders H. Stefansson, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), 110. In Armenian language this process was called "negkhart".

of 1826-1829 – while in 1946 Soviet Russia solicited Armenians from every corner of the world

The inflow of Armenians to Soviet Armenia was not a new phenomenon. Armenian historian Razmik Pannosian estimates that between 1921 and 1936 around 42,000 from neighboring countries, the Middle East, the Balkans and Europe migrated to Armenia. "Soviet authorities encouraged such immigration in ebbs and flows in order to augment the population of the republic and to demonstrate that the Soviet republic was the one and only fatherland of all Armenians." ⁷⁸³ The Soviet Armenian government managed to maintain contacts with the diaspora through the Armenian Aid Committee (HOG) until 1937, when the Kremlin shut down the organization and executed its leaders. The yearning for the homeland was always strongly present in the discussions by the Armenian diaspora around the world, but there was little appetite to move under the Soviet umbrella (and even today to independent Armenia). However, in 1945-1946, there was a big expectation among Armenians of the possible expansion of Soviet Armenia to Turkey. The history that preceded the Armenian repatriation proves Terry Martin's "Piedmont principle," according to which Moscow used the Soviet republics and crossborder ethnic ties to advance territorial claims to neighboring countries. This strategy was successfully exploited by the Soviet Union in the pre-war period, which resulted in the enlargement of the Ukrainian and Belorussian SSR and the creation of the Moldavian SSR in the aftermath of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In a similar manner, during the Second World War Moscow via the Azerbaijani SSR advanced a claim on the South (Iranian) Azerbaijan in 1945-1946 and demanded a part of Turkish territory through the Armenian and Georgian SSR.

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⁷⁸³ Panossian, *The Armenians*, 358.

The evolution (or more precisely devolution) of the relationship between the USSR and Turkey occurred in a relatively short term after the death of Kemal Ataturk in 1938, with whom Moscow had good relations in the 1920s. Lenin and Ataturk shared a perception that they were important allies in the fight against Western imperialism. While there were some objections from then-Foreign Affairs Narkom (minister) Chicherin and Armenian and Georgian Communists, nevertheless the Bolshevik leadership believed that "a Turkish alliance against British imperialism was far more important than sparing the sensibilities of a few Armenians and Georgians." However, in the 1930s Stalin became increasingly suspicious of Turkey, and at the same time wished to install a strong Soviet presence over the Black Sea Straits. In the volatile geopolitical environment of the 1930s Turkey wanted to secure its own control over the Straits of Bosporus and Dardanelles, and a round of negotiations led to the conclusion of the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits in 1936. This affirmed Turkey's control over the Straits and regulated the transit of naval warships into and from the Black Sea, which served the interests of the Soviet Union.

After Ataturk's death, Stalin signaled his wish to reopen the status of the Straits and even to establish a military base there. Soviet propaganda accused Turkey of siding with the Nazis, even as the USSR itself signed the Pact with Hitler to divide Europe and obtain additional territories. Ankara was desperately seeking allies and aid, and for this reason concluded treaties with Britain and France in 1939. The treaty with Germany, signed also few days before the war with the USSR on 18 June 1941, was concluded under pressure and did not stipulate offensive measures. During the war Turkey remained

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⁷⁸⁴ Bülent Gökay, Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1920–1991. Soviet Foreign Policy, Turkey and Communism, (New-York: Routledge, 2006), 9.

neutral until February 1945 and tried to balance the relationship between Germany, the USSR and the Western bloc. Nevertheless, Moscow played a game of "tension", moving arms and personnel to the borderland. As a result, the Soviet border with Turkey remained increasingly militarized on both sides.

In January 1944, the Narkom of Foreign Affairs compiled a document which sketched out the Soviet vision with regard to its post-war ambitions. In the eastern direction the Soviet diplomats suggested strengthening influence in Turkey and Iran. ⁷⁸⁵ Moscow pondered the revision of the Treaty of Moscow and Kars with regard to the frontier territories, as well as a change to the status of the Straits. ⁷⁸⁶

Domestically Stalin purged the borderland territories from suspicious elements, including Turkic-speaking ethnic groups and Muslims. In November 1944 Stalin ordered the total deportation of the Meskhetian (or Ahiska) Turks from Georgia, along with Kurds and Hemshins (Armenian Muslims). Earlier, in May 1944, Crimea was also cleansed from possible "disloyal" elements – including the Turkic-speaking Crimean Tatars, who were accused of collaboration with the Nazis. Moscow and personally Stalin, (as discussed in Chapter 5) feared the possible threat of the ethnic minorities whose brethren lived across the borders. In this regard, all Turkic-speaking groups represented a danger for the Soviet borderland.

In 1945, Moscow used Armenian and Georgian scholars to launch a series of historical and propagandistic articles claiming Soviet provenance over the Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan. The Soviets justified this claim by citing the fact that it

785 Aleksandr Pyzhikov and Aleksandr Danilov, *Kniga «Rozhdeniye sverkhderzhavy. 1945 - 1953 gody,* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2002), 16-19.

⁷⁸⁶ Jamil Gasanly, SSSR - Turtsiya. Ot neytraliteta k kholodnoy voyne. 1939-1953, (Moscow: Tsentr Propagandy, 2008), 135-137; Gökay, Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 59-61.

had belonged to the Russian Empire until 1917 – even though they had only been conquered in 1877-1878. The reference to Tsarist possession did not embarrass or confuse the Bolsheviks. Soviet historians claimed that these areas constituted a part of historical Armenia and Georgia and should be rightfully returned to them. In a conversation with the leader of Bulgarian Communists Georgi Dimitrov, Stalin exclaimed that the USSR would move the Turks into Asia. He questioned: "What is Turkey? There are two million Georgians there, a half million Armenians and million Kurds." Alarmed by territorial claims, Turkey requested diplomatic and material support from the USA and Britain, which became available. After a series of tough messages sent between Ankara, Moscow and Washington, the latter, most probably after the use of the nuclear bombs in August 1945, became the eventual winner in 1946 by protecting the territorial integrity of Turkey. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States were fighting for the fate of Iran. Eventually, the Kremlin failed; first Moscow withdrew forces from Iranian Azerbaijan and then gave up the territorial claim toward Turkey.

As Moscow was preparing its territorial claim on Turkey, following the "traditions" of Tsarist Russia, the Soviets resorted to religious institutions to exert cross-border influence. On 20 October 1943, the Politburo established the council on the relationship with the Armenian Church. The Armenian Church was spared from closure in 1938, when the Armenian NKVD reported gold and other treasures hidden in the centre of the Armenian Church in Echmiadzin. The Armenian Communist Party prepared

⁷⁸⁷ Quoted from Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War. Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 59.

a decision about the closure of the Church, and sent a draft to Moscow. The draft stipulated:

Taking into account that the available materials expose the Catholicosat of Echmiadzin in an active struggle against the Soviet government and the Armenian people, close Echmiadzin Monastery and turn it into a museum. Do not elect new Catholicos and abolish the center of the Armenian clergy – the Catholic See of Echmiadzin.⁷⁸⁸

According to Armenian historian Gamlet Mirzoyan, in a month Stalin phoned the Armenian Communist leader Grigoriy Arutunov and asked: "Did you still insist on this decision?" Arutunov replied negatively, and Echmiadzin continued to function, though on a very small scale. 789 The Armenian Communist leader was a big supporter of the Church, and upon his recommendation, taking into account the contribution of the Armenian Church to the struggle against the Nazis, the Soviet Politburo passed a decision to expand the Church's power.

During the war, Stalin generally allowed the greater function of the religious institutions – Orthodox, Islam and others – as the Soviets saw a mobilizing and spiritual role for them against the German invasion. However, on its own terms Moscow had a farreaching plan for the Armenian Church. In April 1945, Stalin received the vicar of the Armenian Catholicos Gheorg Cheorekchian (in some sources also Kevork Chorekchyan), who submitted a petition in which he asked the Soviet authorities to allow the restoration of the seminary, the reopening of the library and the printing house, the return of several temples to the Church and some other proposals related to the administrative, financial and cultural activities of the Echmiadzin. In his letter, Cheorekchian reminded on several

⁷⁸⁸ Gamlet Mirzoyan, "Sovetskiyi praviteli Armenii. Grigoriy Arutunov", *Noyev kovcheg*, 3 (138), March 2009, accessed on February 17, 2014, http://www.noev-kovcheg.ru/mag/2009-03/1558.html. ⁷⁸⁹ On the history of the Armenian Church under the Soviets see: Felix Corley, "The Armenian Church

⁷⁸⁹ On the history of the Armenian Church under the Soviets see: Felix Corley, "The Armenian Church under the Soviet regime, part 1: The leadership of Kevork", *Religion, State and Society*, vol. 24, no. 1, (1996): 9-53.

occasions that the Church unites Armenians all over the world. He concluded that "using its authority, love and loyalty of foreign Armenians to Holy Echmiadzin, the Catholicos of all Armenians will be able to manage the national interests of the Armenian people and give them a direction desirable for our Soviet Motherland." On 19 April 1945, Stalin imposed a positive resolution on the petition: "I agree." During the meeting with Cheorekchian Stalin said:

The war will come to an end soon. Our government is preparing to take back from Turkey the western provinces of Armenia handed over in 1920. It is clear that Armenians must live on these lands. It would be desirable for them to be the same Armenians who were forced to flee from Turkey and who now live in the diaspora. Because of this, the immigration of about one hundred thousand Armenians must be organised. Soon there will be a government decree on this. You in your turn must help us with this. ⁷⁹¹

Cheorekchian expressed his joy over such plans. In June 1945 he was elected the Catholicos of all Armenians and Echmiadzin was able to function on terms that had Stalin's blessing. During the convention that elected the new Catholicos, the Armenian Sovnarkom held a special meeting with delegates – who raised the issue of the return of foreign Armenians to the homeland. Hazel Hofman notes that the Communist ideology was downplayed in favor of Armenian patriotism and the Church. "The Soviet maneuver to secure the backing of the Armenian Church was a critical aspect of its propaganda process. Armenian clergy became involved in the plea to Armenians worldwide to return

⁷⁹⁰ "Zayavleniye zamestitelya Verkhovnogo patriarkha – katolikosa vsekh armyan arkhiyepiskopa Georga (Cheorekchiana) Predsedatelyu SNK SSSR I.V. Stalinu", *Otechestvenniye arkhivy*, 3 (1995), 65.

to the "fatherland."⁷⁹² Khachig Tololyan points out that the Armenian Church and clergy were always the real leaders of the community.⁷⁹³

Prior to that, on 15 May 1945 Grigoriy Arutunov – leader of the Armenian SSR – sent a letter to Josef Stalin requesting the resettlement of Armenian refugees from abroad to Soviet Armenia. Arutunov was emphasizing the need for acceptance of war refugees from Bulgaria and Romania. On 6 June 1945 Stalin received Grigoriy Arutunov and they discussed the issue of "historical Armenian territories in Turkey." There was a particular focus on the territories that the Russian Empire possessed in 1878-1917. Stalin instructed Molotov to raise this matter with Turkey. At the same time, Stalin and Arutunov discussed the issue of repatriation of Armenians from abroad to Soviet Armenia. Arutunov also raised the issue of Karabakh and Nakhichevan in Azerbaijan. The next day, Molotov called Sarper, the Turkish ambassador, and once again put forward the territorial claims on Kars and Ardahan along with other issues – i.e. the bilateral treaty and the problem of the Straits.

On 4 July Grigoriy Arutunov and Deputy Chairman of the Armenian Sovnarkom S. Karapetyan sent a letter to Molotov reminding him about the previous letter dated 15 May, whereby the leadership of Armenia raised the question of the resettlement in Soviet Armenia of 30-40 thousand Armenians – mainly from Romania and Bulgaria. In the letter, the Armenian leaders had also stressed that the Armenians in Greece suffered from persecution, and that out of 20,000 Armenians living there only 5,000 had Greek

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 ⁷⁹² Hazel Antaramian Hofman, "From James Dean to Stalin: the Tragedy of the Armenian Repatriation", accessed on December 16, 2013. http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Regions-and-countries/Armenia/From-James-Dean-to-Stalin-the-tragedy-of-the-Armenian-repatriation-121168
 ⁷⁹³ Khachig Tololyan, "The Role of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the Diaspora." *Armenian Review*,

vol. 41, no. 1, (1988): 56–68.

794 Gasanly, SSSR – Turtsiya, 230-231.

⁷⁹⁵ This matter will be discussed in the following subchapter.

citizenship. Thus, Yerevan requested the relocation of 15,000-20,000 Armenians from Greece. ⁷⁹⁶ In the fall of 1945, Arutunov once again reminded Stalin about the Armenian resettlement, and emphasized that this might have exerted influence on many Armenian communities abroad.

The Armenian communities abroad enthusiastically supported the Soviet claim on the Turkish territory. For them it represented an opportunity to strengthen the historic homeland, especially in anticipation of the territorial expansion to Turkey. Here nationalist sentiments prevailed over ideological differences. The Armenian National Council of the United States appealed to other Armenian organizations for the unification of Armenian historical lands under the Soviet umbrella, as well as the resettlement of Armenians from abroad. The Armenian Catholicos also voiced his support for the territorial rearrangement. He appealed to Britain and the United States to second the desire of the Armenian people on the territorial question. At the same time, the Catholicos wrote to Stalin on the resettlement: "The Armenian people are firmly convinced that the Great Russian people will aid them in realizing their patriotic and humane aspirations of recovering their national patrimony." On 21 November 1945 the Sovnarkom adopted a decision to allow "the return of foreign Armenians to Armenia and affirmed the plan" of the resettlement.

The Soviet appetite for territory grew and Moscow also demanded a part of the Black Sea strip in Turkey, where mostly the Georgian-related Laz minority resided.

Moscow wanted to harness this momentum and perceived that weakened Turkey would

⁷⁹⁶ Gasanly, *SSSR – Turtsiya*, 230-231.

⁷⁹⁷ Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, 167.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 167-168.

⁷⁹⁹ Gasanly, SSSR – Turtsiya, 278.

cede and succumb to Soviet influence. An American intelligence source summarized the failure of Soviet territorial claims and the Armenian question as follows:

The strategic and political consideration regarding the Middle and Near East in general weight infinitely more than championship of Armenian irredentism [...] As a by-product, however, the Armenian question is played up both as a good pretext for the Soviet claims and as an effective means of enlisting the sympathy and or support of Armenians throughout the world.800

According to the Sovnarkom's decision on 21 November 1945, 360,000 Armenians planned to resettle to Soviet Armenia from abroad. Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, France, and the United States were identified for potential source of Armenian migration. On 22 February 1946, Stalin signed a document on the implementation of measures to ensure the repatriation of foreign Armenians to Soviet Armenia. 801 Diplomats at the Soviet embassies in the respective countries were charged to solicit and supervise the resettlement. A few days later, on 26-27 February, the Armenian SSR discussed the question of the reception and accommodation of the Armenians from abroad. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a decree on 19 October 1946 to grant Soviet citizenship to Armenians immediately upon their arrival on Soviet soil. The Committee on the Reception and the Resettlement of Armenians was established in Yerevan. The repatriates were allowed to bring personal properties, furniture, and tools and were freed from custom duties. The Soviet government covered 50 percent of the cost of housing and building individual units for the settlers. The Armenian authorities made efforts to allocate and construct

 ⁸⁰⁰ Quoted from Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, 173.
 ⁸⁰¹ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1056, 45.

housing for settlers, provide jobs, and even to adapt the curriculum to students from abroad 802

The repatriation began in June 1946 with the immigration of 50,000 Armenians in the course of several months – mainly from Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania. 803 Most Armenians (except Iranian ones) were migrating to the USSR by ships to Batumi in Georgia, where they were carefully scrutinized by Soviet intelligence for potential problems. The first group of Armenians left Beirut in June 1946, 804 followed by a group of 2,000 migrants from Greece. 805 Pro-repatriation diaspora organizations, such as Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) as well as the Armenian Church, organized the fund-raising for the settlers. 806 While many enlisted for the departure, the actual number of migrants was less than was planned. In 1947 about 35,000 Armenians arrived to the USSR. 807 By the end of 1948, 86,000 Armenians moved into the USSR. 808 The slow pace of migration, as compared to the planned resettlement, caused the Kremlin and Armenian Communist authorities to emphasize the necessity of strengthening propagandistic works in diplomatic missions abroad. On 7 August 1948, the Politburo discussed the issue of repatriation of Armenians and concluded that the process should continue. Soviet propaganda put an especially strong emphasis on the migration of

⁸⁰² Schechtman, Population Transfers in Asia, 65-67

⁸⁰³ *Ibid*, 58-59.

⁸⁰⁴ Nicola Migliorino. (Re)constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria: Ethno-Cultural Diversity and the State in the Aftermath of a Refugee Crisis, (Oxford: Berghahn, 2007), 94.

⁸⁰⁵ Süleyman Seydi, "The Armenian Question in the Early Cold War: Repatriation Scheme", Review of Armenian Studies, vol. 1, no. 3, (2003): 47.

For the best detailed account of the Armenian repatriation (especially from the Middle East) as well as their local conditions in the Armenian SSR see cited earlier: Yousefian, "The Postwar Repatriation". 807 Gasanly, SSSR – Turtsiya, 374.

⁸⁰⁸ Mirzoyan, "Sovetskiyi praviteli".

American-Armenians, who had become "disillusioned" by the realities of the capitalist world. 809 However, the number of migrants from the United States was very small.

From Iran, mainly Isfahan, between 1946 and 1947 about 26,261 people departed for Armenia, with a total of 23,489 people finally managing to arrive. According to the results obtained, rural migrants formed 49.37% of the displaced population, whereas the urban migrants formed 38.49%. Lina Malekian assesses that "generally, the mass repatriation of the Armenian-Iranians in 1946-1947 did not play a positive role in the lives of the migrants. They faced serious difficulties in their historical land. The disastrous post-war economic conditions directly affected the newcomers' lives and drastically influenced the process of adaptation to the new realities, which were completely unfamiliar to the Armenians of Iran. Those who had already arrived in Soviet Armenia tried to signal to others not to move. The Soviet intelligence traced all such communications and tried to suppress the flow of information between the diaspora and the repatriates in Armenia.

According to Albert Hourani, the majority of Armenian communities in the Middle East were in favour of the return. However, while some of them were willing to move to Soviet Armenia, others were afraid of Soviet rule and thus desired to return only after Armenia gained independence. "The great majority of Armenians [...] practically all of them, except the small minority who have property or large interests in Syria and Lebanon [...] desire ultimately to return to the Caucasus and rebuild their national life

⁸⁰⁹ Schechtman. Population Transfers in Asia, 65.

Lina Malekian, "The Mass Repatriation of the Armenians from Iran in 1946-1947 (Some Statistical Data)", *Iran and the Caucasus*, 11 (2007): 295-296.
 Ibid, 298.

⁸¹² Gasanly, SSSR – Turtsiya, 313.

there." The Soviet attempts to enlarge the Armenian territory played a positive role in attracting Armenians. Many began viewing this Soviet gesture as an opportunity to recreate Great Armenia. However, the *Dashnaks* (who continued their political activity as émigrés) did not support the relocation; they issued a proclamation and brochures advocating for the establishment of independent Armenia and underlining the necessity to struggle against Turkey. 814 Nevertheless, the Soviet claim was an opportunistic moment for the Armenian nationalists. In this regard, the Soviets were to some extent embellished in the eyes of the nationalists. From April 30 through May 4, 1947, the Pan-Armenian World Congress was held in New York with about 700 delegates from 22 countries and 31 Church eparchies, with the goal of again raising the issue of "return of Armenian lands seized by Turkey."

Hazel Hofman remarks that "in most cases, there was a common thread: more often, a nationalistic, or at times, a socialist-leaning decision was made by a patriarch or a matriarch, who uprooted their family in response to an emotional global appeal encouraged by Soviet propaganda." Susan Pattie remarks that many Armenians, especially in the Middle East, were deprived and poor, and for them it was a chance to connect with the homeland and start a new life. Overall, many Armenians became convinced that the life in Soviet Armenia might open up better prospects. The reality was much worse and for some even tragic. The Soviets were suspicious of possible *Dashnak*, anti-Soviet elements and spies among the repatriates. As a child of repatriates, Hazel

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Albert H. Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World*, (London – Toronto - New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 37

⁸¹⁴ Gasanly, *SSSR – Turtsiya*, 263-264.

⁸¹⁵ Aris Ghazinyan, "Waiting on the Dream: The Comings and Goings of the Armenian State Reality." *AGBU Magazine*, January 7, 2011, accessed on December 5, 2013,

http://www.armenianow.com/special_issues/agbu_magazine/26845/waiting_on_the_dream 816 Hofman, "From James Dean to Stalin".

⁸¹⁷ Pattie, "From the Centers to the Periphery", 114.

Hofman remarks, "the repatriates were headed not to the romanticized, vast ancient land of their forebears, but to a 'sovietized' Armenia under Stalin. It was a migratory event complete with personal and spiritual dispossession, and cultural disparity."⁸¹⁸

The Soviet resettlement project of Armenian from abroad, just like the Tsarist one, had a similar feature; the authorities did not make necessary preparations for accepting and accommodating settlers. The repatriates faced several challenges: first of all, financial and material difficulties, as the Soviets were not well prepared for the accommodation of migrants. In addition, the post-war economic situation greatly aggravated the adaptation process. Secondly, for many Armenians who lived for several decades and centuries outside of Russian Armenia, there was a cultural shock, exacerbated by the harshness of the Stalinist regime. Divisions led to a different treatment of foreign Armenians, whom local Armenians occasionally pejoratively called "akhbar," meaning literally "brother" but which became used as a derogatory term. The Communist system was also another contributing factor to the disenchantment with the homeland. "Within the Soviet glass house" every movement of Armenian migrants appeared to be monitored. 819 For those who were disappointed, there was no official way back to their countries. Some attempted to cross the border illegally, but on most occasions they were arrested and ended up in prison or in exile in Siberia. 820

Some Armenians adapted to the environment. "They found government work or had a lucrative trade or profession that allowed them to cultivate a reasonably profitable

⁸¹⁸ Hofman, "From James Dean to Stalin".

⁸¹⁹ Tom Mooradian, *The Repatriate. Love, Basketball, and the KGB. An Untold Story from behind the Iron Curtain,* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 324.

⁸²⁰ In 1949 the Soviet authorities organized the deportation of Armenians to Altay region: Natalya Ablazhey, "Deportatsiya armyan v Altayskiy kray v 1949 g.", *Gumanitarniyi nauki v Sibiri*, 1 (2011): 47-53.

place for themselves. Others knew how to work the system by bribing officials."821 Joanne Laycock suggests that over time, the narratives of the repatriation became more tragic than they were in reality, as for some poor Armenians in the Middle East the Soviet homeland gave better opportunities. 822 However, Tom Mooradian, a repatriate from the United States who moved to Soviet Armenia and then managed to escape back in 1960, gave a negative picture of the life of Armenian migrants in the USSR in his memoir. 823 The experience of repatriates was different, and we do not have many sources since most Armenians in the Soviet Union were unable to express their genuine opinion.

In May 1947 Arutunov reported to Stalin that some Armenians had attempted to return illegally. 300 repatriates had expressed the desire to move back to the countries of their former citizenship. 824 Considerable resistance to repatriation in the Armenian diaspora was manifested by the *Dashnaks*, who could not reconcile with the fact that their governed independent republic was ruled then by the Soviets, along with the respective ideological divide. The party continued the active political life as émigrés and attracted many Armenians in the diaspora. As noted, even they had welcomed the idea of the expansion of the Armenian homeland, but the divide was wide and exhibited strong resistance of the *Dashnaks* to the Soviet influence in the Armenian diaspora. For example, the *Dashnaks* promoted the creation of independent from Echmiadzin Armenian church, believing that the Armenian official church in Armenia and abroad

Hofman, "From James Dean to Stali"n.
 Laycock. "The Repatriation of Armenians", 150-151.

Mooradian, *The Repatriate*.

⁸²⁴ Gasanly, *SSSR – Turtsiya*, 473-476.

was under the Soviet control. Some members of the *Dashnaks* supported the Nazis and formed a legion fighting the Soviet army. 825

On September 1, 1948, a fire broke out on the board of the Soviet ship "*Pobeda*" (Victory), carrying about 2,000 repatriates from Egypt, which killed 42 passengers heading to Batumi in Georgia. On September 13 Stalin sent a telegram to Georgiy Malenkov, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (CC CP), indicating that the incident was the work of Armenian spies recruited by the United States. On next day, September 14, the Council of Ministers passed a confidential decision to halt the Armenian repatriation process. ⁸²⁶ In October 1948, as an exception, the Politburo allowed 269 Armenians to migrate, and the last group of 162 repatriates arrived in February 1949. As a result of the 1946-1949 repatriation, instead of the planned 360,000 from 12 countries, only 90,000-100,000 moved to Soviet Armenia. "This sudden influx of diasporan immigrants represented 9 per cent of the 1946 Soviet Armenian population of 1.2 million."

After the end of repatriation, the change in attitude of the Kremlin toward the Armenian immigrants was sharp. Besides ideological problems and suspicion over anti-Soviet activities, many repatriates were driven by the idea of Greater Armenia as a strong and possible future independent homeland. Such enthusiasm apparently compelled people who were strongly attached to nationalist ideas to move to the USSR. The Communist leaders of the Georgian and Azerbaijani SSR's complained about a visible trend of

⁸²⁵ Ronald Suny. "Soviet Armenia", in *The Armenian People From Ancient to Modern Times, vol. 2:* Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century, ed. by Richard Hovannisian, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 366-367; Antranig Chalabian, *Dro (Drastamat Kanayan): Armenia's First Defense Minister of the Modern Era,* (Los Angeles: Indo-European Publishing, 2010).

⁸²⁶ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 39, 104.

⁸²⁷ This is approximation. Various studies give slightly different figures. I used Razmik Pannosian, *The Armenians*, 361.

nationalism among new Armenian migrants. Moscow accused the settlers of supporting the *Dashnak* ideas, although probably among migrants the *Dashnaks* were not prevalent as this party opposed the resettlement. On 4 April 1949, the Politburo adopted a decision on the "Deportation of the *Dashnaks* residing in the Armenian and Azerbaijani SSR." On 11 April a similar decision was taken with regard to the Georgian SSR. Along with the *Dashnaks*, the Kremlin also deported Greeks to Kazakhstan and Siberia. 13,000 Armenians and 7,500 Greeks were deported from the South Caucasus. 829 The cleansing also affected the remaining Turks, with regard to whom the Politburo passed a separate decision. These steps were caused by greater suspicion of Moscow toward any ethnic group which might have strong linkages with brethren abroad.

Thus, the resettlement projects for Armenians designed by Moscow ended tragically. Western countries treated the whole repatriation scheme with suspicion, as it was preceded by the Soviet territorial claim toward Turkey. They believed that Moscow was using Armenian national sentiments to advance its own geopolitical interests. For example, the British Foreign Office reached the conclusion that various Armenians and their diasporic organizations were used "for what might be no more than the strategic advantage of the Soviet Union" with far reaching consequences – to dominate the Middle East and have access to its oil resources. ⁸³⁰ It was clear that Communist Moscow's rapprochement with the Armenian Church was designed to obtain the support of Armenian communities abroad. Soviet Armenia and various nationalists were exploited to gain territory. Similarly, the Tsarist Empire exploited the "Eastern Christians,"

⁸²⁸ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 40, 140-141.

⁸²⁹ Gasanly, SSSR – Turtsiya, 504.

⁸³⁰ Süleyman Seydi, "The Armenian Question in the Early Cold War: Repatriation Scheme", *Review of Armenian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, (2003): 53.

including Armenians, in the 19th century to expand territorially into the South Caucasus at the expense of the Ottoman and Persian empires.

However, the consequences of the game with Armenian nationalism affected Azerbaijan, as Stalin after the failure of territorial expansion approved the deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia in 1948-1953. The whole set of territorial problems in the South Caucasus was revived, and the flirtation with the Armenian Communists and the Church in terms of territorial expansion led to the continuous appeal from both to transfer the Azerbaijani and Georgian territories to Armenia.

6.3. The Deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia, 1948-1953.

This section investigates the reasons and process of the resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia in 1948-1953, which was sanctioned by Josef Stalin under the official mantle of strengthening the cotton-growing industry in the Kura-Araz lowland region of Azerbaijan. The decree, which the Soviet leader signed in 1948, contained also a clause on the necessity of vacating places in Armenia for foreign repatriates – the project discussed in the previous section. This and previous resettlement projects are closely intertwined with earlier territorial disputes that overwhelmed the relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the period of 1917-1921, and made the relationship between Armenians and Turks a tense one. In Azerbaijan there were strong sentiments that Armenia's expansionist attempts and mistrust towards Turkic-speaking Azerbaijanis were one of the conducive factors for the removal of the Azerbaijani population from Armenia.

In sum, geopolitics coupled with the complex issues of ethno-territorial disputes was the main culprit of the Azerbaijani resettlement from Armenia. Vladislav Zubok notes that the deportation of Azerbaijanis was a sort of gesture by Stalin to compensate for unfulfilled promises to Armenians to gain territories from Turkey. "Stalin managed to bring the regional politics, destabilized by his foreign policy adventures, back under control."

To date there is no study on the Azerbaijani resettlement of 1948-1953 in Western literature. Not much is written in Russian-language academic literature; however, some studies were done in Azerbaijan, which consider the resettlement as deportation from an angle of Armenian aggression. My analysis of the Azerbaijani resettlement is heavily based on the archival sources available in two national institutions: the State Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ARDA) and the Archive of Political Documents under the Administrative Department of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ARPIISSA), which contains many Soviet era documents.

The deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia resurrected the territorial disputes as well as ignited the nationalist sentiments. The process of resettlement exhibited the lack of management, poor coordination, under-funding and other problems which were prevalent in the Soviet bureaucracy. In certain aspects it resembled the Tsarist practices of the resettlement when people were hastily thrown in and out of lands without proper preparation and planning. Another similarity can be found in the support of Tsarist and Soviet authorities to the Armenian leaders in advancing the resettlement of population

⁸³¹ Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 58.

⁸³² Bakhtiyar Najafov, *Deportasiya*, vol. 3. (Baku: Chashioglu, 2006); Atakhan Pashayev, *Ermenilerin Azerbaydzhan khalgına garşı erazi iddiaları, soygyrymlary ve deportasiyalar (XIX-XX esrler)*, (Baku: Chashioglu, 2011).

with the ambition to modify the administrative and demographic landscape of the South Caucasus. In this regard, the issue of Karabakh, Zangezur and other territories which became the subjects of early disputes re-emerged.

After the territorial dispute between Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan was resolved in 1921-1923 – which resulted in the creation of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province (*Oblast*) NKAO, the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic within Azerbaijan, and the transfer of Zangezur region to Armenia – the two Soviet entities peacefully coexisted as "brotherly" Soviet republics until the end of the Second World War. According to the new Soviet Constitution of 1936, each of three South Caucasus republics – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia – formed separate entities (between 1922-1937 they had existed within the Transcaucasian Federation). In terms of economic significance and manpower, Azerbaijan – as the centre of the Soviet petroleum production – was the strongest. In the meantime, a significant segment of the party and state apparatus was in the control of non-Azerbaijanis. In Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, the percentage of the Armenian population continued to rise (see Appendix with charts).

Throughout the Soviet period, Moscow monitored any sign of nationalistic sentiments among ethnic groups closely, and acted swiftly to silence and thwart dissent from nationalists. The Kremlin arrested and executed several thousands on trumped-up charges of various types of nationalism during the purges of the 1930s. In 1955 the general prosecutor of the Azerbaijan SSR reported on the purges of the 1930s:

According to the NKVD, the entire population of Azerbaijan was covered by counter-revolutionary activities and were members of various counterrevolutionary organizations. Old members of the Party were declared enemies of Soviet power, the governing Party and Soviet workers recruited each other easily into various counter-revolutionary organizations, Azerbaijanis became Musavatists, Russian workers fought for the

establishment of a bourgeois-nationalist government in Azerbaijan and aged professors were registered as militants of terrorist groups. 833

The most frequent accusations in Azerbaijan were related to pan-Turkism, pan-Islamism, and nationalism. Similarly, in Armenia and Georgia thousands of people were arrested, exiled and executed – being accused of various counter-revolutionary and nationalist activities. The war changed the situation; as Vladimir Zubok notes, after Stalin's unfulfilled promises to Armenia and Georgia about the return of "ancestral lands" in Turkey, the leaders of these republics "began to scheme against Azerbaijan". 834

The emergence of the territorial claim in 1945 on the part of Soviet Armenia towards the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan was a unique and bold gesture, especially during Stalin's rule. Therefore, it could not have happened without prior consultation with some high officials in Moscow. Historian Gamlet Mirzoyan reports that on 6 June 1945 Grigoriy Arutunov, the First Secretary of Armenian Communist Party, was received by Josef Stalin. While they discussed the "Armenian territories" in Turkey, Arutunov also raised the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan. Stalin replied: "You think that it is easier to resolve a border issue within the Soviet Union? Did you discuss this issue with Bagirov [Communist leader of Azerbaijan]?" Arutunov replied in the negative. 835 One of the Communist leaders of Azerbaijan, Gasan Seyidov, wrote in his memoir that Mirjafar Bagirov, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, in the fall of 1945 met in Moscow two influential members of the Soviet Politburo: Anastas Mikoyan, an Armenian, and Lavrentiy Beria, a Georgian. They told

⁸³³ ARPIISSA, f.1, op.168, d.33, 12. 834 Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 58

⁸³⁵ Mirzoyan, "Sovetskiyi praviteli Armenii".

him that soon Iranian Azerbaijan would be attached to the Azerbaijani SSR, and the size of his republic would be significantly enlarged. They joked that after that, Bagirov would agree to transfer NKAO to Armenia and some other Northern regions of Azerbaijan to Georgia. Bagirov replied that it was too early to think of such arrangements. 836

In November 1945, two months after the end of the Second World War, Grigoriy Arutunov addressed a letter to Stalin requesting the transfer of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) of Azerbaijan to Armenia. 837 Arutunov in his letter emphasized the strong economic and socio-cultural ties of the Nagorno-Karabakh region with Armenia, and referred to the "wishes of the population" of the region, which was "predominantly Armenian." He also stressed that by transferring NKAO to Armenia, the local population would receive a better education and better service in the Armenian language. This was a strong challenge to the Soviet hierarchy when a leader of one republic spoke on behalf of the part of population of another republic. Arutunov, justifying the transfer of NKAO to Armenia, highlighted three factors: ethnic composition, economic ties and common language.

Stalin, who usually took decisions on his own, expressed no opinion on this important and sensitive issue. Instead, the Soviet leader wrote to Georgiy Malenkov, secretary of CC CP, and on 28 November 1945 Malenkov forwarded the letter to Mirjafar Bagirov requesting him to respond to the proposal. 838 Bagirov responded relatively quickly on 10 December 1945 with the bold title "On the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and inclusion of three regions of Armenia, one region of Georgia and two

⁸³⁶ Ismayilov, Vlast i narod, 219.

⁸³⁷ Partarkhiv Armyanskogo filiala IML pri TsKPSS, f.1, op. 25, doc. 41, 1: Quoted from Kh. Barsegian, *Istina dorozhe,* (Yerevan: Izdatel'stvo Armyanskoy SSR, 1989), 120. ⁸³⁸ ARPIISSA, f.1, op. 169, d. 249, 7.

regions of the Dagestan Autonomous Soviet Republic – all regions consisting of Azerbaijanis – to the Azerbaijani Soviet Republic."⁸³⁹ The title itself gave a clear answer: if the Soviet leadership was going to redraw the borders of one Soviet Republic based on ethnic affiliation of its regions, then it should expect far-reaching consequences for all Soviet entities. Bagirov underlined that NKAO was a part of Karabakh khanate, which was "attached" (*prisoyedinen* – Bagirov avoided the word "conquered") to the Russian Empire in 1826. He further noted that Karabakh was a part of *Musavatist* Azerbaijan in 1918-1920, and inter-ethnic clashes there in 1918-1920 were organized both by *Musavatists* and *Dashnaks*. The Azerbaijani leader described the situation of 1923 when the transfer of the mountainous part of Karabakh to Armenia was under consideration, but it was declined because the region did not have a common border with Armenia and was surrounded by regions inhabited by Azerbaijanis.

The Karabakh problem would re-emerge in the middle of the resettlement process of 1948-1953, as Moscow ordered some Azerbaijanis to be moved from this region to other parts of the republic. Apparently, Armenian Communist leaders acted from a nationalist perspective – trying to increase their physical presence in Karabakh – and relied on Moscow in advancing this goal.

Further on in the letter Bagirov profiled the work done by the Azerbaijani

Communists to develop the infrastructure, economy and cultural life of the NKAO.

Having mentioned all these factors, Bagirov then wrote, "we do not object to the transfer of NKAO except the Shusha region" emphasizing its cultural heritage for Azerbaijan and the role which the population of Shusha played against "Persian aggressors." Here Bagirov tried to underline the pivotal role of Karabakh in the Russian advance to the

839 ARPIISSA, f.1, op. 169, d. 249, 8-12.

South Caucasus in the 19th century. In the letter the Azerbaijani leader also moved to reciprocate the territorial claim against Armenia, pointing to three regions of Armenia (Azizbekov, Vedino, Karabaglar) populated mainly by Azerbaijanis and adjacent to Azerbaijan. "Taking into account the economic and cultural backwardness of these regions, their transfer to Azerbaijan will give the opportunity to improve material, social, cultural and political conditions." Bagirov then raised a number of other territorial issues. He mentioned that "comrades from Georgia" would like to transfer three regions of Azerbaijan to them. Despite the fact that only 9,000 Georgians out of the total population of 79,000 lived in these three regions (Belakan, Zagatala, Gakh), "we do not object to such a transfer provided that the transfer of Borchali region of Georgia to Azerbaijan, the region populated almost exclusively by Azerbaijanis and adjacent to Azerbaijan, will be also considered". In his last remarks, Bagirov also put forward a territorial claim towards the Dagestani ASSR – two regions of which were populated by Azerbaijanis and were part of the Baku governorate in Tsarist Russia. 840

The response showed the confidence of its author. Apparently, Stalin by transferring this letter to Malenkov did not want to impose any decision on Azerbaijan and Bagirov. There is a scarcity of sources about the consideration of this issue by the Soviet leadership. Perhaps the Soviet dictator was unsure how to proceed with the Armenian territorial claim towards another Soviet Republic. As discussed earlier, in 1921-1923 Stalin supported the preservation of Karabakh within Azerbaijan and a formula was found with regard to the creation of an autonomous status. In 1945 Stalin supported three important initiatives that served the interests of not only the Armenian Communists but also the diaspora and even those nationalists who were previously

⁸⁴⁰ ARPIISSA, f.1, op. 169, d. 249, 12.

suppressed by Soviet ideology. As discussed previously, these issues were related to the Soviet territorial claim towards Turkey with regard to "Western Armenia", the re-opening of an Armenian religious centre in Echmiadzin and the repatriation of Armenians from abroad.

Such support emboldened the Armenian Soviet leader Arutunov to advance another territorial claim towards Azerbaijan. However, this time the matter concerned another "brotherly" Soviet Republic and Stalin showed hesitancy. Legally, according to the Soviet Constitution of 1936, the border and territory of Soviet republics could not be changed without the consent of the republics involved. Only on a handful occasions did the Soviet leaders change borders between Soviet republics prior to the Second World War. Two minor changes concerned border regions between Soviet Ukraine and Belorussia, and Belorussia and the newly-created Lithuanian Soviet Republic. The third case was related to the Moldovan Autonomous Republic, which was detached from Ukraine and along with territories gained from Romania was upgraded to the status of a Soviet Republic. All these changes occurred in 1939-1941 when the Soviet Union, as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939, acquired new territories in Eastern Europe. Karabakh was an exceptional case and, if the transfer had occurred, would have significantly changed the borders between two republics. Moreover, it was related to the historic dispute between two ethnic groups (well-known to Soviet leaders) that the Soviets tried to resolve in the 1920s. As Bagirov's response made evident, the territorial changes could open a Pandora's box of redrawing borders among Soviet ethnic groups – the box which was shut down by the Soviets in the 1920s. Thus, the issue of the territorial transfer from Azerbaijan to Armenia was resolved again on the basis of the previous decision and only reappeared after two decades, in the 1960s.

The Azerbaijani Soviet leader Mirjafar Bagirov demonstrated determination in defending Azerbaijani territories. In Azerbaijani historiography his role for preserving the Republic's territorial integrity has been assessed very positively. However, in the meantime, Bagirov's name is associated with the purges of the 1930s and executions and exiles of many Azerbaijani intellectuals. Similarly, in Armenian historiography, the First Secretary of the Communist Party Grigoriy Arutunov (who served during the most brutal period of the Stalinist regime, 1937-1953) is assessed positively due to his efforts to expand the Armenian territory and to support the Armenian Church.

This entire prelude to the Azerbaijani resettlement of 1948-1953 exhibited the role of the ethnic and religious factors and the problem with the territorial expansion both at imperial Soviet Union and nationalistically republican levels. All these features were also present during the Armenian resettlement campaign in 1828-1831. The role of local actors in soliciting St. Petersburg/Moscow's action in the borderland was also significant – although without larger imperial ambitions their voices would not have been heard by policy-makers in the capital.

Two years after Arutunov's letter and the subsequent failure to gain Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from Azerbaijan, on the wave of the repatriation of Armenians from abroad to Soviet Armenia the Republic's Communist leadership appealed to Moscow to resolve another issue; this time the issue was related to "the lack"

⁸⁴¹ Ismayilov, *Vlast' i narod*, 7, 31-51; Adıgözal Mammadov, *Bash tutmamış chevrilish*, (Baku: El-Alliance, 2007); Adıgözal Mammadov, *Mir Cefer Bagirov: achilmamish sehifeler*, (Baku: El-Alliance, 2010)

^{2010).} ⁸⁴² Mirzoyan, "Sovetskiyi praviteli Armenii".

of lands and properties for arriving Armenians. The solution was suggested again at the expense of "brotherly" Soviet Azerbaijan – to resettle Azerbaijanis from Armenia to Azerbaijan, which would allow granting vacant land plots and properties of transferred Azerbaijanis to newly-arriving Armenians from abroad. The Armenian leadership justified such assistance by the fact that Azerbaijan allegedly needed labour to develop cotton production in the Kura-Araz lowland. Apparently, such reasoning sounded well and relevant for the Soviet economy; however, it looked otherwise to be a simple justification for the deportation of Azerbaijanis from rural areas as Armenians from abroad were mostly urban dwellers, and only a handful of them resettled in villages. Moreover, the Azerbaijani population resided in the mountainous zones of Armenia, while their final destination in Azerbaijan was the Kura-Araz lowland with its peculiarities – such as the cotton-growing industry. The Azerbaijani population in Armenia lacked the necessary skills to develop the lowland's specific agriculture, which ought to have been expanded. The archival sources are silent on the question of whether Moscow, Yerevan and Baku discussed this issue. Apparently the discussion was held informally and the decision was made in favour of the Armenian request.

In December 1947, the Communist leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan jointly signed a letter addressed to Josef Stalin about an agreed plan on the resettlement of 130,000 Azerbaijanis from Armenia to "underpopulated cotton-producing *rayons* (districts) of Azerbaijan in order to vacate lands and dwellings for the reception and accommodation of foreign Armenians." The letter emphasized the shortage of labour in Azerbaijan's cotton-growing areas, and the proposed solution was meant to hit two targets: the economy in Azerbaijan, and housing in Armenia (for repatriates from

843 ARPIISSA, f. 1, op, 222, d. 72, 1-2.

abroad). On 27 December 1947 the Council of Ministers of the USSR passed a decision "On the resettlement of Soviet farmers (kolkhozniks) and other Azerbaijani populations from the Armenian SSR in the Kura-Araz lowland of the Azerbaijani SSR."844 The resettlement was planned to be implemented in 1948-1950 on a "voluntary basis" and, in accordance to the plan, 10,000 Azerbaijanis should be resettled in 1948, 40,000 in 1949, and 50,000 in 1950. The Soviet authorities also took responsibility to provide transportation and financial assistance of 1,000 rubles per family and additionally 300 rubles per person, credit up to 20,000 rubles for 10 years for housing, and 3,000 rubles for obtaining cattle. The document signed by Stalin also granted permission to Armenian authorities to use vacated houses for the accommodation of Armenians from abroad. On 10 March 1948 the Council of Ministers adopted a much more detailed instruction on the procedure of the resettlement, as well as protocol for resolving various issues related to transfer of kolkhoz property, salaries and payments from the Armenian to the Azerbaijan SSR. In addition, Moscow applied the 17 November 1937 Law "On Benefits for Rural Resettlement", which concerned mainly settlers in Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Far East, to Azerbaijan.

In the meantime, on 2 February 1948 the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijani SSR adopted a classified document on measures for the preparation of the resettlement of *kolkhozniks* from Armenia to Azerbaijan, instructing local authorities in *rayons* to provide housing and land plots to settlers. Many Azerbaijani Soviet agencies were instructed to render necessary assistance to the resettlement process: the State Planning Committee, the Ministries of Agriculture, Water, *Sovkhozy* (State Collective Farms),

 ⁸⁴⁴ ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 13, 13-16.
 845 ARDA, f. 411, op. 33, d. 112, 55-69.

Health and many others. Such broad involvement meant that the authorities at union and republican levels at least were coordinating their work to smooth the transition and adaptation of Azerbaijani settlers. However, as events unfolded it became obvious that the process of settlement was poorly and hastily organized and replete with bureaucratic hurdles.

On 19 March 1948 the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (CC CPAz) discussed the measures on implementation of the resettlement plan. The Bureau dispatched Teymur Kuliyev, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan and Gasan Seyidov, CC CPAz Secretary, to Armenia, to coordinate the work of the two republics on the resettlement; Mursal Mamedov was also appointed to represent the Azerbaijani authorities in Armenia on this issue. 846 The Azerbaijan Council of Ministers adopted two instructions on 14 April 1948 and 13 May 1948 on the resettlement; the first one dealt with an explanation to republican authorities, and the second dealt with a detailed plan for resettlement. 847 At the same time, on 13 April 1948 the CC CPAz passed a decree "on the mass explanatory work among kolkhozniks and other settlers." ⁸⁴⁸ T. Kulivev and G. Sevidov visited numerous Azerbaijani-populated villages in Armenia, mostly in Zangezur area, and explained to the people "the advantages" of resettlement. On 5 July 1948 Kuliyev reported to Moscow that it was impossible to resettle the given number – 6215 people – to the Kura-Araz lowland, and requested permission to move them to other regions of Azerbaijan. 849

⁸⁴⁶ ARPIISSA, f. 1, op. 33, d. 24, 99.

⁸⁴⁷ ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 677, 68-78 and d. 678, 241-244.

⁸⁴⁸ ARPIISSA, f. 1, op. 33, d. 27, 19-20.

⁸⁴⁹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 601, 376-378.

Kulivev explained that the irrigation system was not vet built, and the land assigned for cotton growing had not been developed. He blamed the Union Ministry of Agriculture for failure to finance the project on the development of the Kura-Araz lowland. Therefore, he requested to resettle the Azerbaijani population residing in mountainous areas to other regions, including around Baku, to develop vegetable growing, and in general to similar climatic zones in which they lived in Armenia. In accordance with his plan, in 1948 only 5,303 Azerbaijanis were to be resettled in the Kura-Araz lowland and 4,697 in other regions of Azerbaijan; and in 1949 20,000 to be settled in the Kura-Araz lowland and 20,000 in other regions. However, Moscow did not accept Kuliyev's request, and gave instructions to proceed according to the previous resettlement target. At the end of May, Moscow demanded acceleration of the resettlement process and subsequently a team of Azerbaijani representatives was dispatched to Armenia to strengthen "explanatory work". The Division on the Economic Development of Population Evacuation and Resettlement of Kolkhozes was transformed into the Resettlement Administration of the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan. Further, six types of housing were prepared for settlers and a special construction agency "Azpereselenstroi" (Azerbaijani Resettlement Construction) was created. 850

For the initial resettlement of 90,000 people, Baku needed 20,000 residential premises, the construction of schools, water and sewage systems, other services and administrative buildings – which would cost a total 400 million rubles. ⁸⁵¹ On 13 May 1948 the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan adopted a plan to resettle 10,945 people

⁸⁵⁰ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 601, 244-247.
851 ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 267-269.

from Armenia in 1948. 852 The Azerbaijani authorities, in order to provide sufficient financing, reduced the non-targeted capital expenditures for 300,000 rubles and channeled this money to meet the needs of settlers. Additionally, 3,000 rubles were allocated for the development of irrigation in the Kura-Araz lowland, and 8,000 were sought from budget reductions by the end of 1948. 853

Among various instructions related to the transfer and accommodation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia, one document shows the underlying nature of the resettlement design: the decision of the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan with regard to the transfer of Azerbaijani-language department of Pedagogic University of the Armenian SSR to Azerbaijan. 854 While Stalin's decision on deportation was explained as a necessity to move rural Azerbaijanis to the Kura-Araz lowland, it is unclear why the university's section was moved from one capital to another. The decision adopted on 1 July 1948 by the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan does not contain any explanation. The document also provided for the transfer of the Pedagogic College (uchilishche) from Armenia to Khanlar city (today's Goygel) in Azerbaijan, which is located far outside of Kura-Araz lowland.

Further, the resettlement plan was stretched to include other segments of the Azerbaijani population. On 26 July 1948 the Minister of Metallurgy of the USSR – I.T. Tevosian – instructed Azerbaijan to resettle Azerbaijani miners (around 100 families) from the Kafan region of Armenia to develop the Dashkesan ore mining areas in Azerbaijan. 855 Another case was related to the organization of new sovkhozes upon a

⁸⁵² ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 678, 241-244.

⁸⁵³ ARDA, f. 411, op. 17, d. 388, 51.

⁸⁵⁴ ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 21, 22-23. 855 ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 15, 27.

decision of the USSR's Ministry of Agriculture. The Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Armenian SSR A. Piruzian informed T.Kuliyev that Moscow had adopted a decision dated 29 September 1948 to create new *sovkhozes* to grow olive and subtropical cultures in the Lembeli and Kerpulu villages of Armenia – and therefore requested Baku to accept Azerbaijani settlers from those settlements. Apparently Yerevan planned to settle Armenians in these *sovkhozes*. In this regard, the head of the Resettlement Administration A.Gezalov sent a letter to Kuliyev on 26 October 1948 emphasizing that "the government of Armenia managed to gain a decision from the Union's government to organize an olive-growing *sovkhoz* on the territory of this [Lembeli] *kolkhoz*" and "many *kolkhozniks* do not want to resettle". These two examples demonstrate that the Armenian Soviet leadership possibly used the extensive network of Soviet high officials of Armenian origin – such as the Minister of Metallurgy I.T. Tevosian – to pass the decision on expanding the spectrum of Azerbaijani resettlement.

In June 1948 the first 44 settlers began arriving to Azerbaijan's Zhdanovsk rayon (today's Beylagan) having brought their belongings, and were accommodated in refurbished houses and provided with necessities by local authorities. It was imperative for the Soviet authorities to show to other potential settlers that they would be accommodated well after their departure from Armenia. Both in Armenia during departure and in Azerbaijan upon reception, official ceremonies were organized by the Communist authorities. By 1 November 1948 Teymur Kuliyev reported to Georgiy Malenkov, Deputy Chairman of the Union Council of Ministers, that 7,747 settlers

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⁸⁵⁶ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 580, 152.
857 ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 580, 149-150.

arrived in Azerbaijan. 858 Additionally 2,834 people moved from Armenia to Azerbaijan without a permit.

Kuliyev, in defiance of Moscow's previous instructions on the resettlement in the Kura-Araz lowland, reported that due to the shortage of housing and appropriate land plots, some settlers were redirected to other regions of Azerbaijan – especially because of "insistent requests of settlers from Armenian mountainous regions about the inappropriateness of the climatic conditions of the lowland belt". See Kuliyev also complained that Armenian kolkhozes did not provide final payment to settlers for their working days, nor did the estimation of settlers' property transfer relevant compensation to kolkhozes in Azerbaijan. Kuliyev was alarmed that additional measures should be adopted to prevent the movement of settlers without permits. Here, the concern of Azerbaijani leadership was two-dimensional: political and related to state control.

Primarily, the concern was related to the prevention of movement of people in the USSR beyond proper authorization and control. Members of a *kolkhoz* in Stalin's Soviet Union were deprived of internal passports and could only legally move from one place to another after receiving special permission (a resettlement ticket - *pereselencheskiy bilet*). Urban dwellers also had restrictions on voluntary movement within the Soviet Union (although these were much more flexible) and had to be registered in their place of residence to obtain a residence permit (*propiska*). Even prior to the official start of the resettlement some Azerbaijani families were to begin moving to Azerbaijan without permits. In March 1948, Azerbaijani authorities (Bagirov and Kuliyev) sent a secret instruction to all local Azerbaijani officials with clear prohibition to accommodate such

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⁸⁵⁸ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 71-74. 859 *Ibid*.

settlers. ⁸⁶⁰ Most illegal settlers moved into Azerbaijani regions neighbouring Armenia such as Kazakh, the local leader of which reported that 8 families arrived in March 1948. ⁸⁶¹

The Head of Azerbaijan's Resettlement Administration, N. Brutents, reported that in Kirovobad (today's Ganja, the second largest city in Soviet Azerbaijan) and other Armenian-neighbouring regions of Azerbaijan – i.e. Kazakh, Shamkhor, Akstafa, and Gedabek – around 200 families arrived illegally. In Kirovabad settlers arrived from Yerevan. 862 Brutents saw the reason for this problem in the lack of information with regard to the resettlement process from Armenia to Azerbaijan. Some Azerbaijanis from Armenia decided to move to the Azerbaijan SSR, hoping to receive rumoured benefits. Apparently they had a preference to live in the Republic of their brethren, where they hoped to have more advantages in terms of career promotion and the use of their native language. Some Azerbaijanis were expressing discontent that in Armenia they were oppressed, and hoped to have better life in Azerbaijan. 863 Here was the second dimension of the problem linked indirectly to the question of settlers without permits pointed out in the above-mentioned letter of Kuliyev to Malenkov. Even though it was not openly voiced by the Azerbaijani authorities, it is apparent Kuliyev tried to attract the attention of Union's authorities to political problems which arose from the resettlement.

Archival records indicate strong opposition to and discontent with the resettlement. For example, Javakhir Nazarova wrote a letter dated 11 April 1948 to Stalin

⁸⁶⁰ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 1.

⁸⁶¹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 15.

⁸⁶² ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 8-10.

⁸⁶³ This opinion was registered in a confidential report by the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Armenian SSR discussed below (ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 65-75).

complaining about the forced resettlement. 864 Nazarova wrote that her native village, populated by Azerbaijanis, was founded 130 years ago, where "my grandparents were born and died". Further, Nazarova emphasized that since her husband died in the Great Patriotic War (World War II) she alone had brought up four children, hoping they would help her, "and now my hope is destroyed forever." She complained that the whole village was instructed to move to Azerbaijan, despite the fact no one wanted to do this. "What is this instruction based on? [...] I understand that this contradicts our Constitution – the basic Law of the USSR. I am a citizen of the USSR with equal rights. I want to stay in my home and will work with my Armenian brothers wherever I am needed". Another Azerbaijani, Ali Seyidov, complained in his letter to Stalin that he had spent money on the construction of his house and had to leave it and resettle somewhere else. "Resettlement means that we will lose a big chunk of our property and people." 865

In turn, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Armenian SSR, Grigorian, submitted a confidential report dated 3 May 1948 about problems related to the resettlement. 866 Grigorian related numerous complaints and discontent expressed by the Azerbaijani population with regard to the resettlement plan. He also stressed that there were incidents when "enemies used such a negative mood, carrying out anti-Soviet activity and interpreting the resettlement as an act of mistrust of the Soviet authorities towards Azerbaijanis in the case of a war with Turkey".

As discussed in the previous section, Moscow was advancing territorial claims toward Turkey and the border remained highly militarized. As Turkey moved in the second half of the 1940s closer to the United States, the anti-Turkish rhetoric in the

⁸⁶⁴ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 45-46.
⁸⁶⁵ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 47.
⁸⁶⁶ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 65-75.

Soviet Union became stronger. Azerbaijanis, who until 1936 in Soviet passports were identified as "Turks," felt uncomfortable with any association with Turkey and Turkishness. The official Soviet propaganda and educational system had already began to forge the new "history" of Azerbaijan since the 1930s, distancing it from the Turkic heritage. 867

While the Armenian Minister of Internal Affairs reported an "overall positive reception of the resettlement plan", some "anti-Soviet elements" tried to undermine the process. According to Grigorian's evaluation, discontent was caused by several factors: firstly, Azerbaijanis did not want to move from mountainous regions to lowlands; secondly, the poor organization of information-propaganda; thirdly, the lack of and delay of material compensation; and, fourthly, the inaction of Azerbaijan's Resettlement Administration. The report highlighted a number of incidents indicating the discontent of the Azerbaijani population. Resident Kafar Akhmed oglu of the Tapakoy village stated his belief that the whole Azerbaijani population of Armenia would be deported and their property would be given to foreign Armenians. Khan Akhmed oglu Ismayilov declared: "It is untrue that the resettlement will be voluntary. We will be treated just like the Azerbaijanis of Akhalkalaki – we will be put in train cars and deported to Kazakhstan". 868

In expectation of their property and cattle being granted to foreign Armenians, some Azerbaijanis killed their stock. Abbas Aliyev and Ismayil Ragimov from the Geygumbat village related: "We are working in a *kolkhoz* in vain. All our production will be granted to Armenians. In general, it is hard to live with Armenians because they

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⁸⁶⁷ See more on this Harun Yilmaz, "The Soviet Union and the Construction of Azerbaijani National Identity in the 1930s", *Iranian Studies*, vol 46, no. 4, (2013): 511-533.

⁸⁶⁸ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 68.

oppress us and even in the *kolkhoz* they do not give us relevant work". Ibrahim Nasirov from village Ranchpar asserted:

It [resettlement] will be carried out because the Soviet authorities, being afraid of a Turkish attack, do not trust Azerbaijanis who reside in the borderland. Secondly, Soviet Armenia intends to gather all Armenians in order to create a state independent from the Soviet government [...] According to the plan of the secretary of the Armenian SSR A. Khandjian, Armenians from all corners of the world must arrive, and Nakhichevan should be joined to Armenia, and all Azerbaijanis should be resettled to Azerbaijan. And now Khandjian's dream is coming true. Recently, I have heard that the Armenian government demanded Nakhichevan, but that the government of Azerbaijan declined this demand.⁸⁶⁹

Another Azerbaijani, Gamid Mamedov, remarked: "How can Azerbaijanis and Armenians live in friendship? Historically there was animosity between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and there will be in future. Therefore, Armenians decided to resettle Azerbaijanis from Armenia. I destroyed my house so that no one will get it after me". Seyfulla Suleymanov from the village of Zangilar argued: "We should not live in Armenia. If war breaks out, Armenians will massacre all of us". On another end of the spectrum, some Azerbaijanis refused to move even under possible threat. Bashir Tagiyev, head of the *kolkhoz* of the village of Siznak said: "Better to die in one's native village, than to move to another place". Jalal Kurbanov from the village Jamartlu attested:

Many people do not know what kind of heat occurs in Azerbaijan. In 1918-1919 we, Azerbaijanis, escaped from Armenia to Nakhichevan. We were 14 people, and after two years only three of us survived. The rest of the 11 people died from heat and illnesses. This is Nakhichevan, but Mingechevir is much worse. Many, many victims we will have.870

Grigorian reported that rumours were spread that the Armenian authorities would not give material compensation, and as a result Azerbaijanis stopped working and they destroyed their orchards and farms. He also emphasized that some provocative statements were made by Armenians as well. Ervand Mesropian from Yerevan posited that "All Azerbaijanis must be deported not only from Armenia but also from Nakhichevan, which should be annexed to Armenia". Several Armenians remarked that the resettlement of Azerbaijanis was connected to the possible war with Turkey and stressed the existing mistrust of Moscow towards them.

Overall, this report showed the failure of the Soviet policy on nationalism in the South Caucasus and its inability to cope with the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict. Mistrust was still strong among the two ethnic groups, and by approving and implementing the Azerbaijani resettlement plan, Moscow further instigated animosity between the two ethnic groups – instead of suppressing it, which the Soviet authorities had partly succeeded in doing in the 1920s. The resettlement of Azerbaijanis also demonstrated the possibility of a territorial claim in the future. Azerbaijanis in Armenia appeared aware of official motives for transferring the Azerbaijani population from Armenia to Azerbaijan. Although the rumour about the war with Turkey was not an unreasonable explanation, two other arguments voiced by the Azerbaijanis – Armenia's expansionist attempt and mistrust towards Turkic speaking Azerbaijanis – were at the core of the resettlement plan. As was seen from Grigorian's report, no Azerbaijani could accept the official explanation: the necessity of developing the Kura-Araz cotton-growing industry. Obviously the question arose of why the Soviet authorities had decided to move the Azerbaijani population from the mountainous areas to the underdeveloped lowland,

which was not ready to accept settlers. (The Mingachevir water reservoir, which strengthened the irrigation system of Kura-Araz lowland at that time, was not ready. It was completed in 1953 and reached full capacity in 1959).

It should be noted that in the USSR at that time some other resettlement projects were implemented with official economic goals. For example, in Tajikistan a significant portion of the mountainous population was resettled for the purpose of increasing the cotton-growing industry. In addition, in Central Asia people were uprooted during the construction of hydro power plants. However, even in those cases frequently the security and political considerations were conducive to the population transfer, or as Kassymbekova put it, "human bodies were being used, quite literally, to secure and territorialize space". ⁸⁷¹ In Central Asia the projects of domestic resettlement had political and military rationales to secure the Soviet southern borders with Afghanistan. In northern frontiers such as Karelia, Moscow had removed Finns and settled Russians in

The development of the resettlement in the South Caucasus demonstrated that, firstly, the Armenian authorities were in a rush to deport Azerbaijanis to harness the political momentum from the USSR's anti-Turkish campaign; secondly, the Azerbaijani authorities were not prepared enough to accept settlers; and thirdly (most importantly) Moscow did not actively intervene in the settlement process, frequently leaving the two

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⁸⁷¹ Botakoz Kassymbekova, "Humans as Territory: Forced Resettlement and the Making of Soviet Tajikistan, 1920–38", *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no. 3-4, (2011): 349.

⁸⁷² Nick Baron, Soviet Karelia: Politics, Planning and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1920–1939, (London: Routledge, 2012); Galina Bol'shakova, "Osobennosti gosudarstvennoy pereselencheskoy politiki v 1940-1960 - ye gody na Karel'skom peresheyke", *Izvestiya Rossiyskogo Gosudartsvennogo Pedagogicheskogo Universiteta*, 59 (2008): 197-202; Liliya Gerashchenko, "Pereselencheskaya politika sovetskogo gosudarstva na Karel'skom peresheyke v 1940–1950-kh gg. v dokumentakh Leningradskogo oblastnogo arkhiva v g. Vyborge", *Izvestiya Rossiyskogo Gosudarstvennogo Pedagagocheskogo Universitteta*, vol. 76, no. 1, (2008): 103-106.

republics to sort out all problems on their own. The communication between Yerevan,
Baku and Moscow showed that the latter did not provide sufficient funds to organize the
life of settlers in new places, nor did it instruct and coordinate various union and
republican agencies. In this regard, having considered the history of both Soviet
resettlement and deportation policy, the Azerbaijani resettlement from Armenia
resembles deportation rather than resettlement.

In a report dated April 12, 1948 – submitted by the Azerbaijani representative in Armenia Mursal Mamedov to the First Secretary of CC CPAz, Mirjafar Bagirov and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Teymur Kuliyev – several problems were raised before Azerbaijan's leadership, and Mamedov requested that these issues be resolved with the Armenian communists. 873 Mursal Mamedov reported that the Armenian authorities planned to resettle 11,244 people in 1948 from 53 mixed Azerbaijani-Armenian settlements. Mamedov also informed that two settlements – Lembeli of Noyamberian rayon and Mekhmandar of Zangibasar rayon – had large kolkhozy. He predicted that if these two settlements were resettled separately in 1948, then they would be split into small pieces and dispersed; thus, to preserve their unity and integrity Mursal Mamedov requested the Armenian authorities to postpone their resettlement until the Azerbaijani authorities were ready to accommodate them in a single settlement. However, Mursalov reported that the Armenian Council of Ministers had declined his request, "arguing that the resettlement of these two villages has social-economic significance." Further Mursalov, noting the "great enthusiasm of Soviet kolkhozniks" to resettle to Azerbaijan, reported at the same time that many Azerbaijanis raised the question of compensation for their property, and the obstacles created by Armenian heads

⁸⁷³ ARDA, f.1984, op. 1, d. 85, 95-98.

of *kolkhozes* in violation of Article 4 of the decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR dated 10 March 1948. Mursalov also stated that many Azerbaijanis from Yerevan expressed a desire to move to Azerbaijan due to the lack of jobs in Armenia. "It is understandable that the necessity to provide jobs to Armenian repatriates from abroad influenced this problem" noted Mursalov in his report, and stressed that Azerbaijanis would like to settle in Baku, Absheron, Kirovabad and several borderland regions with Armenia with a similar climate. Mursalov requested that Bagirov and Kuliyev raise these problems with Armenian Communist leaders Arutunov, the First Secretary of CC CP of Armenia, and Karapetian, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers⁸⁷⁴.

As the resettlement continued to unfold, initial problems remained and in some cases worsened. Problems can be categorized as the following: firstly, there was resistance to so-called "voluntary" resettlement to Azerbaijan. Secondly, Armenian authorities and local bureaucrats were creating various hurdles to force settlers to move without proper compensation, and leaving most of the property and belongings in Armenia. Thirdly, the Azerbaijani side poorly managed the arrival and accommodation of settlers. Fourthly, Moscow had not allocated sufficient funds to ensure construction of housing and other necessities to settlers. Finally, there was unauthorized movement beyond the control of the Soviet surveillance machine, which caused Moscow, Baku and Yerevan together to be concerned. Such unauthorized movement was in two directions. Some Azerbaijanis were crossing the Republic's territory settling in new places without permits, and some settlers moved back to Armenia due to difficulties with adaptation in new places.

⁸⁷⁴ ARDA, f.1984, op. 1, d. 85, 98.

The following cases illustrate a wide range of issues related to the resettlement: poor preparation and management, numerous hurdles and obstacles that led in some cases to fatalities. Poladov from the Zhdanovsk region of Azerbaijan complained that the Yerevan banks did not dispense money to settlers, referring to the lack of instruction on this matter. 875 Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the USSR, S. Khoshtaria, pointed out in his letter to the chairs of the Council of Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan that Azerbaijani settlers in Armenia did not receive reimbursement and their property was not being assessed. 876 Inspector of the Resettlement Administration of Azerbaijan, M. Magerramov, reported on 19 July 1948 that the head of railway station Kamarlu in Armenia, Pogosian, created numerous obstacles for settlers. Pogosian intentionally delayed the arrival of train cars, prevented people from loading hay, insulted settlers and ordered the departure of the train earlier than had been planned. As a result, "two women and a man could not board the train, and a 12-year-old boy fell from the train and hit his head". 877 The head of Resettlement Administration under the Council of the Ministers of Azerbaijan, N. Allakhverdiyev, reported on 13 January 1949 the above-mentioned and other numerous problems with individual settlers, and emphasized that "as a result of lack of daily care and attention to the needs of settlers" about 69 households (khozaysty) moved back to Armenia. 878 N.Allakhverdiyev also reported about some fatalities in Safaraliyev district.

Resident of Lembeli Ali Seyidov complained to Mirjafar Bagirov that despite the principle of voluntary resettlement, the whole village of Lembeli was forced to move to

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⁸⁷⁵ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 580, 174.

⁸⁷⁶ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 80.

⁸⁷⁷ ARDA, f.1984, d. 85, s. 7, 86.

⁸⁷⁸ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 23-27.

Azerbaijan. No *kolkhoznik* agreed to resettle during the meeting, and the second meeting was conducted under pressure from the Armenian Minister of Internal Affairs. "Comrade Bagirov!" exclaimed Ali Seyidov in the letter, "we are subjected to flouting and bullying. We do not know the order of resettlement, and we would like to know whether the resettlement is voluntary or compulsory. Also, we do not know what will happen with our belongings [...] therefore, we appeal to you, comrade Bagirov, to take into account that we have lived for a hundred years in our motherland". 879

While many Azerbaijani residents of Armenia requested to stay in the Armenian SSR, another solution was proposed by the villagers of Nuvedi of the Megri region of Armenia. The residents of *kolkhoz* "Gyrmyzy Serhed" (Red Border) of Nuvedi sent a letter to Stalin, informing him that Nuvedi village belonged to the Zangilan region of Azerbaijan until 1920, and requesting to transfer the whole village under the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan without resettling its population. 880

Due to the unpreparedness of the Azerbaijani authorities to accept settlers, in 1948 most new arrivals were accommodated in barns and other agricultural and industrial facilities. Settlers were not receiving enough food and other necessities, and schooling for their children was poorly organized. Local authorities – administrative, financial, and medical – showed ignorance and apathy towards newcomers. The Armenian leadership accused the Azerbaijani side of undermining the resettlement plan. Some Azerbaijani settlers also moved to Nagorno-Karabakh, and the local Armenians accused of the Azerbaijani authorities of directing settlers there. Moreover, local Armenians in Azerbaijan complained about the pressure which Azerbaijani settlers exerted on them. In

⁸⁷⁹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 580, 151. 880 ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 34, 48.

the Shamkhor region of Azerbaijan, Armenians sent letters to Moscow and Baku complaining about the oppression (pritesneniya) from the Azerbaijani settlers. Especially strong opposition to the arrival of Azerbaijani settlers came from local bureaucrats in the Martuni district of NKAO.

The Azerbaijani settlers had also complained to Mirjafar Bagirov about the harassment from Armenian managers in the region. They informed that those local Armenian managers had roots with the criminal and nationalist forces, including the Dashnaks Settlers in Leninakand recounted:

Here, the group of Armenians organized persecution (goneniya) against us; we cannot live peacefully; they are bourgeois offsprings (otpryski), nationalists, and write against us reports (*donos*). These people are Uzunian Arutun – expelled from the [Communist] party for the embezzlement of kolkhoz property and imprisoned for 5 years, and Grigorian Usik – expelled from the party and imprisoned for 5 years. Z. Shakhnazarian Gurgen from Armenia, whose father was a *Dashnak*, concealed this information and entered the party [...]⁸⁸¹

Azerbaijanis further informed the Azerbaijani leader that the local Armenian managers wanted to relocate them from Shamkhor. In this case, the Azerbaijani settlers wished to return to Armenia.

The Deputy Chairman of Shamkhor RIK [region executive authority] Khodjyan stated at the meeting that he has 150-200 cases against the settlers from Armenia... Comrade Bagirov, we shed our blood for the liberation of our Motherland. If we are expelled from here, then, why we are resettled from Armenia? Once you decided to expel us from here, please agree with comrade Arutunov to return our farms in Armenia and we will return there. 882

⁸⁸¹ MTNA, P-39, d. 1, 262. ⁸⁸² MTNA, P-39, d. 1, 262.

The growing number of problems forced Azerbaijan's Resettlement Administration to set up a joint commission and discuss this problem with NKAO's leadership. There were 570 Azerbaijani settlers who arrived in Martuni in August 1948. 883 Not all children were provided with schooling, and in the village of Guneychertare "a teacher of Azerbaijani language was fired without due explanation by the head of Martuni *rono* [district's education board] Comrade Ulubabayan, and the instruction of Azerbaijani language was assigned to the director of the school, who barely knows the Azerbaijani language." ⁸⁸⁴ Another Azerbaijani teacher, Museyib Makhmudov, was dismissed. There was a lack of newspapers, journals, books and other literature in Azerbaijani language in libraries. Fifty eight kolkhoznik-settlers were not provided with jobs and fifty percent of allocated residences required restoration and refurbishment. The Commission blamed the heads of the district of Amirkhanian and Bakhshian, who ignored the fate and problems of settlers. In the village of Gishi of the same Martuni district in Nagorno-Karabakh, settlers complained that local authorities refused to give them compensation and credits as well as pensions and other benefits stipulated by the legislature. 885

Certainly, neither Armenian Communists nor local bureaucrats wished to receive settlers in Nagorno-Karabakh; nor did the Armenian authorities wish to allow Azerbaijani settlers to move to "undesirable" destinations in Azerbaijan. Thus, when Baku suggested moving Azerbaijani settlers from the Vedin *rayon* of Armenia to the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, the Armenian Council of Ministers did not give its consent, citing the reason as "the lack of labour for agricultural work in the above-

⁸⁸³ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 3-6. 884 ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 6 885 ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 109-110.

mentioned *rayons*."⁸⁸⁶ In turn, the Azerbaijani side (to justify the need for kolkhozniks in Nakhichevan) passed a decision on 27 August 1949 "On the measures to develop cottongrowing *kolkhozes* in Nakhichevan ASSR" which stipulated settling 500 households from the Norashen region of Armenia. ⁸⁸⁷

Clearly under the official Soviet rhetoric about brotherhood and economic needs, two republics moved to fight for their territories. The resettlement in question opened up a clandestine battle between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia tried to cleanse – or at least reduce – the number of Azerbaijanis, while preserving within Azerbaijan compact pockets of Armenians. Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan were territories that Armenia claimed in the 1920s, as the Union of the Soviet Republics was established and the borders of individual republics were formed. Therefore, Armenian leadership and local actors in Azerbaijan were quite sensitive to the possibility of settlement of Azerbaijanis in these two territories. Azerbaijan, facing pressure from Moscow and Yerevan along with economic difficulties, tried to accommodate settlers for its own benefit and to gain some tactical "convenience." Yerevan – apparently supported by Moscow – managed to win this fight.

In September 1949, Azerbaijan's government was instructed to resettle not only Azerbaijanis from Armenia, but also from Nagorno-Karabakh. In a report from N.Allakhverdiyev to Deputy Chairman of the Council of the Ministers of Azerbaijan I.K. Abdullayev on the status of the resettlement process dated 2 September 1949, Allakhverdiyev informed that 132 households or 529 people were resettled from the NKAO to the Khanlar region of Azerbaijan.

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⁸⁸⁶ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 102, 8. 887 ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 19, 39.

This period, in general, was characterized by intense nationalistic arguments between Armenian and Azerbaijani SSRs. Mirjafar Bagirov raised the issue of historical research by some Armenian authors. First, in 1946 he attacked writer and journalist Marietta Shaginyan for declaring Karabakh to be Armenian land, and portraying the Azerbaijani people as backward and brutal in her book *Soviet Transcaucasia* (*Sovetskoye* Zakavkazye) – based on her 1927 journalistic essays "Lake Sevan." Bagirov complained to Andrei Zhdanov, secretary of the CC CP in charge of ideology, that Karabakh in the 1920s was depicted by Shaginyan as ruined, messy, disorganized and plagued by hunger, and that Shaginyan had praised the period when the region was under the Armenian meliks – thus "idealizing the meliks-landowners (pomeshchiks) as wise and noble masters". Moreover, Bagirov wanted to know why this essay that had been written 20-25 years before was being republished in 1946. 888 After the complaint reached its destination, the Shaginyan books were confiscated and she was forced to send an apology. Moscow in this regard tried to address some concerns of Azerbaijan and suppress nationalistic rhetoric from deteriorating the relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Further, Bagirov criticized Georgiy Kholopov's book Fires in bay (Ogni v bukhte), dedicated to the revolutionary period in Azerbaijan and the activity of Sergei Kiroy, the communist leader of the republic in 1921-1926. In Bagiroy's opinion, Kholopov excluded the Azerbaijani people from the revolutionary activities of the period described in the book, and this played into hands of Dashnaks. 889 Thirdly, the Azerbaijani side raised serious concerns over the scholarly publications by well-known Armenian academician Abgar Ioanissian. The latter was criticized first for his study of Armenian

 ⁸⁸⁸ Gasanly, SSSR – Turtsiya, 466-468.
 ⁸⁸⁹ Ismayilov, Vlast' i narod, 227-228; Gasanly, SSSR – Turtsiya, 470-472.

18th century hero Emin by his fellow academician Ashot Abramian, who identified some factual errors as well as a conceptual one (surely within the Marxist doctrine).⁸⁹⁰

Abramian noted Ioanissian's nationalistic attitude:

Prof. A. Ioanissian, when considering the relationship of the Caucasian peoples, sometimes descends to the position of the Armenian bourgeois-clerical historiography. Here is a small example. On page 198, describing the fact that I.Emin misled the Caucasian mountaineers, creating the impression that he wants to put up with the Georgian King Erekle, prof. A. Ioanissian adds: "In fact, he would not change a Georgian Christian to all Mohammedan Asians"⁸⁹¹

Ioanissian's other book, *Russia and the Armenian national-liberation movement in the* 80s of the 18th century, was severely criticized as portraying the whole Muslim population, especially Azerbaijanis, as anti-Russian. In 1950 he published an official apology for his inaccurate portrayal of the Azerbaijani role against Russia. ⁸⁹² Ioanissian in general was right in describing Muslim resistance to the Russian rule, but was wrong on particular cases, as some Muslim rulers (as discussed in Chapter 1) were inclined to accept and support Russia. However, the appearance of such a study in the Soviet Union was unacceptable for official ideology.

Moreover, the timing of the publication was symptomatic of the rise of Armenian nationalism in the aftermath of the Soviet territorial claim toward Turkey and the Armenian attempt to obtain the NKAO. The Armenian diaspora abroad also advanced its territorial claims to Azerbaijan and Turkey. For example, an Armenian newspaper in Iran

⁸⁹⁰ Ashot Abramian, "O nekotorykh oshibkakh prof. A.R.Ioannissiana, dopushchennykh v knige "Iosif Emin", *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR: Obshchestvennyye nauki*, 8 (1948): 61-68. ⁸⁹¹ *Ibid*, 67.

⁸⁹² Abgar Ioanissian, "Po povodu moyey knigi «Rossiya i armyanskoye osvoboditel'noye dvizheniye v 80-kh godakh XVIII stoletiya", *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk Armyanskoy SSR: Obshchestvennyye nauki*, 4 (1950): 83-88.

published an article in 1948 called "The significance of Nakhichevan for Armenia". ⁸⁹³ As the resettlement began, some Armenian nationalists hoped to harness this momentum and gain administrative and territorial concessions from Azerbaijan. The relationship between the USSR and Turkey worsened, despite the fact that Stalin retreated from his plan of territorial expansion. Only after Stalin's death did the Soviets renounce their territorial claims towards Turkey. ⁸⁹⁴

The second half of the 1940s was highly tense in terms of the Armenian-Azerbaijani relationship, and Bagirov was quite sensitive to any historical and territorial aspirations. On 25-29 January 1949, during the convention of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, Bagirov touched upon historical distortions in the work of some Armenian scholars, and Ioanissian's in particular. He demanded Azerbaijani historians mount a response to such falsifications. ⁸⁹⁵ In 1952 Armenia published the second volume of the textbook *Armenian History*, which drew the attention of reputable Soviet scholar and expert in the history of the Caucasus Zelik Yampol'skiy. Yampol'skiy sent a letter to Mirjafar Bagirov pointing out that the newly published textbook referred to Nakhichevan, Karabakh and other Azerbaijani regions as historical Armenian territories. Yampol'skiy opined: "More important is the political question: who needs now, in 1951, to convince [the public] that Azerbaijan is located on the territory of Armenia?" The answer lay in the inspiration which Armenian nationalists received in a series of actions blessed by the Kremlin, including the resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia. In the same period,

⁸⁹³ ARPIISSA, f.1, op. 222, d. 48, 14.

⁸⁹⁴ Yaacov Ro'I, From Encroachment to Involvement: A Documentary Study of Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1973, (Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1974), 106–107.

⁸⁹⁵ Gasanly, *SSSR – Turtsiya*, 496-497.

⁸⁹⁶ ARPIISSA, f.1, op. 245, d. 94, 34-39.

Bagirov was also fighting to refute Georgian claims on Azerbaijani territories – especially in the Gakh (Kakhi) region.

While this scholarly debate unfolded, the resettlement continued. The head of the Resettlement Administration of Azerbaijan – N. Allakhverdiyev – reporting 1948 results, informed that 198 out of 2174 households had not been resettled and asked the authorities to transfer them to other regions of Azerbaijan. 897 Allakhverdiyev also requested that the Azerbaijani authorities prioritize those who were supposed to be resettled in 1948 but were not as priorities for the 1949 resettlement – as those kolkhozniks had already sold their property. Further, he also requested that the plan of resettlement in 1949 be reduced to 15,000 people due to the lack of housing and land plots in the Kura-Araz lowland. 898 As people became reluctant to move to the Kura-Araz lowland, the republic's authorities refused to give those settlers benefits and compensation. Thus, on one end, in Armenia, settlers could not receive full compensation for their property, and on the other end, in Azerbaijan, those who settled outside the Kura-Araz lowland had to cope with problems on their own.

In April 1949, Azerbaijan and Armenia agreed on the establishment of a joint commission to make a proper assessment of the properties of kolkhozniks, and their due salaries. The Soviet resettlement plan for kolkhozniks stipulated that they would move strictly between two kolkhozes – from the Armenian to the Azerbaijani ones. This left no room for settlers to move to cities. However, due to a lack of coordination, some kolkhozniks continued to make their way to cities and other larger settlements in defiance of the resettlement plan. Besides kolkhozniks, a growing number of Azerbaijani urban

⁸⁹⁷ ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 20, 2. ⁸⁹⁸ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 231-237.

dwellers from Yerevan (mostly intelligentsia) were moving to Azerbaijan – which created a high rate of unemployment among this type of internal migrant.

Problems related to the accommodation of settlers became more complicated in 1949. On 13 January, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan Teymur Kuliyev complained to Malenkov that the Union's agencies did not finance "Azpereselenstroi" – a state construction company which was set up to meet resettlement needs. ⁸⁹⁹ In February, Azerbaijani officials complained about the lack of funding as well as the provision of defective construction materials for settlers. Besides, it became obvious that the credit allocated to settlers for housing – 20,000 rubles – was not an adequate sum. For the construction of a two-room house, between 22,951-40,287 rubles was needed. ⁹⁰⁰ It was unclear how the authorities were going to cover the difference between the approved credit and the actual cost.

Kuliyev, in his letter to Malenkov, requested that the resettlement plan be further reduced to 12,000-15,000 in 1949 instead of the original 40,000. He also emphasized the necessity on the part of the Armenian SSR to prevent the flow of settlers without permits. As a result, two republics agreed to plan the number of settlers in 1949 to 15,895. However, Moscow did not approve this plan and on 27 September 1949 the head of the Resettlement Administration of the Council of Ministers of the USSR – S. Cheremushkin – demanded from Kuliyev a report about the implementation of the initial plan to resettle 40,000. The available archival sources do not indicate what was the reason for Moscow's resistance despite the fact that both republics reached the agreement

⁸⁹⁹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 19.

⁹⁰⁰ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 159-163.

⁹⁰¹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 74.

⁹⁰² ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 240-243.

⁹⁰³ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 208.

on the reduction of settlers. It might be simply a game played out by Moscow and Yerevan; while the republican authorities in Armenia agreed formally on the plan, they pressed Azerbaijan to accept more settlers through the ethnic network in the Soviet capital.

By August 1949, only 2,000 Azerbaijanis were resettled; the main problem was related to the lack of voluntary settlers from the mountainous regions of Armenia to move to the Kuraz-Araz lowland, along with a deficit of housing in the destinations. 904 N. Allakhverdiyev, in his letter to his Moscow superior S. Cheremushkin, also pointed out that two other outstanding problems remained unresolved: the evaluation and compensation of the left properties of settlers and the dispensing of salaries to kolkhozniks in Armenia. In September 1949, Secretary of the CC CP of Azerbaijan Gasan Sevidov sent instructions to the heads of several rayons of Azerbaijan to take all necessary measures to fulfill the agreed plan of resettlement. At the same time, Kuliyev informed Malenkov that the USSR's Council of Ministers had assigned Azerbaijan's Resettlement Administration "with new tasks, which require a large volume of construction work for settlers; however, the existing organizational structure and staff of the [Resettlement] Administration does not correspond to those tasks, and they need revision ",905

Despite the active exchange of letters between Yerevan, Baku and Moscow, problems persisted. Allakhverdiyev reported in October 1949 to Cheremeshkin that the Armenian side was not ready to move 915 settlers. The problem was related to the lack of transportation, and Allakhverdiyev warned that with the arrival of the cold season it

⁹⁰⁴ ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 22, 1. 905 ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 267-269.

would be impossible to ensure the movement of Azerbaijani settlers from mountainous regions of Armenia. He emphasized that Azerbaijanis had already sold their properties and were not ready to meet winter in Armenia – and therefore should be resettled immediately. 906 To solve the problem with transportation, Azerbaijan allocated 60 tons of benzene. Besides the problem with auto transportation, numerous rail echelons did not depart on time, and stayed at stations for long periods. By the end of October 1949, only 4,000 people had moved from Armenia to Azerbaijan, 907 and by November their number approached 15.276 people – still far from the planned quota. 908 From 1948-1949, while 50,000 people were planned to transfer from Armenia to Azerbaijan, in reality 18,348 were resettled by 1 January 1950. 909 3600 households were transported by rail and 604 by automobile. Kuliyev explained to Malenkov that the underperformance was due to a lack of logistics for the construction of houses for settlers in their new places of residence, and again urged the Union's authorities to provide necessary materials. He requested the establishment of a quota for the ensuing years as follows: 1950 – 15,000, 1951 – 10,000, 1952 - 20,000, and 1953 - 15,000.

In July 1949, Moscow adopted the decision to create the Main Resettlement Administration (MRA) (*Glavnoye Preselencheskoye Upravleniye*) under the Council of Ministers of the previously titled Resettlement Administration of Sovnarkom. The charter of the administration was only drafted in November. Apparently, the need for better coordination and advancement of the resettlement policy caused the reorganization in the capital. During the post-war period, the Soviet Union intensified the population transfer

⁹⁰⁶ ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 23, 16.

⁹⁰⁷ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 266.

⁹⁰⁸ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 734, 288

⁹⁰⁹ ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 24, 2.

⁹¹⁰ ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 78, 51-52.

and migration policy aimed at reconstructing war-torn regions as well as developing new agricultural and industrial zones. (Later, in 1953 the Main Resettlement Administration was transferred under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture.). The period of 1949-1953 – from the creation of the above-mentioned unit until the death of Stalin after which the organized resettlement slowed down – was characterized on the one hand by the increase in personal accountability of local bureaucrats for underperformance with regard to the resettlement goals. On the other hand, the resettlements were conducted under conditions of austerity and a highly militarized economy. Documents pertaining to resettlements in Karelia, for example, indicated serious financial problems: underfunding of resettlement departments in payroll of employees as well as in the provision of the construction materials and payment of travel expenses, etc. 911

The period of 1949-1953 was also accompanied by other resettlements on a Union-wide scale, especially from the borderland areas. About 200,000 people were banished from the Baltic states, mostly as "bourgeois nationalists" and other non-loyal elements. Ukrainian western borders and Moldova were cleansed from the "remnants" of *kulaks* and other dangerous groups. 912 The Soviet authorities also banished some groups from the Caucasus – Moscow was worried that among Armenian repatriates, nationalists such as *Dashnaks* had penetrated the Soviet Union. Thus, already in May 1948 the Minister of State Security of the Azerbaijani SSR Stepan Yemel'yanov circulated an instruction to identify *Dashnaks* and other "anti-Soviet individuals" who were trying to move from Armenia to Azerbaijan. 913 In the summer of 1949 Moscow banished a small

⁹¹¹ Liliya Gerashchenko, "Pereselencheskaya politika sovetskogo gosudarstva na Karel'skom peresheyke v 1940–1953 gg", (PhD diss., University of St. Petersburg, 2009).

⁹¹² Polian, Against Their Will, 164-171.

⁹¹³ MTNA, orientation for 1948, vol. 1, 53.

group of Greek, Turks and Armenians from three republics – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia – to Central Asia. 914

In 1949 Azerbaijan was assigned the task of expanding the resettlement plan of Azerbaijanis from Armenia. In addition, Baku was tasked with defining areas that had surplus labour, and preparing the movement of people not only from Armenia but also internally from one region to another. 915 On 17 December 1949, the USSR Council of Ministers adopted a plan to resettle in 1950 3,500 families from Armenia to Azerbaijan. In January 1950, MRA's chief S. Cheremushkin dispatched a letter to T. Kuliyev with an instruction to organize the resettlement in a more efficient manner and provide the settlers with houses and land plots. 916 In another communication Chremushkin pointed to the shortages and problems related to the implementation of the resettlement plan in 1949. 917 Cheremushkin highlighted that only 28.3 percent of planned settlers moved from Armenia to Azerbaijan, or 11346 out of 40,000. Cheremushkin emphasized that the regional authorities in Azerbaijan lacked a plan for accepting settlers, and did not provide enough housing, land plots or logistical support.

The Azerbaijani authorities recognized the shortcomings of republican agencies in providing the settlers with houses, transportation and other necessities. The Council of Ministers and the CC CP of Azerbaijan issued in this regard a lengthy instruction to all agencies and regional authorities to speed up the resettlement process and ensure the major provision of settlers. Apparently in 1950 Moscow pressed Azerbaijan to ensure the implementation of the resettlement plan, as in previous years the target had been missed.

⁹¹⁴ Nikolay Bugay and Askarbi Gonoy, *Kaykaz: narody v eshelonakh (20-ve-60-ve gody)*, (Moscow: Insan,

⁹¹⁵ ARDA, f. 411, op. 9, d. 657, 33-35. 916 ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 21, 11. 917 ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 21, 34-37.

However, problems continued to persist in 1950. The construction of housing lagged behind the plan schedule, the accommodation was not sufficient, and settlers were not receiving enough funds and household items. From communication between regional authorities and Baku, it is clear that the republic's leaders were not interested in sabotaging the resettlement plan fearing reprimand from Moscow. Neither of the regional authorities did anything to intentionally derail the resettlement process. Rather, it was clear that the Soviet system was suffering from mismanagement, inertia and poor organization. Azerbaijani authorities created a commission to investigate problems, and on 31 May 1950 concluded that "the main problem in the economic accommodation of settlers is the lack of the construction by both "Azpereselenstroi" and settlers themselves". 918 Out of 3,500 planned houses, only 450 units were constructed in 1950. 919 In August 1950, Kuliyev obliged local authorities to organize the "warm reception of settlers" and provide enough transportation and houses. While the instruction of high officials such as Kuliyev was supposed to mobilize the local bureaucrats, the lack of resources prevented the full implementation of the planned measures.

In January 1950 the head of Azerbaijan's Resettlement Administration, N. Allakhverdiyev, informed the Council of Ministers that the authorities in Nakhichevan expressed the desire to accommodate 500 Azerbaijani families from Armenia; however, due to the location of Nakhichevan outside of the Kura-Araz lowland, the settlers could not receive state funding. 920 The Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan agreed to accept 500 families from Armenia in Nakhichevan by the spring of 1951. In the meantime, the

⁹¹⁸ ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 101, 107. 919 ARDA, f. 1984, op. 1, d. 99, 1-32.

⁹²⁰ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 21, 13.

Azerbaijani authorities strictly instructed regional administrations to prevent the acceptance of "self-settlers" (samovolnykh pereselentsev). 921

Overall, in 1950 the result of the resettlement was better compared to previous years. Out of 3,500 planned households, 3,107 were resettled – which fulfilled 88.8 percent of the target set by Moscow. About 400 households were retained by the Armenian authorities in order to fulfill "the agricultural plan". 922 N. Allakhverdiyev noted in the report on the implementation of the resettlement plan in 1950 that thanks to settlers, the Azerbaijani regions were successful in fulfilling the plan on the cotton harvest.

On 6 September 1950, the USSR Council of Ministers adopted a decision to resettle another 15,000 families from Armenia to Azerbaijan from 1951-1955. This decision came at the time when the repatriation of Armenians had ceased more than two years before. 923 However, Moscow still felt it necessary to move Azerbaijanis from Armenia. In the meantime, authorities in Moscow criticized Baku for significant shortages in the implementation of the resettlement plan in 1948-1949. The Main Resettlement Administration (MRA) informed Mirjafar Bagirov that the plan was implemented only by 41,5 percent and also blamed the "Azpereselenstroi" for the lack of needed construction. "Unreliable and dirty people were appointed to senior positions in this *trest* and its offices, who allowed the embezzlement of funds and materials," concluded Moscow. 924

⁹²¹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 21, 99.

⁹²² ARDA, f, 1984, op. 1, d. 99, 1-32.

⁹²³ ARDA, f. 3034, op. 1, d. 3, 39-42. 924 ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 125, 54-55.

The head of the Azerbaijani Resettlement Administration stressed that due to the sharp change of environmental conditions, many settlers needed special medical attention. Kolkhozniks, moving from the mountainous regions of Armenia to the Kura-Araz lowland and thrown into the fields to harvest cotton, seriously suffered. Another persistent problem was the lack of housing; "Azperselenstroi", blamed by all sides, was underfunded. N. Allakhverdiyev noted that the workers could not receive salaries for several months. The situation with discipline and management was another cause for troubles in the construction by this trest. He also stressed that on the Armenian side the problems outlined in previous years continued to obstruct the resettlement process; namely, the problems with the payment of salaries, obstacles in transferring livestock, and the sale of the property. Local authorities in Armenia, as well as those in Moscow, were not interested in facilitating the above-mentioned problems – all related to financial obligation and the loss of material benefits. Here, the Soviet solidarity of the workers and peasant class was also shattered by the parochial interests. On 25 April 1951, the head of one of Azerbaijan's banks – Selkhozbank – complained that the Armenian banks were transferring the debt of Azerbaijani settlers to Azerbaijani financial institutions. According to the complaint, the Armenian banks had deliberately misrepresented financial and statistical data. 925

On 31 January 1951, the MRA held a special meeting to discuss the problems with the resettlement process. The MRA again severely criticized the Azerbaijani agencies for underperformance and serious shortages. ⁹²⁶ The MRA's chief S. Cheremushkin noted that about 22.5 percent settlers or 743 families had returned to

⁹²⁵ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 81, 110-113. ⁹²⁶ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 81, 49-52.

Armenia. ⁹²⁷ T. Kuliyev, in his report to Malenkov, informed that from 1948 to April 1951 Azerbaijan received 8,018 households or 34,382 settlers from Armenia. About 309 households left Azerbaijan, and 860 moved to another region of Azerbaijan. T. Kuliyev noted that the people from the highlands could not adapt to the harsh conditions of the Kura-Araz lowland, and while 3,649 households had received housing 4,369 households were still in need. T. Kuliyev requested an increase of funding, and proposed that the Armenian side be encouraged to prioritize the resettling of those who expressed a desire to move to Azerbaijan – especially people living in the lowland areas of Armenia. ⁹²⁸ This latter point shows that the Armenians had their own priority in terms of depopulating certain areas in the Republic. The rationale was to empty the highland areas – most of which were adjacent to Azerbaijan – such as Zangezur, which was the point of a bitter dispute in 1918-1921. The archive contains letters from the Azerbaijanis to Josef Stalin, requesting to let them stay in Armenia. A. Ismayilov, resident of Ragim village of the Zangibasarskiy region of Armenia, wrote to Stalin:

Our dear father Stalin, I inform you that we were resettled from the Armenian SSR to the Azerbaijan SSR in 1950. We have arrived back to Armenia now because we cannot live in Azerbaijan; because of the climatic conditions, our children died there and now we are sick. Let us, dear father, live again in the Armenian SSR. 929

In 1951, Armenian authorities began complaining about the number of returnees. In response, Kuliyev suggested allowing the Azerbaijani settlers to move to highland areas of Azerbaijan in order to resolve the problem with returnees. However, an investigation

⁹²⁷ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 81, 73.

⁹²⁸ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 213, 63-66.

⁹²⁹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 139, 74.

revealed that only 215 families had returned back to Armenia from Azerbaijan, ⁹³⁰ while the Armenian side claimed that this number was about 360-376 families. ⁹³¹ Malenkov demanded a full explanation as to why people were moving back. T. Kuliyev blamed N. Allahvedriyev for neglect:

You must raise the whole Republic [to resolve this problem], but you think that it is normal that 250 people are returning. Do you know about the consequences of your behaviour?! Comrade Karapetian says that you create antagonism between Azerbaijanis and Armenians! 932

Allakhverdiyev received three reprimands (*vygovor*) for the shortcomings in the Resettlement Administration's work, but the situation did not improve significantly in 1951 – as only 50 families were convinced to move from Armenia to Azerbaijan. According to N. Allakhverdiyev, the Armenian authorities again did not facilitate the reresettlement of Azerbaijanis and did not provide sufficient logistical support. The problems with the repayments in Armenia and poor accommodation in Azerbaijan continued to obstruct the resettlement process. "While these lacunas exist" Allahvedriyev emphasized in the report about the resettlement process in 1951, "the removal of the problem of returnees is impossible". ⁹³³

Another clash between Armenia and Azerbaijan occurred with over 400 families of *intelligentsia* – teachers, doctors and other experts – whom Malenkov ordered to resettle from Yerevan to the Kura-Araz lowland. The Azerbaijani authorities objected that the area could not accommodate these types of settlers and that there were not

931 ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 163, 205-209 932 ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 163, 233-237.

⁹³⁰ ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 163, 211-214

⁹³³ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 296, 74-82.

enough jobs for them. ⁹³⁴ In 1952, the Armenian authorities recalled 75 teachers for their own need. N. Allakhverdiyev, in his communication to the authorities of Armenia and Azerbaijan, underscored that while Armenia complained about the returnees, "for unknown reasons [they] recalled back teachers as settlers". ⁹³⁵ The Armenian side in response explained that there was a shortage of Azerbaijani teachers in Armenia, and that they had dispatched these people by mistake. ⁹³⁶

Azerbaijan fulfilled 82.6 percent of the plan in 1951 or 909 households, which was an improvement compared to the previous years. 937 Thus, in the four years from 1948-1951, 8,948 families or 39,870 Azerbaijanis were resettled from Armenia. In January 1952, the USSR Council of Ministers set up a target for 1952-1954 at 3,000 households. 938 However, Armenian authorities complained that fewer and fewer people had expressed their desire to move to Azerbaijan. Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Armenia, A. Charchoglian, declared that due to this problem it was impossible to ensure the resettlement of 3,000 households. 939 However, 1952 was the most successful year, as the resettlement plan was fulfilled by 124.6 percent and 80 percent of housing was constructed. 940 Apparently after several years of failures, the Azerbaijani authorities gained more experience in tackling the problem related to the accommodation of settlers.

The resettlement continued in 1953, but slowed significantly after Stalin's death.

Overall, many projects which had begun on the Union level were put on halt by new

⁹³⁴ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 139, 58.

⁹³⁵ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 296, 70-73.

⁹³⁶ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 296, 86-87.

⁹³⁷ ARDA, f. 411, op. 28, d. 209, 2.

⁹³⁸ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 175, 29.

⁹³⁹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 26, d. 296, 62.

⁹⁴⁰ ARDA, f. 3034, op. 1, d. 636, 247-248.

leadership of the USSR. As the country was preparing to revise repressive policies, the fate of the Azerbaijani resettlement process had also changed.

In 1953-1954 many Azerbaijanis began returning, and in 1954 the Government of Azerbaijan dispatched a delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture M. Poladov to visit Azerbaijani villages in Armenia in order to determine the number of returnees and to convince them to move once again to Azerbaijan. According to the delegation's estimation, 1,500 households had returned back to Armenia. 941 The Armenian authorities also tried to convince the returnees to leave Armenia for Azerbaijan, and the Minister of Agriculture Gazarian instructed the local authorities "to explain to them that they lost the right to demand their houses possessed previously". 942 Poladov noted that while the returnees created tension in Armenia as they demanded their property, some Armenian kolkhozes welcomed them as they needed the labour force. Obviously, this situation proved that the official explanation about the necessity to vacate places for Armenian repatriates was a pretext, as Armenians from abroad mostly were settled in cities – while Azerbaijanis were removed from mountainous areas in the context of the Armenian agricultural sector needing a bigger labour force. The rationale of the removal of Azerbaijanis from the mountainous areas might be strategic in nature; the Soviet and Armenian authorities wished to expel the Azerbaijani population from sensitive areas which would be hard to control in case of alleged Azerbaijani support to Turkey.

Viktor Shnirelman, referencing the Armenian scholar Yuri Barsegov, indicates that the resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenia did not constitute a repressive

⁹⁴¹ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 277, 84-97. 942 ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 277, 95-96.

measure and that almost all Azerbaijanis after Stalin's death returned. 943 This argument is far from accurate. One of the reports by the Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan – dated 13 October 1953 – indicated that in 1948-1953 11,914 households or 53,000 people were resettled from Armenia to the Kura-Araz lowland. The number of returnees by the end of 1954 was about 1,500 households, or approximately 7,500 people – only 14 percent of all settlers from Armenia. Some Azerbaijanis might have continued to return back to Armenia, but it is unlikely that there was a significant number, since they could not get their houses back and the problem with the registration in *kolkhozes* (for unauthorised settlers) was also a significant factor in the Soviet system. We should add also around 1,000 Azerbaijani families who moved from Armenia without permits from 1948-1953. 944 Some Armenian authors argue that the Azerbaijanis moved to Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan. 945 The above-mentioned archival sources indicate that 570 Azerbaijanis were resettled initially in the NKAO, but after obstacles and harassment eventually 529 were moved outside the NKASO to Khanlar region. As for Nakhichevan, 500 households (around 2,500 people) were settled in the region.

However, the main question raised by Shnirelman and some Armenian authors is about whether this resettlement project was a repressive measure, or can be called a "deportation." As can be seen from the archival sources, most settlers were forced to move from Armenia to Azerbaijan; thus, in essence it was deportation. Surely, in terms of its repressive quality, the Azerbaijanis did not face the brutality of the Soviet system to the same degree as had fallen on the Germans, Chechens, or Meskhetian Turks —

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⁹⁴³ Shnirel'man, Voyny pamyati, 47.

⁹⁴⁴ ARDA, f. 411, op. 36, d. 139, 181-187.

⁹⁴⁵ Valeriy Gazaryan, "Imela li mesto deportatsiya azerbaydzhantsev iz Armenii v sovetskiye gody?" *Regnum*, accessed on January 17, 2014. www.regnum.ru/news/1657402.html.

although some families and individuals perished due to the harsh conditions of the lowland areas, left without proper housing and medical care. Yet this resettlement project should be considered, as Vladislav Zubok pointed out, within the process of ethnic cleansing in the Soviet borderland areas from potentially "disloyal elements" carried out by Stalin. ⁹⁴⁶ The official reasoning of the deportation of Azerbaijanis – the necessity to accommodate Armenian repatriates – was a very weak pretext, as manifested in this study by the whole resettlement process. First of all, instead of the planned 300,000-400,000 repatriates, only 90,000-100,000 arrived to Armenia. Secondly, the process ended in 1948, but the Azerbaijani resettlement continued up to 1953 – until Stalin's death – and perhaps would have been prolonged if Stalin had been alive.

The resettlement of 1948-1953 resembled the Tsarist practices in a number of ways. Besides the geopolitical dimension discussed above, Soviet instructions to resettle Azerbaijanis separately from Armenian inhabitations were similar to those of Russian imperial orders of the 1830s (discussed in Chapter 2) to split the Muslim and Armenian populations in Erivan khanate and later in the Armenian province, and prevent the mixing of the two populations. The issue of imperial territoriality – i.e. creating loyal spaces and making settlements easier to monitor by homogenizing the population – was present in the approach of both Tsarist and Soviet empires in the South Caucasus.

Another feature prevalent in many instances of resettlement practices of the Tsarist and Soviet bureaucracies was the lack of planning, management and coordination. Interesting to note in this regard is that even the Stalinist machine (which looked perfectly suitable for the exploitation of the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union) suffered from serious and chronic malfunctions caused by bureaucracy,

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⁹⁴⁶ Zubok, A Failed Empire, 58.

unprofessionalism and underfunding. Similar problems with the neglect of settlers existed during the Tsarist resettlement process in the South Caucasus in 1817-1831.

The resettlement of 1948-1953 had added greatly to inter-ethnic tension between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Academic disputes were exacerbated, and cultural life was also affected. In 1949 the Azerbaijani theatre in Yerevan was transferred to the rural centre in Basarkechar region, and then was completely shut down and only reopened in Yerevan in 1967. The Azerbaijani language sections of the Abovian Yerevan Pedagogical Institute were closed. The deportation affected the demography of the Azerbaijani population of Yerevan and other historical habitats, though the Armenian capital was not the main target of resettlement. Thus, if in Yerevan in 1939 there were 6,569

Azerbaijanis, in 1959 there were 3,413 – a decrease of nearly half. ⁹⁴⁷ In turn, Armenian scholars point out that the Armenian population of Nakhichevan also decreased, ⁹⁴⁸ although no organized resettlement of Armenians was carried out there.

Despite the fact that the resettlement ended after the Stalin's death, this project gave hope that some administrative changes could be made in favor of the Armenian expansion. As the resettlement was rooted in the question of Armenian repatriation — which in its turn was tied to the question of the Armenian historical lands in Turkey — the Armenian leaders believed that at least they could get the territorial concession from Azerbaijan through Moscow's decision on Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenian side made some other attempts to gain Nagorno-Karabakh in the 1960-1970s, but without success. The decade of the Soviet "thaw" was characterized by a growing

⁹⁴⁷ Nazim Mustafa, "Gorod Irevan. Deportatsiyi 1948-1953", accessed on February 1, 2014, http://www.iravan.info/ru/1948-1953 deportasiyasi/.

⁹⁴⁸ Lalig Papazian, "A People's Will: Armenian Irredentism over Nagorno-Karabakh", in *The Making of Nagorno-Karabagh: from Secession to Republic*, ed. by *Levon Chorbajian* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 66.

number of academic disputes about Armenian and Azerbaijani national histories. Historians in the respective republics published books and monographs. Armenians were focused on ancient Great Armenia, claiming Karabakh and Nakhichevan; the Azerbaijani counterparts' version of the local history underlining the heritage of ancient Caucasian Albania asserted their territorial possession of disputed lands. Eventually, the events of the 1940s and the previous clashes were echoed with the blood and massacres in 1988-1990 as Gorbachev's *perestroika* advanced; in 1992, the two independent countries of Armenia and Azerbaijan would be drawn into interstate war – lasting until the present day. This war was accompanied by large scale deportations, ethnic cleansings and massacres.

CONCLUSION

The present study focused on the resettlement policies carried out by Tsarist Russia during the periods of 1817-1850 and 1878-1914, and the Soviet period from 1941-1953 in the context of broader geopolitical environment and demographic transformations. This research contribution to the volume of transhistorical studies ⁹⁴⁹ analyzes the similarities, modalities and differences of policies implemented by two empires – Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union – with the view of highlighting possible linkages between the resettlement projects and the ethno-territorial conflicts in the South Caucasus. As there is no consensus on whether Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union had a similar approach to population management in the region of the South Caucasus – or on whether this had implications for the modern conflicts in the region – this study was undertaken for the purpose of answering these questions. My finding confirms both assumptions: that Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union acted with the same tools and in pursuit of the same interests in the South Caucasian borderland.

In carrying out the resettlement projects, St. Petersburg and Moscow acted in a similar geopolitical environment characterized by the presence of a large Muslim population within the imperial borders and two rivals: Ottoman/Turkey and Persia/Iran. Imperial Russia resorted to population management motivated by two intermediate goals: to increase the percentage of the Christian population, and to advance the "civilizing mission." The Soviet Union was also engaged in the policy of the "civilizing mission" under a different ideological banner, focused on Soviet-style modernization and cultural

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⁹⁴⁹ Here the focus is on identifying the qualities which are present through several historical and political entities and periods, and not merely within the scope of a particular form of society or the stage of the history.

reforms. As for Islam, due to its atheist nature the USSR officially opposed all religions; however, in reality the anti-religion policy differed along the same religious lines as in Tsarist Russia. Moscow in the Soviet Union used religious institutions such as the Armenian Church in advancing their expansionist ambitions.

The resettlement of Germans, Armenians, and Russian sectarians should be understood in the context of borderland security, although the invitation of Germans began as an economic project and the bringing in of Russian sectarians was initiated as punishment for heresy. Eventually, the Russian authorities and experts (as it was shown in Chapter 3) perceived the usefulness of sectarians in the empire-building process. As for the Germans, the attacks on them on the part of Russian nationalists for being not patriotic enough manifested the underlying Russian interests in foreign settlers as empire-builders rather than agricultural colonizers. A similar negative attitude on the part of Tsarist officials and experts developed near the end of the 19 century with regard to Armenians.

The resettlement and religious policies in Russian empire evolved over a span of two hundred years. As early as in the beginning of the 18th century Peter the Great envisioned the contours of Imperial Russia's future policy in the region, including population transfers in order to increase the number of Christians. Peter gave clear instructions on how to employ local Christians – e.g. Armenians – in solidifying the military conquest of the region. Under Catherine II, Russia began to invite foreigners to populate Russia's infinite emptiness. She and her entourage (especially Prince Potemkin) were also instrumental in promoting the population transfers in conquered borderlands

such as Crimea. Potemkin also advanced a concrete plan for the conquest of the Caucasus, which began to be implemented in the 1780s.

The "Catherine period" was important from two perspectives. Firstly, a socioeconomic drive to create model communities; for this reason, Catherine invited more
educated Europeans such as Germans to instruct Russians and the local population to
advance agricultural techniques and crafts. This project conditioned the constant state
intervention which became the dominant feature in the Russian colonization and
migratory processes. Late Imperial Russia transformed this into more of a rational
planning project, and then the Soviets continued this practice in terms of social
engineering and experimentation. However, as Alfred Rieber noted, this was always
linked with geopolitical considerations – including the question of frontier control. 950
Nicholas Breyfogle et al point out that "from the state's perspective, colonization was
consistently linked to basic issues of security, economic development, and social change
and control. Of these, security was most basic of all." What I tried to emphasize in this
study is that foreign policy objectives overwhelmed the other factors.

Secondly, as in all of Europe, the question of territory and population became the art of governance in the late 18th century. Here, we have to consider what Michel Foucault suggested as a form of governmentality – the intricate relationship between power, people and space. The Russian elite was intuitively developing tools to control population, and its movement over the vast territories belonged to the Empire. The everevolving expansion in the ensuing 19th century brought Russia face-to-face with the

⁹⁵⁰ Rieber, "Colonizing Eurasia," 270.

⁹⁵¹ Breyfogle, Schrader, Sunderland, introduction, 8.

⁹⁵² Michel Foucault, "Governmentality", in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. by Graham Burchell et al, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 101.

"hostile" Muslim population in the Caucasus and Central Asia. As a Russian official put it, "due to the very nature of the Muslim religion, Russia, like any Christian power, cannot rely on the loyalty and unwavering fidelity of a Muslim population."953 Challenges for the imperial rule were multiple: religion, multiethnic composition, different and difficult terrains, uneven economic potentials, and neighbors. The simple solution was ethnic cleansing and deportation, and Russia resorted to such instruments when other means were deemed ineffective; for example, the deportation of the North Caucasian tribes during the 1860s. However, for the most part, Russia had to manage space and people through different, more "peaceful" instruments. The South Caucasus became a kind of a laboratory where Russia and the Soviet Union exercised all types of resettlement; bringing, resettling and deporting people. Here, the art of governance offered several tools, including the injection of loyal people or colonization, and the "civilizing mission."

Scholars argued about various other imperatives such as economic development and cultural policy. In my view, these goals were secondary in nature but nevertheless present in the minds of policy-makers and bureaucrats as supplementary tools to strengthen empire-building process. As Alfred Rieber noted, "colonization... was perceived as a means for defending or expanding territorial control and integrating the periphery into the body politic." In this context, we have to consider the ideas of the "civilizing mission," which constituted the government's ideology of colonization." ⁹⁵⁴ Between the settlement of foreigners (German, Armenians, Greeks, etc.) and Russians, the views of state officials had undergone some evolution. They pursued the resettlement

⁹⁵³ Dana Sherry, "Social Alchemy on the Black Sea Coast, 1860-1865", Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History, vol. 10, no. 1, (2009): 26. ⁹⁵⁴ Rieber, "Colonizing Eurasia", 270.

of Christians as a means to not only increase loyal elements, but also to enhance the multiethnicity of the region. This was an important consideration, especially in urban centers, as the imperial officials rightfully perceived it as conducive to the civilizing mission. They hoped that the presence of more "civilized" Christians would positively affect Muslims. Dana Sherry argues that a plan to inject desirable qualities into the locals or – as she put it – "imperial alchemy," was behind the resettlement. ⁹⁵⁵ Thus, the perception became dominant in the Russian administration that those qualities could be changed.

David Scott argues that colonial rule is aimed at disrupting linkages with the old lifestyle and infusing new qualities. 956 Reinforcing this assumption, Dana Sherry argues that the colonial goal was to cut ties between the old and the new, and the resettlement was intended to impede access to old ways of living. Caucasus officials did not try to recreate new Russia in the Caucasus, but rather to have a sanitized local version of westernized society. However, soon the disappointment prevailed with regard to the idea that the South Caucasus could be forged in Russia's image by removing certain qualities from the locals. Muslims at large continued their separate cultural existence from colonial mentors and even resisted to the Russian rule. The only tiny stratum of intellectuals appeared to be like Russian "Europeans." Suspicion of Russian bureaucrats towards Muslims as plotting with Iran and Turkey against the Tsarist rule remained in the second half of the 19th century. Moreover, settled Germans and Armenians manifested a strong sense of national identity despite inhabitation in Russian empire. Armenians voiced a desire for autonomy and even independence. Thus, the project of civilizing through

⁹⁵⁵ Sherry, "Imperial Alchemy", 25-31.

⁹⁵⁶ David Scott, "Colonial Governmentality", in *Anthropologies of Modernity. Foucault, Governmentality, and Life Politics*, ed. by Jonathan Xavier Inda, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 23-49.

resettlement resulted in failure, and then St. Petersburg favored the the enforcement of ethnic Russians in the South Caucasus.

The disappointment with foreign settlers led St. Petersburg to reconsider its approach to resettlement in favor of Russian colonization. Some scholars, such as Kluchesvkiy, emphasized this as the cornerstone of the Russian Empire. However, the significance of Russian colonization in the 19th century was disputed; some Russian scholars such as Matvey Lyubavskiy maintained that the Russian colonization was completed before the time when Russia became an empire; even before the time of the Peter the Great. In his opinion, the addition of peripheries such as the Baltic, the Caucasus and Central Asia – which were densely populated – did not attract Russians. 957 Alexander Kaufman, to the contrary, believed that permanent colonization remained one of the main characteristics of the Russian Empire. 958

Contemporary scholars such as Michael Khodarkovsky, Willard Sunderland, Mark Beissinger, and others (as well as my own finding) consider Russian colonization as an important instrument throughout the Russian Empire. It is nevertheless true that the Russian colonization of the South Caucasus in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was lagging behind other settlers, but the intention of St. Petersburg with regard to "pure" Russians was there. The reasons for the slow pace of Russian colonization were multiple: the impact of serfdom, bureaucracy, the lack of planning. The initial plan to settle so-called "Eastern Christians" such as Armenians and Greeks which the Russian administration believed were better fitted to the regional

⁹⁵⁷ Matvey Lyubavskiy, *Obzor istorii russkoi kolonizatsii s drevneishikh vremen i do XX veka*, (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1996), 539; See also Matvey Lyubavskiy, Istoricheskaya geografiya Rossii v svyazi s kolonizatsiyey. Kurs lektsiy, (St. Petersburg: Lan, 2000 (re-print of Moscow: Tipolitografiya Lyubomova, 1909)).

Alexander Kaufman, *Pereseleniye i kolonizatsiya*, (St. Petersburg: tip. Obshchestvennaya pol'za, 1905).

environment was also important factor as most areas suitable for Russian colonization were taken by foreign settlers.

While I agree that the end result of complete colonization of the South Caucasus was a failure (foreign settlers did not meet the expectation of the imperial policy-makers and Russian colonists had limited presence in the region and difficulty in adapting to the environment) it is necessary to stress that before embarking on "civilizing mission" or "social alchemy," St. Petersburg deemed it important to change demography. Here, as stated above, St. Petersburg wished to achieve a complex composition of the population where none of the indigenous or non-Russian groups would dominate. In the meantime, the creation of a pool of loyal people – i.e. Christians among Muslims in the region – was perceived by the imperial officials as the cornerstone of population control in the South Caucasus.

Population management continued in the 20th century and was only disrupted by the First World War. The Soviet Union maintained a similar imperial attitude toward the South Caucasus in terms of its geopolitical significance (though the region represented also an important source of wealth – oil first and foremost). Moscow sacrificed the revolutionary movements in Iran and Turkey to make a convenient arrangement with those countries facilitating Bolshevik control over the South Caucasus. The Soviets had launched ethnic cleansing in this borderland once they perceived a threat to security. The first victims of such perceptions were the Germans. Then, similarly to Tsarist resettlement projects in 1828-1831, Moscow launched the Armenian repatriation project to exert influence on Turkey and reinforce their territorial claim on Eastern Turkey. Once the attempts to gain territories from Turkey failed, Stalin allowed the deportation of

Azerbaijanis from Armenia to accommodate the Armenian nationalist sentiments inspired previously by Moscow's policies vis-à-vis Turkey. For the Kremlin, all ethnic groups in the Caucasus were pawns in the great game – the favoritism toward one or another was dictated by geopolitical factors, which nevertheless made Moscow more suspicious of Muslims. However, there was no "inherent" ideological predisposition to this policy. It was primarily security and geopolitical factors which shaped the Soviet imperial policy in the South Caucasus. Here I find my intake from David Scott's reflection on "colonial governmentality"; that it is the political rationality of "destruction and reconstruction of colonial space." Resettlement was part of "improvement" of the imperial borderland, where the government(s) was aimed at guiding, controlling, limiting or preventing human mobility, or as Parker points out, the state sought to establish "disciplined mobility."

However, differences between Tsarist and Soviet approaches to population management in the South Caucasus existed too. The Soviet approach stemmed from the tenets of the Bolshevism, and consisted of an attempt to refashion the peoples of the former Tsarist empire and modernize the country. The Bolsheviks believed that social engineering was both necessary and possible. They targeted Muslims in terms of education and social transformation. The Kremlin also approached the issue of nationalities differently, granting some administrative and cultural autonomy to the ethnic groups in the empire. In terms of population movement, the changes were present in a more visible inflow of industrial settlers and the massive confinement of non-loyal elements to GULAGs. In principle – especially when it came to the geopolitical

⁹⁵⁹ David Scott, *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality*, (Princeton: Princeton. University Press, 1999), 40.

⁹⁶⁰ Jeremy Packer, "Disciplining Mobility: Governing and Safety", in *Foucault Cultural Studies and Governmentality*, ed. by Jack Bratish, Jeremy Packer and Cameron McCarthy, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 135–164.

considerations – Moscow acted similarly to its Tsarist predecessor, resorting to deportations and resettlements.

In sum, the resettlement projects altogether have significantly changed the demography of the region. Borders, inherited by the ethnic groups – namely Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians – became the source of major conflicts in the region. Even prior to that, the imperial policies in the borderland caused tension among the ethnic groups.

The linkages of resettlement projects to ethno-territorial conflicts are visible in three domains. Firstly, they are visible in the demography: the radical change of the demographic profile of colonial territories and the creation of pockets of "loyal" Christian populations put the local, mostly Muslim inhabitants in a disadvantageous situation – especially in the former Erivan khanate. Secondly, the demographic shift coupled with the uneven distribution of privileges was another source of instability, particularly in urban centers like Baku and Tbilisi. While the latter avoided conflict between Armenians and Georgians, Baku became a bloodbath of interethnic clashes in 1905-1906. Thus, this second dimension of the resettlement – the socio-economic one – aggravated the overall revolutionary situation at the beginning of the 20th century. The interethnic clashes were conditioned by the colonial policy of the Russian Empire. Moreover, the Russian administration of the South Caucasus did little to stop the violence and in certain cases manipulated interethnic tensions by practicing a strategy of divide and rule – though it was not a direct instigator as some sources claimed.

The third dimension of the resettlement – geography – advanced the perception of a historical homeland among the settlers. As I emphasized, this study does not dwell on

the pre-Russian history of the region, as respective conflicting sides put forward many historical arguments about the pertinence of particular territories to their ancient homeland. Obviously, with the rise of nationalism in the 19th century, the respective groups developed not only the notion of independence and statehood but also the contours of their national geography. The demographic conditions (i.e. the dominant presence on the given territory) encouraged the ethnic groups to claim their self-professed ancestral homeland. Much is written about the concept of "imagined communities" by Benedict Anderson as a source of the ethnonationalism. ⁹⁶¹ A similar concept began developing quite rightfully with regard to "imagined geography." Maria Todorova in her work *Imagining the Balkans* shows how perceived regional geography interrelates with religion, politics and nationalism. 962 The concept of "imagined geography" can be applied to the ethnic groups in the South Caucasus in their creation of homeland frontiers and the images of hostile environment. For example, the debate over the historic borders of Great Armenia became the major source of the conflict between Azerbaijanis and Armenians over Nagorno-Karabakh. Further on, the Muslim domination in the Caucasus was perceived as threatening and physically destructive for Christians.

Demographic transformations, especially during the Tsarist period – namely, the creation of ethnically homogenous spaces – fostered the notion that this was a solution enabling the future creation of independent states to be free from troubling non-loyal ethnic groups. Here, the Erivan khanate represents a vivid example. What began as the resettlement projects in the 1820s ended up after almost two hundred years with the ethnic homogenization of certain territories and states. For example, today's Armenia –

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⁹⁶¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1991).

⁹⁶² Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

which by 1820 (as Erivan khanate) had only 20% of its population comprised of Armenians – became after independence in 1992 almost completely (98 percent) ethnically Armenian. Essentially, the Republic of Armenia had the motto: "One Nation, One Culture". 963 The legacy of Imperial Russia and to certain extent the Soviet Union was accomplished by independent Armenia. For the Russian imperial policy-makers, the resettlement of Armenians was the measure of the population control in the Muslim borderland, while for Armenian nobles and clerics it represented an opportunity to advance first autonomy and then independence. The Soviets viewed the Armenian repatriation to Armenia as an inter-mediate measure for territorial expansion, while for Armenian local leaders and the Armenian diaspora it was another opportunity to enhance and solidify the homeland.

The war with Azerbaijan over its Nagono-Karabakh region in 1988-1994 homogenized the population of Armenia further. Armenian nationalists saw the benefit of the war over Karabakh as being that "Armenia was cleaned [or cleansed] of this weed [i.e. of Azerbaijanis]". 964 Razmik Panossian notes in this regard,

This population transfer was partially in response to Armenians being forced out of Azerbaijan, but it was also the last phase of the gradual homogenization of the republic under Soviet rule. The population transfer was the latest, and not so "gentle" episode of ethnic cleansing that increased Armenia's homogenization from 90 percent to 98 percent. Nationalists, in collaboration with the Armenian state authorities, were responsible for this exodus. 965

⁹⁶³ Kari S. Neely, "Diasporic Representations: A Study of Circassian and Armenian Identities in Greater Syria", (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008), 258. Panossian, *The Armenians*, 281.

⁹⁶⁵ Razmik Panossian, "Post-Soviet Armenia. Nationalism and its (Dis)contents", in *After Independence:* Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial & Postcommunist States, ed. by Lowell W. Barrington, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 231.

Azerbaijan since the beginning of the conflict with Armenia in 1988 had also undergone certain degree of homogenization, mostly related to the deportation of Armenians from Baku and some other cities and regions of Azerbaijan. Prior to the conflict, Armenians raised concern over the decrease of the Armenian population in Nakhichevan. Margarita Tadevosyan stresses that "the ethno-demographic shift in population was perceived to be very alarming for the Armenian population." ⁹⁶⁶ The demographic changes during the Soviet Union were also the result of the qualitative differences between more rural Azerbaijanis and dominantly urban Armenians, ⁹⁶⁷ characterized by high mobility and outmigration to other parts of the USSR. The Azerbaijani side also claims that the changes were due to different birth rates between the two ethnic groups. ⁹⁶⁸ However, Armenians believed that the Azerbaijani authorities had intentionally pursued the policy of gradual decreasing the Armenian population in Nakhichevan and Karabakh. ⁹⁶⁹

The current situation in the South Caucasus has some similar aspects with the Tsarist and Soviet periods: the region is an arena for the struggle between regional powers – Russia, Iran and Turkey; countries fight for "historic" homelands, the resettlement and deportations continued after the collapse of the USSR. This raises the importance of a transhistorical approach in understanding the dynamics of the past and

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⁹⁶⁶ Margarita Tadevosyan, "Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: War, Humanitarian Challenge and Peacekeeping." *Journal of Conflict Transformation: Caucasus Edition*, vol. 3, no. 1, (2010): 66.

⁹⁶⁷ Niall Fraser et al., "A Conflict Analysis of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Dispute", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 34, no. 4, (1990), 655.

⁹⁶⁸ Swiss scholar Christoph Zuercher maintains similar opinion. See: Zuercher, *Post-Soviet Wars*, 156. Some other research on the impact of the conflict on the demography: Arif Yunusov, *Migration Processes in Azerbaijan*, (Baku: Adiloglu, 2009); Arif Yunusov, "Armyano-azerbaydzhanskiy konflikt: demograficheskiye i migratsionnyye aspekty", *Central Asia and Caucasus*, 16 (1998), accessed on November 5, 2014, http://www.ca-c.org/journal/16-1998/st_10_junusov.shtml.

⁹⁶⁹ Mikhail Agadzhanian, "Politiko-pravoviye aspekty polozheniya natsionalnykh menshinstv v Azerbaydzhane", *21 vek*, 2 (4) (2006): 124-153.

present development of the regions and countries. In the meantime, I agree with Mark Beissinger that the significance of transhistorical studies is not in finding parallels between empires and across periods. He asserts that many characteristics of the empire can be applied to modern states. ⁹⁷⁰ For me, the transhistorical approach was important in order to look at the relevancy and "sustainability" of the empire/state apparatus and tools to manage populations and space. Moreover, I agree that these tools are being employed today by large and small states. However, differences between empires and modern states exist, mainly in the scope and nature of the application of the tools. Empires, as Doyle proposed, are characterized by the presence of metropole and peripheries as well as coercion as a means to rule.

However, when it comes to coercion, similar tools to those applied by empires can be exploited by small states. I would like to illustrate this with regard to today's situation in the region. Since 1988, Armenia and Azerbaijan have been involved in an interstate conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. De jure, this region belongs to Azerbaijan, a fact which is confirmed by the United Nations and many international organizations and states. In reality, it is occupied by the Armenian armed forces, though Yerevan denies its direct involvement and asserts that the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh exercises its desire for self-determination. Thomas Ambrosio termed the situation "a highly permissive or tolerant international environment" which allowed the Armenian "annexation of some 15 percent of Azerbaijani territories." Part of this permissive regime rests on an *Orientalist*

 ⁹⁷⁰ Mark Beissinger, "Rethinking Empire in the wake of the Soviet Collapse", in *Ethnic Politics After Communism*, ed. by Zoltan D. Barany and Robert G. Moser, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 15.
 ⁹⁷¹ Thomas Ambrosio, *Irrdentism. Ethnic Conflict and International Politics*, (Connecticut: Praeger Publisher, 2001), 146.

perception of the conflict, viewing it through a lens of a religious divide – a fight between Christian Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijanis. The reason of the conflict lays in a much more complex set of geopolitical, historical and identity issues – some of which I have considered in this research. While the stalemate has existed for almost twenty years, Armenia advanced a resettlement policy; first, the government in Yerevan encouraged Armenians to move and settle in the occupied territories ⁹⁷² and more recently, Yerevan began settling the Armenian refugees from Syria in Nagorno-Karabakh, though officially such a policy is denied. ⁹⁷³

As the prospect of a peaceful resolution seems remote, and Nagorno-Karabakh remains unrecognized, one of the nationalist leaders of Armenians, Zori Balayan – whom Thomas de Waal called a "chauvinistic intellectual warrior" – sent a letter to Russian president Vladimir Putin asking him to accept Nagorno-Karabakh under Moscow's rule. This letter, full of "historical" references, resembled the letter sent by Karabakh *meliks* to the Peter the Great, asking for Russian protection. ⁹⁷⁵ Authors of both letters complained about oppression from Muslim/Azerbaijani rulers and asked Russia for protection.

This recurrence of themes – resettlement and the quest for external support – continues to be present in the region. As for Russia, as Svante Cornell put it, she "would support peace in Karabakh only if it were to be the sole, or at least dominant, arbiter of

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⁹⁷² Report of the OSCE Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan Surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh (NK). 28 February 2005. United Nations document A/59/747-S/2005/187 retrievable also from http://www.partnership.am/res/General%20Publications_Eng/050317_osce_report1.pdf. ⁹⁷³ "Armenia Continues Settling in Nagorno-Karabakh", *Vestnik Kavkaza*, January 21, 2013, accessed on January 23, 2014, http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/politics/36049.html; "Armenia: Syrian Refugees Resettling in Nagorno-Karabakh", *Euroasianet.org*, January 24, 2013, accessed on January 23, 2014, http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66446.

⁹⁷⁴ De Waal, *Black Garden*, 142.

⁹⁷⁵ "Zori Balayan napisal pis'mo Vladimiru Putinu: "Net problemy Karabakha - yest' problema Rossii." *Regnum*, October 14, 2013, accessed on February 18, 2014, www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1719610.html.

such deal – that is, if it could be assured that Armenia and Azerbaijan would not use the newly found peace to escape Russia's orbit." Russia uses various levers – political pressure, military threats and economic incentives – to maintain control over the region which Moscow declared the zone of its influence and interest. Provided In September 2013 Armenia joined the Russia-led Customs Union, a step which analysis has claimed was made under pressure, as Armenia "depends on Russia in its decades-long standoff with Azerbaijan over its breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh." Azerbaijan, due to the continued conflict with Armenia, also has limited space for maneuvers in its foreign policy strategy.

Despite the demise of the Russian and Soviet empires, many foreign policy and geopolitical issues discussed in the present study remain relevant in the post-Soviet and post-colonial period of the South Caucasus. Mark Beissinger points to the phenomenon of a "recreation of empires" in the context of modern Russia's ambition, ⁹⁷⁹ stressing at the same time that modern states must be treated differently – especially in terms of their practice. ⁹⁸⁰ While I limit my study to two periods, a brief analysis of the modern development in the South Caucasus unveils persistent mechanisms such as deportation and resettlement that were employed by empires and states across historical periods. The

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⁹⁷⁶ Svante Cornell, *Azerbaijan Since Independence*, (New-York-London: M.E.Sharpe, 2011), 356.
⁹⁷⁷ Richard Giragosian, "The South Caucasus: The Limits of a Resurgent Russia", Heinrich Böll Foundation, February 6, 2014, accessed on 6 November 2014, http://georgien.boell-net.de/web/52-1612.htm; Mahir Khalifa-Zadeh, "The South Caucasus: Obama's Failed Russia "Reset" and the Putin Doctrine in Practice", *MERIA Journal*, vol.18, no. 3, (2014), accessed on September 30, 2014, http://www.gloria-center.org/2014/09/the-south-caucasus-obamas-failed-russia-reset-and-the-putin-doctrine-in-practice/.

⁹⁷⁸ Robert Coalson, "News Analysis: Armenia's Choice Stirs Competition between Moscow and EU", *Radio Free Europe*, September 4, 2013, accessed on November 7, 2014, http://www.rferl.org/content/armenia-russia-customs-union-eu-analysys/25095948.html; see also Stephen Blank, "Russia Pressures Armenia to Join Customs Union", *The Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst*, August 27, 2013, accessed on November 7, 2014, http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12793-russia-pressures-armenia-to-join-customs-union.html.

⁹⁷⁹ Mark Beissinger, "Fenomen vosproizvodstva imperii", *Ab Imperio*, no. 1, (2008): 7. ⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid*. 10-13.

impact on the life of ordinary people of these is profound and frequently terrible. Victims are stretching across all states and nations – Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Germans, and Russians. Even though the latter ruled the empire, the majority of Russians (as Geoffrey Hosking argues) were the principal victims of their own empire – as they have been the subject of exploitation and manipulation to advance imperial goals. ⁹⁸¹

The neglect over the fate of settlers was another continued theme of this study. Even when authorities (from both the Tsarist and Soviet periods) solicited people to migrate or invited them to move to respective states, they showed indifference to the problems related to adaption, material and financial shortages, diseases and conflicts with the locals. German colonists in 1817-1821, Armenian settlers from Persia and Turkey in 1828-1831, Russian peasants in 1899-1914, Armenian repatriates in 1946-1949 – they all received an insufficient amount of assistance from the state. The destiny of those who were forced to migrate – such as the Russian sectarians in 1830, the Germans in 1941 and the Azerbaijani *kolkhozniks* in 1948-1953 – was even worse.

Numerous peoples have been moved from one place to another involuntarily throughout human history. Once they were moved, resettled or deported, on most occasions they stay in the new places permanently. Numerous modern states – more precisely, the ethnic composition of states – are the result of various resettlement projects. Many of those who have suffered through traumatic experiences of deportations still struggle with dark memories. Even their children and grandchildren carry out the weight of the past. The possible restitution of rights of today's living victims of conflicts and deportations are the responsibility of policy-makers, lawyers, diplomats, social

⁹⁸¹ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia, People and Empire. 1552–1917*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997); Geoffrey Hosking, *Rulers and Victims. The Russians in the Soviet Union*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2006).

workers, and many others. Historians must ensure that people, while remembering the past lessons, look for a better future in which to live in peace, safety and reconciliation.

APPENDIX A

MAJOR TIMELINES

- 1722-1723 Peter the Great's Caspian Campaign against Persia
- 1762-1763 Catherine the Great's edict on the resettlement of Europeans in the Russian Empire
- 1783 Treaty of Georgiyevsk, according to which Georgian kingdom Kartli-Kakheti became the Russian protectorate
- 1801 Russian tsar Paul I signs a decree on the incorporation of Kartli-Kakheti into Russian empire
- 1805 Treaty between Russian General Pavel Tsitsianov and Karabakh ruler Ibrahimkhan Shushinskiy, who accepted the Russian protectorate
- 1804-1813 The Russian-Persian War
- 1813 Russian-Persian Gulistan Treaty affirming the Russian conquest of the South Caucasus (Baku, Sheki, Shirvan, Kuba, Talysh, Karabakh)
- 1817-1821 Resettlement of Germans in the South Caucasus
- 1826-1829 Russian-Persian and Russian-Turkish Wars
- 1828 Russian-Persian Turkmanchay Treaty affirming the Russian conquest of Erivan and Nakhichevan khanates and the right of Persian subjects (e.g. Armenians) to resettle in Russian Empire
- 1829 Russian-Turkish Treaty of Adrianople, according to which subjects of the Ottoman Empire could resettle to Russia
- 1828-1831 Resettlement of Persian and Ottoman Christians (Armenians, Greeks) in the Russian Caucasus
- 1830-1840 Resettlement of Russian sectarians to the South Caucasus
- 1861 The emancipation of serfs in the Russian Empire
- 1877-1878 Russian-Turkish War and the conquest of Kars
- 1889-1904 Series of legislative acts encouraging greater movement of Russian settlers in the Empire, including in the South Caucasus

1899-1914 – Resettlement of Russian peasants in the Mugan-Mill steppes (Azerbaijan)

1905-1906 – Armenian-Azerbaijani massacres

1905-1907 – First Russian Revolution

1914-1918 – World War I

1917 – Russian Revolution and the collapse of Russian Empire

1918-1921 – Independent Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and armed conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh and Zangezur

1920-1921 – Bolshevik conquest of the South Caucasus

1922 – Formation of the USSR

1939 – Soviet-Germany Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on the "division of Europe"

1941-1945 – War between USSR and Nazi Germany

1941 – Deportation of Germans from the South Caucasus

1946-1949 - Repatriation of Armenians from abroad to the Armenian SSR

1948-1953 – Deportation of Azerbaijanis from the Armenian to the Azerbaijani SSR

APPENDIX B

DISCOURSE ON THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF KARABAKH AND CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

The present dissertation does not deal with the period prior to the Russian penetration of the South Caucasus in the 18th century. However, some historiographic problems help to elucidate the current political and scholarly disputes around the issue of the Armenian resettlement and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict (which I touched upon in the main body of the thesis). The following is more in-depth analysis of what had been discussed briefly in Chapters 1 and 2.

There is an ongoing dispute concerning the history and legacy of Karabakh and the relevancy of this region, either to Armenia or Caucasian Albania (an ancient state, which existed on the territory of modern-day Azerbaijan). The dispute revolves around several questions. Firstly, scholars are divided about the history and legacy of Caucasian Albania. Armenian scholars believe that Caucasian Albania, even though it existed as an independent entity during Ancient Times, has strong links to the Armenian state; moreover, its alphabet, religion and culture were greatly influenced by Armenia.

Azerbaijani scholars argue about the independent nature of the development of Caucasian Albania. Apparently, by the 18th century, Caucasian Albanians (or to be more precise, the remnants of their population) in Karabakh called themselves "Armenians," as was determined from their letter addressed to Peter the Great. This gradual erosion of

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⁹⁸² See for example, Robert H. Hewsen, "Ethno-History and the Armenian Influence upon the Caucasian Albanians", in *Classical Armenian Culture: Influence and Creativity*. ed. by Thomas J. Samuelian, (Philadelphia: Scholars Press, 1982) and Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), and the critic of his work: Ulvia Gadjiyeva, "Kritika na knigu Robert H.Hewsen "Armenia. A Historical Atlas", accessed on October 22, 2014, http://erevangala500.com/?direct=page&id=225; Farida Mamedova, *Kavkazskaya Albaniya i albany*, (Baku: Tsentr Issledovaniy Kavkazskoy Albanii, 2005).

Albanian identity can be explained by several factors. First of all, Caucasian Albania was a conglomerate of tribes (26 tribes according to Strabo), probably of Caucasian origin, and had no dominant ethnic group to solidify the state around. However, some groups have survived until today, such as the Udins. Secondly, surrounded by Muslims, both Christian Albanians and Armenians naturally had common ground for close interactions. Further, after the Arab conquest of the Caucasus, the majority of the Albanian population was converted to Islam. Those who adhered to Christianity gradually synergized with the Armenian Church, and the latter tried to completely control the Albanian church and, according to Azerbaijani historians, destroyed and forged many historical documents in an attempt to erase any traces of independent Albania. Armenian historians claim that modern Azerbaijani scholars forge and distort historical documents, omitting any reference to the Armenian heritage.

However, until the Russian conquest of the region, the Albanian church was semi-independent and had its own Catholicos in Gandzasar (a town in modern day Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan). As for the ethnic composition of the region in the 18th-19th century, Azerbaijani historians claim that most of those who associated themselves with the Armenian ethnos were indeed Christianized Albanians – a point of view which is categorically rejected by many Armenian scholars. A renowned American scholar Ronald Suny also supports the opinion that "the Albanians in the mountainous area of Karabagh up to historic Armenia remained largely Christian and eventually merged with the

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⁹⁸³ See various version and discussion of the history of the Caucasian Albania: Kamilla V. Trever, *Ocherki po istorii i kul'tury Kavkaszkoy Albanii. (III v. do n. e. - VII v. n. e.),* (Moskva - Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1959); James Forsyth, *The Caucasus: A History,* (Cambridge: University Printing House, 2013), 48-58.

⁹⁸⁴ Ziya Buniyatov, *Azerbaydzhan v VII-IX vekakh*, (Baku: Izdatel'stvo AN Azerbaydzhana, 1965). ⁹⁸⁵ Bournoutian. "Rewriting History".

Armenians." ⁹⁸⁶ A similar claim is made by Soviet scholar Petrushevskiy. ⁹⁸⁷ In Russian sources of the 19th century, there were also references to the Armenization of the Alban population, namely the Udins: "Some Udins, left without a monastery, converted to the Armenian faith, others to the Muslim faith." An Armenian writer of the 19th century, Raffi, pointed out that the Armenian meliks (local rulers) of Karabakh originated outside of the region. 989 Apparently, whoever lived in Karabakh ("pure" Armenians or "Armenized" Albanians) had some historical memory about the past; still, in the 18th century, Esaia Hasan-Jalalian (or Jalalaiants), Catholicos of Gandzasar (1702-1722), wrote a book about Albanian history. 990 At the same time, in known correspondences of the 18th century Karabakh Christians referred to themselves as "Armenians". ⁹⁹¹ The existence of Albania was also known to Russian policy-makers; Prince Grigoriy Potemkin in his "Eastern plan" envisaged the creation of Armenia and Albania as two separate entities (this issue is discussed in the first chapter).

Azerbaijani scholars also maintain that after the Russian conquest and subsequent abolition of the Albanian Catholicosate in Gandzasar in 1836 (and its full subordination to the Armenian Catholicosate in Echmiadzin) the manuscripts of the Albanian Church were destroyed or concealed by Armenian clergy and scholars. (Russian linguist Timur

⁹⁸⁶ Ronald G. Suny, "What Happened in Soviet Armenia?", Middle East Report, No. 153: Islam and the State, (1988): 37–40.

987 I. P. Petrushevskiy, Ocherki po istorii feodalnykh otnosheniy v Azerbaydzhane i Armenii v XVI–nachale

XIX v., (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1949), 52.

988 Obozreniye Rossiyskikh vladeniy za Kavkazom v statisticheskom, etnograficheskom, topograficheskom i

finansovom otnosheniyakh, (Tiflis, 1836, vol. 3), 355. Raffi, *Melikstva Khamsy*, (Yerevan: Nairi, 1991).

⁹⁹⁰ Yesai Khasan-Jajalian, *Kratkaya istoriya strany albanskoy*, (Baku, 1989).

⁹⁹¹ A letter from Karabakhi Armenians to Peter the Great is widely cited in academic literature. This letter was published by Armenian scholar Ezov in Imperial Russia (See: Ezov, Snosheniva Petra Velikago). However, Azerbaijani scholar Khaliladdin Khalili asserts that Ezov might have altered the primary sources and refers to the opinion of the XIX century Georgian scholar Ilya Chavchavadze, who thought of Ezov as "master of shameless lie" (Khaliladdin Khalili, "Sud'ba karabakhskikh alban v XVIII-XIX vv", IRS, 24 (2006): 29).

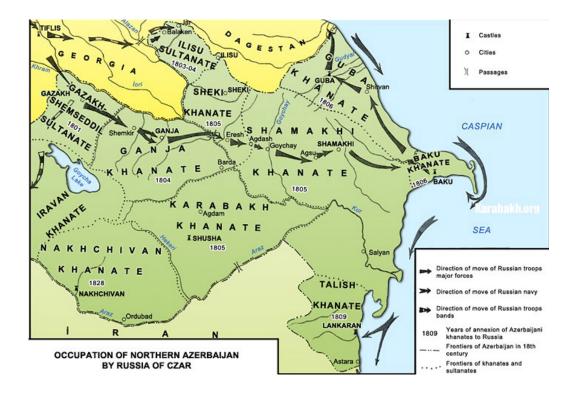
Maisak also maintains that the religious books in the Albanian language were destroyed or re-written in other languages.)⁹⁹² The Albanian Church which emerged in the 4th century AD always had linkages with the Armenian one, but existed independently until the Arab invasion in the 7th century AD – and then was subordinated to the Armenian Church in the 8th century. Some attempts were made to restore the autocephaly of the Albanian Church, but the latter failed against the pressure of the Armenian clergy in the 10th century. In the Middle Ages, the Albanian Catholicasate became an important regional religious centre.

The dispute over the Albanian heritage has political connotations due to the current conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. None of above-mentioned issues are to be resolved by this study, as they demand separate research and are out of the scope of this dissertation. However, for the purposes of this study – namely, the Armenian resettlement in the South Caucasus – it is essential to understand the historiography and the political discourse around the above-mentioned matters.

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⁹⁹² Timur A. Maĭsak, "K Publikatsii Kavkazsko-Albanskikh Palimpsestov iz Sinaĭskogo Monastyrya". *Voprosy Yazykoznaniya*, 6 (2010): 89.

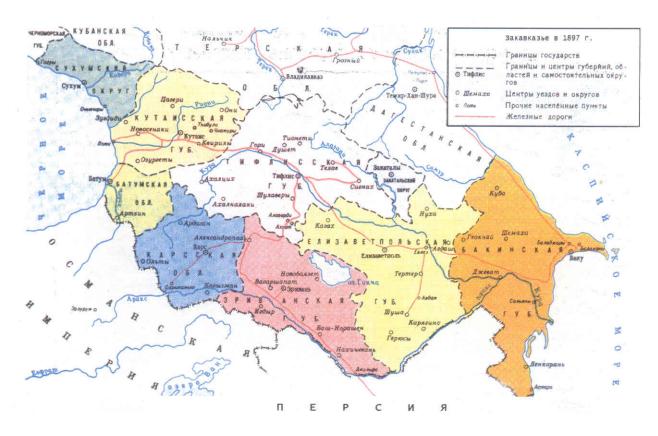
ILLUSTRATIONS (MAPS)



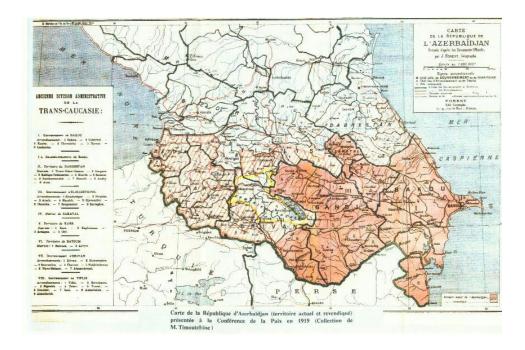
1. The Azerbaijani-Turkic Khanates, conquered by Russia by 1829 (www.karabakh.org)



2. German and Russian colonies in Azerbaijan (Wikicommons)



3. Russian Governorates of the South Caucasus, 1897 (www.azerbaycanli.org)



4. The map of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, 1918-1920 (www.azerbaycanli.org)

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5. The South Caucasus during the Soviet period, 1957-1991 (Wikicommons)



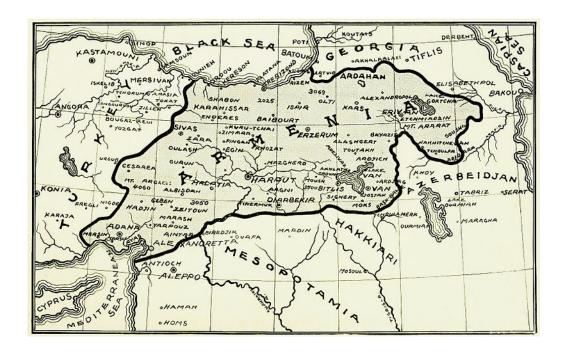
6. The territory of Turkey claimed by the Soviets in 1945-1946 (Wikicommons)



7. South Caucasus, 2014 (Google map)



8. The map, reflecting the occupied by Armenia territories of Azerbaijan (MFA of Azerbaijan), 2014



9. Great Armenia according to Armenian claims in 1919 (Wikicommons)



10. United Armenia, claimed by Armenian nationalists, 1998 (Wikicommons)

Table 1. Demographic Changes in Karabakh, 1810-2005

	Armenians	Azerbaijanis	Russians	
1810	12,500 (20 %)	47,500 (80 %)		Karabakh khanate
1823	4,366 families	15,729 families		Karabakh province
	(22 %)	(78 %)		
1897	109,250 (40 %)	164,098 (60 %)	2,605 (1%)	Population of 3 uyezds of
				Elizavetpol governorate:
				Shusha, Jebrayil, Javanshir
1926	111,700 (89 %)	12,600 (10 %)	596 (0,4 %)	Territory of NKAO
1979	123,076 (75 %)	37,264 (23 %)	1,265 (0,8 %)	Territory of NKAO
1989	145,500 (76 %)	40,688 (21 %)	1,990 (1 %)	Territory of NKAO
2005	120,000	6	171 (0,1 %)	Territory of former NKAO,
	(Azerbaijan's	Ethnically		occupied by Armenia
	statistic)	cleansed in		
	137,380 (95 %)	1992-1993		
	(Armenian			
	claim)			

Table 2. Demographic Changes in formerly Erivan khanate (today Armenia), 1828-2001

	Armenians	Azerbaijanis	Russians	
Prior to	25,151 (18 %)	117,849 (82 %)		Erivan and
Russian		(Muslims)		Nakhichevan
conquest				khanates
in 1828				
After	82,377 (50 %)	82,073 (50 %)		Erivan and
1828		(Muslims)		Nakhichevan
				khanates
	65,280 – In	49,875 – In		
	Erivan only	Erivan only		
1897	439,926 (53 %)	350,099 (42 %)	16,388 (1,9 %)	Erivan governorate
1914	643,300 (65 %)	267,900 (27 %)	32,700 (3,3 %)	Erivan governorate
1922	671,300 (85 %)	77,800 (10 %)	19,200 (2,5 %)	Armenian SSR
1939	1,062,000 (82 %)	130,900 (10 %)	51,500 (4 %)	Armenian SSR
1959	1,551,600 (88 %)	107,700 (6 %)	56,500 (3,2 %)	Armenian SSR
1989	3,083,600 (93 %)	84,900 (2,6 %)	51,600 (1,6 %)	Armenian SSR
2001	3,145,400 (98 %)	Deported in	14,700 (0,5 %)	Republic of Armenia
		1988-1989		

Table 3. Germans in Azerbaijan, 1819-1941

1819	1873	1897	1916	1941
1,600	2,391	9,483	15,990	22,471 (before
				deportation)

Table 4. Demographic Changes in Baku city, 1851-2009

	Armenians	Azerbaijanis	Russians	Germans
1851	-	7,431	-	-
		(Muslims)		
1897	19,099 (17%)	40,341 (36%)	37,399 (33%)	3,430 (whole Baku
				governorate
1926	76,656 (16%)	118,737 (26%)	159,491 (36%)	6 357
1959	137,111 (21%)	211,372 (32%)	223,242 (34%)	Deported in 1941
1979	167,226 (16%)	530,556 (52%)	229,873 (22%)	
2009	104	1,848,107	108,525 (5 %)	
		(90%)		

Sources: The tables above are compiled from the sources indicated on pages 67-68, 128-141 and 181 as well as I have consulted with some figures from:

Khajar Verdiyeva, *Pereselencheskaya politika Rossiyskoy imperii v Severnom Azerbaydzhane*, (Baku: Altay, 1999), 242-250, 263-264.

Rafik Safarov, *Izmeneniye etnicheskogo sostava naseleniya Irevanskoy guberniyi v XIX-XX vv*, (Baku: Sada, 2009), 146, 158-159, 176, 196, 204, 214, 217, 225.

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⁹⁹³ From 1930-1992 this archive was called TsGAORSS or shorter TSGAOR, Tsentralniy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Oktyabrskoy Revolutsiyi i Sotsialisticheskogo Stroitelstva.

⁹⁹⁴ In books and articles published prior to 1991 (when Azerbaijan became independent) this archive is referred to in Russian as TsGIA, Tsentralniy Gosudarstvenniy Istoricheskiy Arkhiv.

⁹⁹⁵ In books and articles published prior to 1991 this archive is referred in Russian as GAPPiOD, Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Politicheskih Partiy i Obshestvennykh Dvizheniy. In today's Russian language

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