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**ARMENIANS OF BAKU  
PROVINCE IN THE SECOND  
HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY**



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**ARMENIANS OF BAKU PROVINCE IN  
THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH  
CENTURY  
(HISTORICAL-DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY)**

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## CONCLUSION

As attested by the available archive documents, as well as historiographical and lapidary sources, from times of remote antiquity Armenians - the natives of the Armenian Highland inhabited also the region of Eastern Transcaucasia, namely from the river Kur (the left bank) to Apsheron Peninsula. Eastern part of Great Armenia's province of Paytakaran was included into Baku Province of the Russian Empire in 1867. As one of ancient peoples of Eastern Transcaucasia, the Armenians created their specific cultural heritage there and always participated in the socio-political, economic, educational and cultural life of the region.

With the invasion of Turkic-speaking elements into Eastern Transcaucasia from the end of the 11th c. and later the ethno-cultural makeup of the region suffered grave damages and underwent destructive transformations. Despite this, however, the Armenians due to their creative abilities and natural self-defence characteristics succeeded in continuing their existence and retaining their ethnic territory. They constituted a considerable part of the region's population, in the meantime, going through religious persecution and enduring national and social pressure exerted by the Muslim rulers. In the Middle Ages, a considerable part of the region was known as an Armenian-populated zone.

In the late 18th century, the Armenian villages of Eastern Transcaucasia grew considerably stronger thanks to the resettlements from Artsakh and partly Siunik (in the early 19th century, Armenian resettlers arrived there from Iran as well). These resettlements revived the Armenian-inhabited places of the region which were on the verge of total desertion or already lay derelict.

The 19th century proved a pivotal period for the Armenians of Baku Province. At the beginning of the same century, Eastern Transcaucasia lifted the domination of Persian shahs, and the local Armenians were given an opportunity to live under comparably favourable economic and political conditions for a time. Although the Tsarist authorities exercised a colonial policy which posed various obstacles for the population of Transcaucasia, part of the Armenian nation was liberated from the centuries-old Muslim sway and was provided with an opportunity to make progress. The improvement of the



socio-economic conditions fostered the natural growth of the Armenian population. In Baku Province, the Armenians were mostly concentrated on the southern slopes of the main Caucasian chain, namely, in the districts of Gyokcha, Shamakhi, as well as partly Ghuba and Lenkoran. The available statistical sources show that throughout the 19th century, almost all the Armenian villages of these districts had a large number of inhabitants. Initially, the city of Shamakhi and the adjacent villages were known as populous places with large Armenian populations, whereas beginning with the '60s of the 19th century, Baku replaced Shamakhi due to the rapid development of oil industry. The subsequent increase of the Armenian population in the city of Baku was mostly conditioned by the grave socio-economic conditions facing Armenian peasantry—the consequence of the establishment of capitalistic relations under which the villagers of the mountainous areas and foothills were compelled to emigrate into the city in large numbers as they were either totally deprived of soil or had acute shortage of it. Already in the late 19th century, the Armenians were considered as one of the largest ethnic entities in Baku.

The available statistical evidence shows that in the late 19th century, the Armenians of Baku Province amounted to 78,536 thus forming a considerable part of the entire population of the region.

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The Armenian inhabitants of Baku Province enjoyed a period of prosperity in the public, political, socio-economic, educational and cultural spheres of life when the "Caucasian Tatars," guided by the propaganda of pan-Turkism and evidently supported by the Tsarist authorities, launched the massacres of the Armenians in Baku in 1905. In the aftermath of these slaughters, the number of the Armenians was reduced, and artificial obstacles were posed against them so that continuing their existence in the province became utterly difficult for them. As of 1 January 1916, the Armenians amounted to 120,087 in the province of Baku.<sup>1</sup>

The Armenians of Baku Province suffered a particularly heavy blow in 1918, when the Turkish army units invaded Transcaucasia and reached Baku (prior to it, the criminal Young Turks' troops had devastated the whole of Western Armenia committing the genocide of

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<sup>1</sup> КК на 1917 г., Тифлис, 1916, с. 179, 183.



the Western Armenians). With this incursion, Turkey pursued the objective of taking possession of the petroleum of Baku, after the acquisition of which, it planned to penetrate into the Northern Caucasus and Middle Asia in order to create a large Turkish state in realization of its programme of pan-Turkism. The same programme also envisaged the establishment of an Oghuz state, namely, the “new state” of “Great Azerbaijan” was planned to be founded in the area from the Black Sea to the Caspian (viz. from Batum to Baku) under the auspices of Turkey. With the creation of this state, a bridge would be erected between Turkey and the Turkish-speaking peoples of the Caucasus and Middle Asia.<sup>1</sup> Among other means, this programme was to be put into effect through the massacres, forced Islamization and deportations of Eastern Armenians. Enver Pasha himself maliciously said, “...as the Armenians have always been our enemies and will continue so in the future... it will be fine to totally exterminate them in the Caucasus as well, just as was done in Turkey.”<sup>2</sup> That Turkey exercised a policy of putting the entire Armenian population of the Caucasus to carnage is also attested by a telegraph that State Secretary of Germany Richard von Kulmann addressed to the ambassador of Germany to Turkey on 3 June 1918: “The Turks are on their way of realizing their goal—to exterminate the Armenians in the Caucasus.”<sup>3</sup>

During the invasion of Baku, a considerable part of the Armenian inhabitants of the Armenian villages of Gandzak-Yelisavetpol (Nukhi and Aresh Districts)<sup>4</sup> and Baku Provinces were subjected to deportation and slaughter.<sup>5</sup> After the four-month heroic self-defence of Baku Armenians, the large Turkish army units eventually took the city on 15 September. During 3 days (from 15 to 17 September), the Turkish army headed by Nuri pasha getting active support of the Azerbaijan

<sup>1</sup> Зареванд, Турция и пантуранизм, Париж, 1930, с. 92, «Հորիզոն», Թիֆլիս, 1918, հոկտեմբերի 30, № 222, Խաղիկյան Գ., Սի ուշագրավ քարտեզ, «Երևանի համալսարան», Երևան, 1989, № 3, էջ 37-38, Փ. Ժ. Լա Շրեն, Ատրաշի լեռների Հանրապետությունը, «Դրոշակ», 1992, ԻԲ տարի, փետրվարի 12, № 22, էջ, 41-42:

<sup>2</sup> Խաղիկյան Ա., Հայաստանի Հանրապետության ծագումն ու զարգացումը, Բեյրութ, 1968, էջ 88-89:

<sup>3</sup> Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике (документы и комментарий), т. I, сост. проф. Ю. Барсегов, Москва, 2008, док. 222, с. 224.

<sup>4</sup> Ստեփանյան Գ., Հայերի կոտորածներն ու ինքնապաշտպանական մարտերը Նուխի և Արեշ գավառներում 1918-1920 թթ.: Հայոց ցեղասպանության պատմության և պատմաբանության հարցեր, հ. 5, Երևան, 2002, էջ 23-28:

<sup>5</sup> Ստեփանյան Գ., Հայերի կոտորածներն ու ինքնապաշտպանական մարտերը Բաքվի նահանգում 1918-1920 թթ., ՊԲՀ, Երևան, 2008, № 3, էջ 31-48:



Musavat government kept brutally massacring the Armenians, the victims among whom amounted to more than 30,000.<sup>1</sup> Neighbouring Armenian villages, which had become derelict and devastated in the aftermath of the carnage, were re-inhabited by “Caucasian Tatars.” Centuries-old Armenian monuments, such as cross-stones, churches and monasteries, were destroyed without any vestiges left, which attests that the Armenian population of Baku was also subjected to the genocide of culture.

The criminal policy of physical extermination and deportation continued against the Armenians throughout the existence of Musavatist Azerbaijan (1918 to 1920). When we compare the number of the Armenians in the pre-war period and in 1921, we clearly notice the large losses caused by the Turk-Tatars. According to the census returns of 1921, the Armenian population of the Gyokcha, Shamakhi, Ghuba, Baku, Lenkoran and Javat Districts amounted to 50,212.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the outbreak of the massacres, the Armenians amounted to 127,318, these two figures clearly showing the immense losses caused by the Young Turks and Musavatists.<sup>3</sup> Judging from these data, over 77,106 people fell victim to the slaughters; only 49,927 of them were killed in the city of Baku, where the Armenians had formed 88,673 before the carnage.<sup>4</sup> But for the massacres, if the natural growth of the Armenians could have proceeded without any obstacles, they should have formed around 140,000 late in 1921. The vandal policy of genocide exercised against the Armenians by Turkey and Musavatist Azerbaijan between 1918 and 1920 drastically changed the ethno-demographical makeup in Azerbaijan, and this change was not in the interests of the Armenians at

<sup>1</sup> Рафалович С., Правда о бакинских событиях, «Кавказское слово», Тифлис, 1918, 3 (20) декабря, № 262, Իշխանեան Բ., Բազուի մեծ սարսափները: Անկետային ոտնմնասիրութիւն սեպտեմբերեան անցրեի 1918 թ., Թիֆլիս, 1920, էջ 184-187, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 121, ց. 2, գ. 94, ք. 96-99, Геноцид армян в Османской империи. Сборник документов под редакцией М. Г. Нерсисяна, Ереван, 1982, док. 245, с. 524, Մանուշարյան Ա., 1918 թ., Բաքվի հայկական ջարդերը (Գ.ՖՀ-ի արտաքին գործերի մինիստրության քաղաքական արխիվի փաստաթղթերը), ԼՀԳ, Երևան, 1990, № 6, էջ 77-88, Дадряк В., История армянского геноцида (этнический конфликт от Балкан до Анатолии и Кавказа), Ереван, 2007, с. 454, also see Ստեփանյան Գ., Բաքվի հայերի 1918 թ. կոտորածները և թուրք-ադրբեջանական իշխանությունների պատասխանատվությունը, «ԼՀՀ դատական իշխանություն», Ստեփանակերտ, 2011, № 3, էջ 25-32:

<sup>2</sup> Закавказье. Советские республики. Статистико-экономический сборник, с. 152-153.

<sup>3</sup> ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 149, ց. 1, գ. 46, ք. 2-8, գ. 133, ք. 19, ֆ. 57, ց. 3, գ. 512, ք. 1-2, ֆ. 409, ց. 1, գ. 2634, ք. 1-2, Ստեփանյան Գ., Հայերի կոտորածներն ու ինքնապաշտպանական մարտերը Բաքվի նահանգում 1918-1920 թթ., էջ 31-48:

<sup>4</sup> Իշխանեան Բ., Բազուի մեծ սարսափները, էջ 17:



all. According to the returns of the statistical survey carried out in the agricultural sphere in Azerbaijan in August 1921, the Armenians surviving in the districts of Shamakhi, Gyokcha, Nukhi and Aresh amounted to about 12,716.<sup>1</sup>

The Armenian population of Eastern Transcaucasia suffered genocide just as the genocide was committed against the Western Armenians in their cradle - Western Armenia by the Young Turks between 1915 and 1916; therefore, the policy conducted in September of 1918 in Azerbaijan by the Young Turks and Musavatists may be defined as the continuation of the genocide of Western Armenians, for the geographical coverage of the Armenian Genocide (from Baku, Nukhi, Aresh and Artsakh to Western Armenia and Armenian Cilicia) was the result of the implementation of the programme of pan-Turkism.

The policy of the violation of the rights of the Armenians and other native peoples in Eastern Transcaucasia (Tats, Talyshes, Lezghins, etc.), their persecution and all kinds of pressure exerted against them continued during the 70 years of the Soviet rule. They were forced to renounce their national identity and identify themselves with the Azerbaijanis. As a result, these people were either registered as "Azerbaijanis" or were driven away from their ancestral houses.<sup>2</sup> The anti-Armenian policy of the Azerbaijani authorities was accompanied with the destruction of historical and archaeological Armenian monuments (cross-stones, churches and monasteries).

The discriminatory policy of persecutions against Armenians and stripping them of their fundamental rights committed by the Azerbaijani authorities had a new manifestation in February 1988, when another crime was perpetrated against them—all the methods and forms of genocide were committed against the Armenians of the city of Sumgait with the immediate participation of the central authorities of

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<sup>1</sup> **Карпетян М.**, Этническая структура населения Нагорного Карабаха в 1921 г. (по сельскохозяйственной переписи Азербайджана 1921 г.), Ереван, 1991, с. 4.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed analysis of the policy of persecutions exercised against the Armenian and other ethnic communities in Azerbaijan, see **Григорян В.**, Насильственная ассимиляция мусульманских национальных меньшинств в Азербайджане, Ереван, 1992; **Ростам Б.**, Судьба курдов в Советском Союзе и после его распада, «Курдистан рапорт», Москва, 1993, сентябрь, № 2, с. 22-27; **Чобанян С.**, Государственная и национальная политика Азербайджана, Ереван, 1993; **Абдурагимов Г.**, Кавказская Албания-Лезгистан. История и современность, СПб., 1995; Этническая принадлежность в политическом и общественном дискурсе современного Азербайджана (на примере антиармянских материалов), подготовил **Г. Демоян**, Ереван, 2004; Հնդկան Արրբ-անի հայախոյաջ քաղաքականութեան, կազմող Հ. Ալիբեյли, Երևան, 2007:



Soviet Azerbaijan and Muslim-zade, First Secretary of the Communist Party's Municipal Committee of Sumgait. Prior to the outbreak of the carnage, the telephones had been turned off in all the Armenian flats and houses, lists of Armenian houses had been compiled, etc.<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1988, the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party received a document stating that more than 400 Armenians had been slaughtered in Sumgait (many of them were burnt alive after unspeakable torture and suffering); around 1,000 people, including women, aged men and children, were crippled.<sup>2</sup> According to another source of information, the number of the Armenian victims oscillated between 500 and 1,000.<sup>3</sup> These slaughters marked the beginning of the first stage of the Armenians' deportation from Azerbaijan. On 21 to 22 November 1988, another storm of genocide broke out in Azerbaijan against the local Armenians, and as a consequence, they were driven away from many places in large numbers. The third large-scale deportation of the Armenian population started in July to August 1989 as a result of a new wave of violence against the Armenians.<sup>4</sup> The anti-Armenian policy reached its climax on 25 December 1989, when the Azerbaijani bandits set a fire in Baku Armenians' Cathedral Church of St. Gregory the Enlightener—as a result of the fire, a large number of valuable books, icons and the entire property of the sanctuary were burnt away.<sup>5</sup> The carnage of Sumgait Armenians, which had been perpetrated at state level, was not condemned as genocide so that between 13 and 19 January 1990, the Azerbaijani authorities, who were completely convinced of their total impunity, also committed massacres against the Armenians of Baku. By the methods of its perpetration, the carnage of Baku resembled those of 1905 and 1918. The Armenian massacres which broke out on 13 January 1990 were premeditated and committed at state level. They were preceded by the anti-Armenian speech made by

<sup>1</sup> For details, see **Шахмурадян С.**, Сумгаитская трагедия в свидетельствах очевидцев, Ереван, 1989; Сумгаит... Геноцид... Гласность?. Составили **Улубабян Г., Золян С., Аршакян А.**, Ереван, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> **Արշակյան Ա.**, Արցախյան գոյապայքար (1985-1992), Երևան, 2004, էջ 25:

<sup>3</sup> **Оганесян Э.**, Век борьбы, т. II, Мюнхен-Москва, 1991, с. 567-568, **Մինասյան Է.**, Սումգայիթի և Բաքվի ջարդերի ադրբեջանական կեղծարարությունը: Պատմություն և մշակույթ. ընդդեմ կեղծիքի և ոտնձգության: Հանրապետական գիտաժողովի հիմնադրույթներ (4-6 մայիսի), Երևան, 2011, էջ 25:

<sup>4</sup> **Խոջաբեկյան Վ.**, Յեղասպանությունը և հայաթափությունը Ադրբեջանում (1918-1990-ական թթ.), ՊԲՀ, Երևան, 2005, № 1, էջ 29:

<sup>5</sup> «Գրական թերթ», Երևան, 1990, փետրվարի 2, № 6, **Ստեփանյան Գ.**, Համառոտ ակնարկ Բաքու քաղաքի Սբ. Գրիգոր Լուսավորիչ եկեղեցու պատմության, էջ 45-53:



First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Abdulrahman Vezirov during the rally of seventy thousand people in Baku after which the First Secretary had a meeting with the representatives of the National front and expressed his support in the implementation of the plans of massacring the Armenians and subjecting them to deportations.<sup>1</sup> That the Armenian slaughters were premeditated and planned beforehand is proved by the speech USSR Minister of the Interior V. Bakatin made during the joint sitting of the two chambers of the USSR Supreme Council held within its third session on 19 February 1990. He particularly stated: "They [the massacres of the Armenians - G. S.] broke out all of a sudden and were organized very well. Everything happened after the rally—the crowd that comprised up to 5 thousand people dispersed to plunder and massacre the Armenian population in accordance with the addresses that had been distributed among them beforehand."<sup>2</sup> The Azerbaijani authorities were very interested in what was going on in the city; they kept instigating the mob and stirring up the slaughter of the Armenian inhabitants of the city, during which the militia units acted in unison with the National front.<sup>3</sup> According to some information which cannot be considered comprehensive, the massacred Armenians totaled more than 400.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the facts confirm that the massacres of the Armenians of Baku were organized at high state level, the policy of the genocide of the Armenians was adopted by the authorities of Azerbaijan from Turkey and the Musavatists.

The Supreme Council of the Armenian SSR severely condemned the acts of vandalism and genocide perpetrated in Baku and the adjacent places. Its 19 February 1990 resolution states: "To demand that the USSR Supreme Council should recognize and condemn the

<sup>1</sup> **Ջանիկյան Գ.**, Եղեռնապատում, «Վերստանված Հայաստան», Երևան, 1990, մարտ, № 3, էջ 3, **Чобанян С.**, idem, с. 19, **Խոջաբեկյան Վ.**, Հայաստանի բնակչության վերաբերմունքը և տեղաշարժերը XIX-XX դարերում և XXI դարի շեմին, էջ 276, **Մոսեսովա Ի.**, **Հովնանյան Ա.**, Բաքվի ջարդերը (պաշտոնական փաստաթղթեր, ականատեսների վկայություններ և այլ նյութեր 1990 թ. հունվարի 13-19-ի ողբերգական իրադարձությունների վերաբերյալ՝ անհրաժեշտ մեկնաբանություններով), Երևան, 1992:

<sup>2</sup> «Ավանգարդ», Երևան, 1990, մարտի 7, № 26, **Чобанян С.**, idem, с. 169-170.

<sup>3</sup> **Խոջաբեկյան Վ.**, Արցախը փորձության ժամին, Երևան, 1991, էջ 131:

<sup>4</sup> **Արշակյան Ա.**, idem, էջ 114, **Մարութեան Յ.**, Յեղասպանությունների շարքեր: Պատմական յիշողությունը եւ ինքնությունը տարեթուերում ու տեղանուններում (ըստ 'Նարաբադեան շարժման նիւթերի'), ՀՀՀ, հ. ԻԷ, Պէյրութ, 2007, էջ 312, idem, Հայ ինքնության պատկերագրությունը: Յեղասպանության իշխողությունը և դարաբաղյան շարժումը, հ. Ա, Երևան, 2009, էջ 163, **Ստեփանյան Գ.**, Բաքու քաղաքի հայության պատմությունը (պատմաժողովրդագրական ուսումնասիրություն), էջ 514:



genocide of the Armenians committed in Baku and a number of other places in the Azerbaijani SSR in January 1990.”<sup>1</sup> The genocide of the Armenians of Baku and the acts of vandalism the Azerbaijanis committed against them also aroused indignation amidst some foreign political figures. Chairman of the US Foreign Committee, Senator Herbert Claiborne Pell told the following to the press in Moscow after his meeting with USSR Foreign Minister E. Shevardnadze: “I am deeply shocked at, and depressed by, the barbarity with which the Azerbaijanis perpetrated the pogrom of the Armenians in the USSR. The Soviet Government should do its utmost to protect the Armenian population.”<sup>2</sup> The genocide against Armenians in Baku was followed by the deportation of the last group of Armenians from Soviet Azerbaijan (on the whole, the number of the Armenian deportees totaled more than 361,000).<sup>3</sup>

To summarize, the criminal policy of the Azerbaijani authorities was aimed at the genocide against the Armenians in Eastern Transcaucasia and it was exercised at state level, stage by stage, eventually stripped the Armenians of their native land where they had been living for centuries, creating cultural values and industrious life full of struggle and heroism.

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<sup>1</sup> «Խորհրդային Հայաստան», Երևան, 1990, փետրվարի 16, № 39:

<sup>2</sup> Ջանիկյան Գ., Եղեռնապատում, «Վերածնված Հայաստան», Երևան, 1990, մարտ, № 3, էջ 10:

<sup>3</sup> Խոջաբեկյան Վ., Ցեղասպանությունը և հայաթափությունը Ադրբեջանում, էջ 40: