

THE INVENTION OF HISTORY

**Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Showcasing of
Imagination**

(Second, revised and expanded edition)

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my friend, Dr. Armen Hagnazarian (1941-2009), founder and the driving force behind the organization Research on Armenian Architecture. Dr Hagnazarian spent his life studying, recording, and whenever possible, restoring the Armenian architectural monuments.

It was Armen, who encouraged me to start this project and urged me on. The aims and contents of the present work were discussed and planned with him and I have benefited greatly from his wisdom.

Rouben Galichian

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Rouben Galichian
Yerevan, 2010

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Map of the South Caucasus. During the early 20th century East and West Azerbaijan and Ardebil provinces of Iran were known as the Province of Azerbaijan. Map by RAA, Yerevan.



INTRODUCTION

The territory ruled by the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan, situated north of the Arax River and south of the Caucasus Range, includes the territory to the north of the Kura River – historically known as the Caucasian Albania (in Persian – Arran). This is where, from ancient periods until the early Middle Ages, a Christian people known as the Caucasian Albanians lived. It must be said that these people were not related to the European Albanians. Alongside and near these territories were the historic Armenian provinces of Artsakh (modern Karabagh), Utiq and Siuniq. Most of the cultural monuments remaining on these lands date from the Middle Ages and fall into two distinct categories. One category consists of a multitude of mainly Christian monuments, such as churches, monasteries, khachkars (cross-stones) and tombs, built by the indigenous Armenians as well as by the Albanians, who themselves were much influenced by Armenian culture and civilization of the time. Monuments in the second category, which are considerably less numerous, are the Islamic mosques, palaces and tombs, built either by the invading Arabs, and in the late medieval era, by the Tatars and other Turkic tribes who followed the Arabs, as well as by Islamized locals, but most of all by the Persians, who ruled the area from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

The “Musavat Democratic Islamic Party” was founded in Baku in 1911 with the aim of establishing a pan-Islamic belt of nations in the region of the South Caucasus (also known as Transcaucasia), led by Turkey, which was then ruled by the secretive and militaristic Committee of Union and Progress. In 1917 Musavat was merged with the “Turkish Federalism” party and was renamed the “Turkish Federalist Musavat Party”, also known as the “Musavat Party”, led by Muhammad Ali Rassoulzadeh.¹ After 1918, when the territory north of the Arax River became independent, it was originally decided to name the new country the “Eastern and Southern Republic of Transcaucasia”; but the Musavat party exerted its influence to change this decision and name the country “Azerbaijan”.² With this single decision of the Musavat party the various peoples, tribes and minorities living in the area, which until then had been called by the general name of Turks (or Tatars), became “Azerbaijanis” or “Azeris”.³ Thus, a name that for over two millennia rightfully belonged to a historic

¹ Firuz Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia, 1917-1921* (New York: Philosophical Library and Oxford: George Ronald, 1951), 20-22. And

– Ahmad Khalilullah Moghaddam, *Where is the Real Azerbaijan* (Bonn: Aseman, 2008), 37-43. In Persian.

² Василий Владимирович Бартольд, *Работы по истории Кавказа и Восточной Европы* (Москва: Изд. Восточной литературы, 1963), volume 2, 703. (Barthold, *Studies on the History of the Caucasus and Eastern Europe*, Moscow: 1963).

– Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1967), 189.

³ А. К. Алекпаров, *Исследования по археологии и этнографии Азербайджана* (Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджана, 1960), 71. (Alekarov, *Research in the Archeology and Ethnography of Azerbaijan*, Baku: 1960).

region south of the Arax River, inside the territory of Iran, was used to define a country that was born in 1918 north of the same river.⁴

In Iranian circles this action was met by surprise and a number of leading Iranian Azerbaijani politicians and literary figures such as Sheikh Muhammad Khiābāni, Esmail Amirkhizi and Ahmad Kasravi opposed this action, claiming that “this small region in the Caucasus whose population speaks Turkish, has another name and has never been called Azerbaijan”.⁵ Khiābāni even went as far as suggesting that the name of the Iranian province should be changed to *Āzādīstān* (Land of Freedom).⁶ The Iranian Embassy in Istanbul protested against the establishment of a new country in the region named “Azerbaijan”, but did not go any further.⁷

This was comparable to the naming, in our own time, of one of the independent countries created after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, which called itself Macedonia, overlooking or deliberately ignoring the fact that this was the name of one of the existing provinces of Greece. After much quarrelling and discussion the newly born country was renamed *Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR Macedonia)*, a purely cosmetic change, as everyone calls this land Macedonia. Yugoslavia presents a fascinating case in another respect. The country was broken up by NATO and the program of splitting it into smaller countries has continued unabated. NATO is adamant in maintaining the territorial integrity and permanency of official borders of friendly countries such as Georgia and Azerbaijan. NATO’s policy is contradictory in that it denies the right of self-determination to Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabagh, at the same time it splits Serbia into two separate countries. It comes to prove that these namings and re-namings, be they under the cover of the United Nations or NATO, or any other major world power for that matter, serve purely political purposes and are not aimed at the actual well-being of the people, nor do these actions conform to popular aspirations.

The newly established country in the South Caucasus, which announced that it constituted historic Azerbaijan, laid claim to the Islamic monuments built in and around the territory following the Arab, Tatar and Mongol invasions, as well as those built up to the 1920s. However, most of the monuments in the territory were Christian and could not be claimed to be of Islamic Azeri heritage. To find a solution, and in order to prove that the population of the Republic of Azerbaijan had a much older history and tradition than one beginning with the invasion of the Tatar and Mongol tribes, the Azerbaijani authorities in the 1960s began a

⁴ Kāveh Bayāt, *Storm Over the Caucasus: A Glance at the Iranian Regional Relationship with the Republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in the First Period of Independence 1917-1921* (Tehran: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002), 45-47. In Persian.

⁵ Touraj, Atabāki, *Azerbaijan. Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 2, 25. See also – Moghaddam, *Where is the Real Azerbaijan* (Bonn: Aseman, 2008), 38. In Persian.

⁶ Touraj Atābaki, *Azerbaijan. Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, op. cit., p50. See also

- Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleye Azerbaijan* (Tehran: 1978), volume 2, 872. In Persian. (Eighteen year history of Azerbaijan), and

- Ali Āzari, *Qiyam-e Sheikh Mubammad Khiābāni* (Tehran: Ameir Kabir, 1970), 299. (Sheikh Muhammad Khiabani’s uprising). In Persian.

⁷ Kāveh Bayāt, *Storm Over the Caucasus*, op. cit., 66-67. In Persian.

quest to find a way to invent a historical background and heritage for their now forty-year-old country.

The many pre-Islamic historical monuments and a rich heritage in the country belonged to others cultures, namely the Armenians and, partially, the Caucasian Albanians. This was unacceptable to the authorities of Azerbaijan; therefore, it was decided to falsify the origin of the monuments and attribute all to the people claimed to be the forefathers of the present population. To achieve this it was necessary to prove that the people of present-day Azerbaijan were in fact the heirs and descendants of the Caucasian Albanians and that the Armenians were newcomers to the region. Once this was “proven” and the Albanian heritage would become theirs, the second stage was to “prove” that ALL the Christian monuments found in the territory of Azerbaijan were in fact Albanian and not Armenian. If the present authorities could “prove” that the Armenians were not the indigenous people of the region, but were newcomers to the territory now named Azerbaijan, and even to the whole of the region of Southern Caucasus, the Armenian connections would be removed. This would automatically confirm that the Christian heritage is not Armenian, and hence, by default, it would become Caucasian Albanian and hence Azerbaijani.

The above proposition was neglecting the fact that the majority of Christian monuments in the area date from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries, when there were no surviving Christian Albanians to build them.⁸ By the middle of the twelfth century the Christian Albanians had mostly converted to Islam (present day Lezgis, who number about a million) and the rest had disappeared. Their sole Christian survivors were a few thousand Udis now living in the Vardashen and Nij areas of north Azerbaijan and Georgia, who maintain a precarious existence. Since there were no Christian Albanians in the area, is it at all possible to attribute the building of Christian monuments to the remaining Moslem heirs of the Albanians, now living in north Azerbaijan and the Russian Autonomous Republic of Daghestan?

The above plan was put into action and soon numerous publications, papers, monographs, articles, theses, books and research papers began to appear, promoting the above falsifications and “scientifically confirming” and “proving” them. These include the works of Zia Buniatov, Farida Mamedova, Igrar Aliyev, Kamil Mamadzade, Davud Agha-oghli Akhundov, Rashid Geyushev and others. Meanwhile the Armenian names of old monuments and places were being altered and many indisputably Armenian monuments were gradually and quietly demolished. Against these pseudo-scientific and deceitful publications some Armenian historians and literary figures such as Paruir Sevak, Assadour Mnatzakanian,⁹ Karapet Meliq-Ohanjanian,¹⁰ Bagrat Ulubabyan,¹¹ Babken

⁸ Cyril Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown: University Press, 1963), 216-7. Also see the chapter *History* of the present work.

⁹ Paruir Sevak, Assadour Mnatzakanian, “По поводу книги З. Бунятова “Азербайджан в VII-IX вв””, *Պարսկա-բանասիրական հանդես* (Yerevan: 1968), volume 1, 177-190.

¹⁰ Karapet Meliq-Ohanjanian, “Историко-литературная концепция З. Бунятова”, *Բանբեր Հայաստանի արխիվների* (Yerevan: 1968), volume 2, 169-190.

¹¹ Bagrat Ulubabyan, “Еще одна произвольная интерпретация армянской “Истории страны Агван””, *Բանբեր Հայաստանի արխիվների* (Yerevan: 1979), volume 2, 219-232.

Harutyunyan,¹² Gevork Stepanyan¹³, Henrik Svazian¹⁴ and others rebelled and published articles in various periodicals in Armenia, but these were only in the Armenian and Russian languages. As an example, as a reply to Mamedova's claims, one can cite the Russian-language article written by A. Hakobyan, P. Muradyan and K. Yuzbashyan, entitled "On the Research of the History of the Caucasian Albania", published in Yerevan in 1987.¹⁵ This was published in *Historic-Literary Periodical* in Yerevan (1987), which has limited circulation and is completely unfamiliar to western historians, even those who read Russian. In our opinion and much regrettably, the Armenian authorities have not considered Azerbaijani falsifications sufficiently important to compellingly contradict them with scientific, but easily accessible articles and books. So far the efforts of Armenian authorities to prove Azerbaijani claims to be false and untrue, especially in the Western media, where most of Azerbaijani anti-Armenian propaganda is distributed, have been lax to nil.

The title of one of these books, Akhundov's *Ancient and Early-Medieval Architecture of Azerbaijan* itself is a fallacy, since the "Azerbaijan" that he refers to, situated north of the Arax River, did not exist in ancient or early-medieval times, or even up to the nineteenth century (see the next chapter of this volume).¹⁶ In the process of changing Armenian names and giving them new Turkish names, he calls a typically and distinctly Armenian cross-engraved stone, the "khach-kar", a "khach-dash", keeping the first part of the word "khach" (meaning cross in Armenian) but changing the second part from the Armenian "kar" = "stone" to the Azerbaijani "dash" = "stone".¹⁷

Since the 1960s Azerbaijani authorities have ceaselessly tried to make sure that their population, and particularly the new generation of Azerbaijanis, devotees of this newly invented history, are filled with hatred towards all things Armenian. Armenians are portrayed as the exterminators of Albanian culture and religion. This is quite similar to what is happening in Turkey which is still denying the Armenian Genocide of 1915, and instead blaming the Armenians for the alleged mass killings of the Turkish population, a view with which Azerbaijan officially concurs and promotes. This volume does not intend to discuss the Genocide, as all the proof required can be found in the newspapers of the time, as well as the archives of most countries, including those in alliance with Turkey at the time.

For almost 50 years these fictitious claims and fallacies have been promoted

¹² Babken Harutyunyan, "Когда отсутствует научная добросовестность", *Լրագիր հասարակական գիտությունների* (Yerevan: 1987), volume 7, 33-56.

¹³ Gevork Stepanyan, "Ընդդեմ Արևելյան Այսրիովկայի պատմության աղբրեջանական կեղծարարների", *ՎՃԻ* (Yerevan: 2009), volume 1, 133-143.

¹⁴ Henrik Svazian, "Пример использования исторической науки в экспансивных Целах", *Պարմի-բանասիրական հանդես* (Yerevan: 1989), volume 2, 46-56.

¹⁵ А. А. Акопян., Паруйр Мурадян, Карен Юзбашян, "К изучению истории кавказской Албании", *Историко-филологический журнал*, Ереван: Изд. Академии Наук Армянской ССР, 1987, том 3. 166-189. (Hakobyan, Muradyan and Yuzbashyan, *On the research of the History of Caucasian Albania*, Yerevan: 1987).

¹⁶ Rouben Galichian, *Countries South of the Caucasus in Medieval Maps. Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan* (London: GI and Yerevan: Printinfo, 2007), various maps and texts.

¹⁷ Давуд Ахундов, *Архитектура древнего и ранне-средневекового Азербайджана* (Баку: Азербайджанское Государственное Изд. 1986), various pages. (Davud A. Akhundov, *The Architecture of Ancient and Early Medieval Azerbaijan*, Baku: 1986).

and included in Azerbaijani state propaganda, official literature, history books and textbooks to such an extent that most of the present young generation of Azerbaijanis believe this to be the truth, that the Armenians are indeed newcomers to the area who have taken the land over from the indigenous people, the Azerbaijanis. This can be compared to distorted Soviet version of historic facts taught by Soviet textbooks and media, and faithfully accepted and believed by almost the entire population of the USSR. The Azeri authorities have furthermore declared that Azerbaijanis are the heirs and descendants of the Caucasian Albanians, who were Christians, purely in order to be able to confirm that the remaining Christian monuments are not Armenian, but Albanian. In the process of distorting the historic facts, they have even renamed the Caucasian Albanians “Azerbaijanis”.

As part of its intensive propaganda war against the Armenians, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan published a book entitled *War against Azerbaijan: Targeting Cultural Heritage*, which is part of a series *The True Facts about Garabagh*. The book is compiled by Kamala Imranli. It has 280, 27x25cm pages, is hardbound and includes a CD-ROM and a DVD. The volume has been published by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, in 2007 and was launched in London in February 2008.

This handsomely and maticuloucly prepared book is clearly aimed to appeal to the prospective English language browser. However, the real aim of the book is somewhat different. The book is full of projections in which Azerbaijani actions are falsley attributed to Armenians. Its aim is to misinform and mislead the reader. It even blames the Armenians for starting the conflict between the population of Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijani government forces, conveniently forgetting the Azeri attacks on Sumgait (February 1988) and continuous bombardment of the population of Stepanakert and other towns beginning in 1989, which initiated the war. Books of this type can only serve propaganda purposes by seeking to create and instigate animosity between neighbouring peoples by direct geopolitical agitation, disinformation and the outright reversal of the truth. This can only help the ruling elite, interested merely in their own financial and political gains and status, at the cost of the lives of its own citizens, as well as the lives of others.

The book is listed on websites such as www.amazon.co.uk, but the site states that it is not available for sale. It is interesting to note that a book, which has been published for propaganda purposes, is not sold or distributed to the public. Only selected libraries, organizations and institutions, or persons approved by the publishers are able to obtain it. This action reveals much about the lack of credibility of the volume and the information it contains.

Azerbaijani claims that they are the descendants of the Caucasian Albanians who were Christians, however, not only fail the test of historical truth but also generates its own internal contradictions. The claim is incosistent with pan-Turkic and pan-Turanist ideology, which claims that the Turkish-speaking Azerbaijanis

are of Turkic race and heritage and form a link in the chain of a Turkish-speaking belt of nations stretching from the Mediterranean to Mongolia. Therefore, in order to be in good standing with the pan-Turkists and Turkey, Azerbaijan has to be able to claim a Turkish origin and thus acquire membership of the Turkic club of nations. Hence their argue that the Turkic races of Agh-koyunlu (Ak-koyunlu), Kara-koyunlu, as well as the Safavids and others, are also their ancestors. This assertion apparently resolves some of the possible ethno-political problems with Turkey, but presents the larger one of claiming two distinct and geographically widely separated origins.¹⁸

At the same time Azerbaijani authorities, in order to maintain the goodwill of Turkey and to benefit from its support, have published yet another book entitled *Azerbaijan and Turkey. One Nation, Two Governments*. This book, whose author is Nəriman Qurbanov, was published in 2007, in Baku.

The Azerbaijanis eventually have to decide one way or the other as to who their real ancestors are. The two ancestries that they claim could not be more different. They should make up their minds as to which of the two ethnicities are their ancestors, the Caucasian Albanians or the Central Asian Turkic races. This confusion abounds in the recently published volume, where both claims are presented simultaneously. It is surely wiser to accept and admit that the people in question are made up of a mixture of ethnic groups, from the Albanians to the Central Asian Turkic tribes and other local peoples, including the Persians. Even in the medieval times Gervase of Tilbury, Isidore and many other ancient and medieval historians and geographers mention that the population of ancient Albania constituted as many as 26 tribes.¹⁹

The United States of America, the largest economy in the world today, proudly claims that its population is a truly international mixture. Furthermore, the USA boasts that American culture has been enriched by the continuing inflow of the immigrants, since all these various ethnic groups have brought along their traditions and cultures, contributing to what is known today as “American culture”. Similarly, the Azerbaijani authorities should have the courage to accept that they are a mixture of races and have benefited from it, instead of putting forward misleading and false claims, repressing and falsifying the past in order to present their population as a monolithic and indigenous one, which they clearly are not. (See page 28 and footnote 58 of this volume).

The authors of the volume also need to sort out their confusion with regard to the existence of Christian monuments in their territory. If, according to history, Caucasian Albanians had either become amalgamated with other ethnic groups and thus mostly disappeared between the tenth and twelfth centuries AD, or had

¹⁸ Kamala Imranly, compiler, *War against Azerbaijan: Targeting Cultural Heritage* (Baku: MFA Republic of Azerbaijan, 2007), 7, 11 and 12.

¹⁹ Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia. Recreation for an Emperor*, Translated by S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also

- *Ebstorf Mappa Mundi*. See also

- R. Galichian, *Countries South of the Caucasus in Medieval Maps*, London: Gomidas Institute (Yerevan: Printinfo Art Books, 2007), 161-163.

converted to Islam, how could they build so many churches, monasteries and most important of all, typically Armenian monuments called Khachkars (cross-stones) during the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries?

Moreover, if the Azerbaijanis are the descendants of the Caucasian Albanians who built all these Christian monuments, why do the present-day Azerbaijani authorities demolish and destroy these monuments, which they claim to be their own? One much publicized example of this is the destruction of the Medieval Armenian cemetery of Julfa, which, according to Akhundov was Albanian. (See p. 9).

Some try to make this a religious issue and conflict. This is far from the truth, since many Christians have lived and are now living in Islamic countries such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Iran, enjoying full religious freedom. Wherever there are problems between the Muslim and Christian populations of a country, the roots could be traced back to ethno-political ones, such as the case of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan. It must, however, be said that in recent years the Turkish authorities are trying, albeit unsuccessfully, to amend their ways, with the aim of eventually joining the EU. Today many Turks want to know more about the dark periods of their history, which so far have either been falsified or simply covered up. The truth cannot be kept secret for much longer and eventually the real facts will have to be told. It needs courage and maturity to face ones past errors and admit having made them.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the historic Christian Armenian monuments are protected by the state. The “Department for the Protection of Historic Monuments” is repairing and maintaining most of the Armenian monuments, mainly with government funding. Such a religious complex is the twelfth century monastery of St. Thaddeus in the Northwest Iranian Province of West Azerbaijan. The complex has now been included in the list of UNESCO’s World Heritage sites, thanks to the interest and concern of the Iranian authorities in preserving this cultural monument. Another example is the medieval Armenian monastery of St. Stepanos Protomartyr, located near the Arax River on the border of Nakhijevan, which, after extensive refurbishment has now become a pilgrimage site for Muslims.

One of the most recent and extreme cases of Azerbaijani falsifications is the book entitled “*Les Monuments d’Azerbaïdjan Ouest*” (The Monuments of Western Azerbaijan) by Aziz Alakbarli, published in Baku in 2007, by the order of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan as part of their “Nourlan” Editions.

The editors of this megalomaniac fantasy are Azerbaijani academicians Vali Aliev, Djafar Giyasi, Machadikhanoum Nemat and Boudag Boudagov, who, contrary to their academic calling have carried deceit and fabrication to the extreme. The map on page 7 of the book is that of the Republic of Armenia whose caption reads:

The map of western Azerbaijan (actually the “Republic of Armenia”) the homeland of the ancient Oghuz Turks.²⁰

²⁰ Aziz Alakbarli, *Les Monuments d’Azerbaïdjan Ouest* (The Monuments of Western Azerbaijan) (Baku: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Nourlan Editions 2007), 7.

The authors claim that in antiquity the territory currently occupied by Armenia was in fact Azerbaijan, a country not created until 1918. Furthermore, the Azerbaijani academicians mentioned above seem unaware or do not acknowledge that the Oghuz Turks were from Central Asia and the Altai regions and who migrated to Asia Minor via Iran and the Northern Caspian territories during the Middle Ages, a fact confirmed by *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.²¹ If we believe the Azerbaijani authors, these Central Asiatic tribes suddenly became ethnic Caucasians! The academic fabrications and sham extend as far as claiming that the ancient monuments, including the Hellenic temples, Urartian fortresses, Christian churches, monasteries and cemeteries, with a few exceptions, belong to the Turkic tribes. With the publication of this and similar volumes, the Oghuz nomadic tribes overnight become the builders of the Urartian fortresses, Hellenic temples, churches and monasteries.

The book depicts photos and short descriptions of various historic monuments found in present-day Armenia, claiming them to be mainly Azeri. These include the prehistoric stone monoliths of Zoratz Karer (Karahunj, which can be translated as Stonehenge), the Urartian fortresses of Erebouni and Taishebani, various rock carvings, the Hellenic temple of Garni, the Armenian monasteries of Tatev, Goshavanq, Haghardzin, Echmiadzin, Haghpat, Sanahin as well as the churches of Yereruiq, Kasakh, Mastara, Talin, Talish, Khor Virap, Odzum, Avan, Gayaneh, Hripsimeh and many more. These writers are quite imaginative.

Here are some examples taken from this infamous volume with the descriptions in italics:

Pages 28-29.

Pictures depict the Urartian fortress of Teishebani near Yerevan dating from around eighth century BC.

The inscription reads: "*Ancient Turkish fortress*".

Pages 30-32.

Photos show the Greco-Roman *Garni* temple, some 25 kilometers east of Yerevan, dating from the first century AD.

The inscription reads: "*Garni Turkish Temple and Fortress*".

Pages 50-51.

The photos show the Monastery of Khor-Virap at the foot of Mount Ararat, where St. Gregory the Illuminator, who converted Armenia into a Christian nation, was imprisoned.

The inscription reads: "*Ancient Turkish Temple*".

Pages 60-61.

The Cathedral of Holy Echmiadzin, the center of the Armenian church dating from the fifth century.

In the book this is named "*Uch Kilissa. Armeno-Turkish Temple, of the seventh century*".

²¹ B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat, J. Schacht, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: J. Brill and London: Luzac, 1965) Vol. II, 1106-7.

Pages 90-91.

The monastic complex of Goshavanq, a medieval Armenian university dating from twelfth and thirteenth centuries, some 150 kilometers north-east of Yerevan. In the book this is described as “*Gochavang, Armenian-Turkish Temple of 8-9th century*”.

Pages 98-99.

The photos depict the seventh century Armenian Monastery and university of Tatev. The book describes it as “*Albano-Turkish Christian Temple*”.

Pages 106-107.

The Monastery of Haghpat in northern Armenia, dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The book calls this monastery “*Agbbat Turkish Temple*”.

Pages 126-127.

Photos of the Haghardzin Monastery and learning center, dating from tenth to the fifteenth centuries.

In the book this is described as “*Agbarchin, Albanian-Turkish Temple*”.

Pages 148-149.

Here is the photo of one of the churches of the Armenian Monastery of Noravank, built by the Orbelian princes during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The book renames it the “*Amagou, Oghuz Turkish monument*”.

Pages 154-155.

The Monastery of Saghmosavanq (Monastery of the Psalms) dating from the thirteenth century.

In the book it is described as “*Turkish-Christian Temple of Sogbmasavang*”.

This publication presents quite a few challenges to legitimate historians and ethnographers. These include the search for the “Turkish-Urartian” and “Armeno-Turkish” nations and the medieval “Turkish-Christian” builders who constructed the Monastery of Saghmosavanq, as well as many other unexplained mysteries!

As far as the Armenian nation and authorities are concerned, this publication is libelous and the authors of these defamatory statements should not go unpunished.

According to this book the Turks must have lived in Asia Minor from Urartian times, while the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* writes that even the name Turk originated during in the sixth century AD in China as “Tu-kiu”. These tribes lived in Mongolia and near China, where they gained independence in 682 AD.²² The oldest record showing the existence of Turkish tribes is that named “Orkhon”, discovered near Lake Baikal in 1889.²³ The name Oghuz was given to the confederation of Turkic Kirgiz and Uigur tribes who lived in Mogolia and became

²² *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (London: 1961), vol. 22, 622.

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. 16, 905.

the rulers of Mongolia during the eighth century AD. These tribes began their westward migration during the eleventh century AD.²⁴

Another of the publications containing similar lies and falsifications is the book entitled *Azerbaijan: 100 Questions Answered*, published in Baku by The European Azerbaijan Society and the Anglo-Azerbaijani Youth Society in 2005, 2006 and 2008. The last edition is a book of 208 pages with many glossy photos where 100 basic questions are answered. The first nineteen questions deal with the ethnic makeup, historic geography and history of Azerbaijan. As expected, the book contains the same fabrications and falsifications of history as we find in the other propaganda books printed in Baku. Some of the noteworthy points that are noted at the first glance are the following.

Page 11. The caption, under the flag of Azerbaijan says “*Blue signifies the Turkic origin*”.²⁵ This is contrary to the claims of the authorities who say that Azerbaijanis’ forefathers are the Caucasian Albanians. (See footnote 18 and related paragraphs in this volume).

Page 13. The book mentions that today there are 120,700 Armenians living in Azerbaijan.²⁶ This constitutes the population of Nagorno-Karabagh, who now have declared independence from Azerbaijan. The book, however, avoids mentioning that up to 1988 there were over 354,000 Armenians living outside the Karabagh region, in Baku and other major cities in Azerbaijan.²⁷ The members of the Armenian community were expelled from Azerbaijan during the two years following the 1988 pogroms in Sumgait. (See the chapter entitled History). The only Armenians remaining in Azerbaijan are those in mixed marriages, where either the husband or the wife is Armenian. Unofficial statistics put this figure at around 3,500.

Page 26. The book states that after the treaties of Gulustan (1813) and Turkmanchay (1828):

*...Azerbaijani land north of River Arax was incorporated into Russia, while land south of the river was annexed to Persia. These were later dubbed Northern and Southern Azerbaijan.*²⁸

In fact the names North and South Azerbaijan did not appear until well over 100 years after these treaties, when the authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan planned to annex the Iranian Province of Azerbaijan, the only real Azerbaijan, into the Soviet state. This political naming was hammered into the minds of the Azeri population with such persistence that most Azerbaijanis today believe it to be true.

²⁴ *Encyclopaedia Americana* (New York: Americana Corporation, 1967), vol. 27, 277.

²⁵ Tale Heydarov and Taleh Bagiyav, Editors, *Azerbaijan: 100 Questions Answered* (Baku: The European Azerbaijan Society, 2008), 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷ USSR Census of 1970. *Soviet Armenian Encyclopaedia* (Yerevan: 1974), vol.1, 90.

²⁸ Heydarov, *Azerbaijan: 100 Questions Answered*, op. cit., 26.

In the abovementioned volume the whole territory of the Republic of Armenia is described as:

*Western Azerbaijan and historically belonging to Azerbaijan. All historical monuments, toponyms and homonyms prove that the Azerbaijanis were the aborigines of that land.*²⁹

With such a ridiculous statement and offering no shred of evidence, all Armenian monuments are attributed to Central Asian Turkic tribes, which appeared in this part of the world during late medieval times.

This volume claims that Abbasqulu or Abbas-Qulu Agha Bakikhanov (1794-1847) was one of the best-known Azerbaijani writers, who has written the history book entitled “Gulistan-i Iram”.³⁰ The book fails to mention that the full title of Bakikhanov’s book is *Gulistan-i Iram. History of Shirvan and Derbend*. This book never mentions Azerbaijan, except when referring to the Iranian Province of the same name, located south of the Arax River.

Among best-known Azerbaijani poets and writers the book mentions the Armenian historian Movses Kaghankatvatsi, who has written the oldest existing chronicle of Albania as well as the famous twelfth century Armenian thinker and author the first law text, Mkhitar Gosh.³¹ They are supposed to be from a country, Azerbaijan, which did not even exist in this locality.

The book boasts 186 references, but a close scrutiny of these “sizeable” references reveals the following:

- 176 books and papers are published by Azeri authorities in Baku.
- 3 reference books are published by Azeri Embassies etc.
- This leaves only 7 independent references works.

To close this chapter, we would like to cite a comment by the British historian and travel writer William Dalrymple made on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel in 2008. In an interview given to Channel 4, on British television, he said “One should protect one’s own history and fight for it by tooth and claw, as others will always try to change it”.

Many questions remain to be answered, and this small volume will try to resolve some issues, while at the same time raising more questions. Meanwhile, it is advisable to relate historical events as they happened using the best available evidence and not to rely on the fantasies of a small number of individuals, whose careers and employment are dependent on satisfying agendas set by state officials.

²⁹ Ibid., 27.

³⁰ Ibid., 95.

³¹ Ibid., 102.

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

In order to gain a correct understanding of the relative position of countries in a specific geographical area, it is important to consider the historical geography and maps of the region in question. The best way to discover the past existence of any long-established country is to look into historical writings and maps of ancient and medieval writers, mapmakers and geographers.

According to the book *War against Azerbaijan* examined in the previous chapter, the modern country named “the Republic of Azerbaijan” claims to be the heir to Caucasian Albania, whose culture is claimed to be a progenitor of Azerbaijan. In this context the author writes:

*Caucasian Albania was home to different religious traditions, including forms of Idol- and Fireworship, Zoroastrianism and Christianity, which enriched the Azerbaijani cultural treasure with a great number of monuments....*³²

*The cult monuments created by the ancestors of Azerbaijanis have a special place within this heritage, one of them being the Christian Albanian ones.*³³

These two statements imply that Albania and Azerbaijan, as known in the early Middle Ages, are one and the same country, which could not be further from the truth. This could be seen in all the documents and maps drawn by Greek, Roman, Western European, Syrian and, most importantly, all the works of Islamic mapmakers, geographers and historians, where both these countries appear side-by-side. The country of Albania has been discussed in many historical and geographical works as has the country of Azerbaijan, or Lesser Media, as it was known in ancient times, located south of the Arax River, which at present comprises the north-western province of Iran, a distinctly separate country from Caucasian Albania. When talking about Albania, the Greek historian and geographer Strabo states the following:

They live between the Iberians [the ancient name of the Georgians] and the Caspian Sea, their country bordering

³² Imranly, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 7.

³³ *Ibid.*, 11.

on the sea towards the east and on the country of the Iberians towards the west. Of the remaining sides the north is protected by the Caucasian Mountains, whereas the southern side is formed by Armenia, which stretches alongside it. [The river] Cyrus [Kura] flows through Albania.³⁴

Albania belongs to the territory of the Caspian tribe, as was also the sea; but the tribe has now disappeared. The pass through Iberia and Albania leads through Cambysene... to the Alazonius river [Alazani, in Georgia]³⁵.

The Roman historian Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) in his *Natural History* states the following with regards to Albania:

All the plain from the Kur onward [northward] is occupied by Albani and then that of the Hiberes [Iberians], separated from the Albani by the river Alazon [Alazani] which flows from Mount Caucasus into the Cyrus.³⁶

The Greek geographer Claudius Ptolemaeus, known as Ptolemy (ca. 90-168 AD), is the author of *Geographia*, which, until the late medieval period was a key reference work for all geographers and cartographers. The book lists some 8000 place-names in the known world, and groups them into the various continents and countries, giving geographic coordinates for each one. Although the text of *Geographia* survives, none of the maps has reached us. Since the thirteenth century numerous cartographers and mapmakers have prepared Ptolemaic maps, basing their work on the list of place-names given in *Geographia*. In all the Ptolemaic atlases created by different mapmakers the “Third map of Asia” is entitled *Armenia Maior, Albania, Iberia and Colchis*. The map depicts the area of the South Caucasus and shows Albania, Iberia (Georgia), Colchis (Abkhazia), Armenian Maior (Greater Armenia) and parts of Armenia Minor (Lesser Armenia) and Media (Iranian province of Azerbaijan).

A typical Ptolemaic map of the South Caucasus is shown in Fig. 1. As can be clearly seen from this map, Caucasian Albania is far north of Media and Iranian Azerbaijan, being situated north of the rivers Arax and Kura, where the greater part of the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan can be found, while the historic and true Azerbaijan is shown around Lake Urmia, south of the Arax River.

³⁴ Strabo, *Geography*, Books 10-12, translated by Horace Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 11.4.1-2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.4. 5.

³⁶ Pliny (Gaius Plinius Secundus), *Natural History*, Books 3-7, H. Rackham, trans. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 6.11.29.



Fig. 1 – Ptolemy’s map of the Southern Caucasus entitled, *Map of Armenia Maior, Albania, Iberia and Colchis*. From Ptolemy’s *Geographia* printed in Ulm, 1482. Tabula III Asiae. From *Historic Maps of Armenia*, by Rouben Galichian, London: I.B. Tauris, 2004, 89.

An anonymous seventh-century monk from Ravenna collected the works of other historians and geographers and prepared a Map of the World, whose redrawing is shown in Fig. 2. In a reconstruction prepared by the leading German cartographer Konrad Miller (1844-1933) the three adjacent countries of Albania, Media Maior and Armenia are shown as separate countries (Azerbaijan being part of Media Maior, entitled Media Minor).



Fig. 2 – Reconstruction of the World Map of Ravenna, by Konrad Miller. From the book *Countries South of the Caucasus in Medieval Maps*, Rouben Galichian, 2007, p.43.

The ninth century Persian scientist Ibn Khordadbeh, who was one of the first Islamic geographers, in his book *Kitab ul Masalik va al-Mamalik* (The book of Roads and Realms) has the following to say about Albania (known as Arran) and Azerbaijan:

*The townships of Arran and Jurzan (Georgia) and Sisjan are part of the region of Khazar [Caspian], which Anushirwan conquered.*³⁷

*The north forms a quarter of Iran and is ruled by an Ispahbadh [General] who bears the title Adhapaikan. The quarter comprises Armenia, Adherbajian, Rey, Demavand with its main city being Shalanba.*³⁸

Ibn Khordadbeh names the following as being the cities and towns of Azerbaijan:

*Maragha, Mianj [Miane], Ardabil, Warthan [Warzaqan], Tabriz, Marand, Kboy, Moghan, Barzand, Jaberwan, Urmia and Salmas.*³⁹

*...[the city of] Warthan is the limit of Adherbajian with Armenia.*⁴⁰

All the above-mentioned cities and towns are and always have been inside the territory of the Iranian province of Azerbaijan, once again confirming that the country known as Azerbaijan was known to be part of Iran. The city of Warthan is about 50 km north-east of Tabriz, 40 km from the River Arax, which marks the border of Azerbaijan with Albania or Arran, reasserting the location of Azerbaijan in relation with Albania and inside the territory of Iran.

In the Russian translation of the same work, published in Azerbaijan, there is a map of the South Caucasus, which confirms the above statement. It shows Armenia reaching Lake Sevan, while Azerbaijan is shown located in the territory south of the Arax River around Lake Urmiya, as one of the regions of Iran. To the north of Azerbaijan we can see the regions of Arran, Shirwān, Mughan, Shaki and Tabarsaran (see Figure 3).⁴¹

Arab geographers and historians also considered Azerbaijan as the north-western Province of Azerbaijan. The ninth century Arab historian Yahyā ibn Jāber al-Balādhurī, in his *Kitābi Futūh ul-Buldān (The Book of the Conquests of Countries)*, in the chapter related to the conquest of the Iranian Province of Azerbaijan by the Arabs writes:

Husein ibn Amru of Ardabil relates that Omar ibn Khattab appointed Hadhifat bin al-Yamān the ruler of Azerbaijan... When al-Hadhifat after receiving

³⁷ Abul Kasim Obaidallah ibn-Abdallah Ibn Khordadbeh, *Kitab al-Masalik va al-Mamluk*, original Arabic with French translation, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, Part 6, volume 39 "from the Islamic Geography" series (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 1889), 118-120.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 118.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 119

⁴¹ Ибн-Хурдадбех, *Книга Путей и Стран* (Баку: Издательство Академии Наук Азербайджана, 1986), 290, карта 10. (Ibn Khurdadbeh, *Book of Realms and Routes*, Baku, 1986).

this appointment traveled to Ardabil, the main city of Azerbaijan, where the collector of taxes, Marzban [local ruler] resided, the Marzban had already gathered an army of followers from the towns of Bajervan, Meymand, Narin, Sarat[b], Mianj [Minaeh] and other cities of Azerbaijan, who offered stiff resistance to al-Hadhifat's Islamic forces.⁴²

All the above towns are those of the Iranian Province of Azerbaijan, therefore as far as the Arabs were concerned, this was Azerbaijan.

In the chapter regarding the conquest of Armenia by the Arabs, al-Baladhūri lists the names of Armenian cities, which include the cities of Shimshat [Samosat], Kalikla [Erzrum], Khlāt, Arjish, Jurjan, Sisakan, Bagevand and Debil [Dvin].⁴³

The Islamic historian and geographer Ibn Hawqal (deceased around 978 AD), in his geographical work *Surat̄h ul-Ardh* (Picture of the earth), following the tradition of the Balkhi school of Islamic cartography, describes the countries of the known world, which are mainly the Islamic states and provinces. In his maps he includes one showing the countries in southern Caucasus, which lie in their immediate neighbourhood. Here he lists the cities and towns of the three neighbouring countries in the following manner:

- Arran – *Bāb ul-Abwāb* [Derbend], *Shirwān*, *Shamakhiya* [Shamakha], *Shaki*, *Tiflis*, *Jenzeh* [Ganje], *Bardabe*
- Azerbaijan – *Marand*, *Khunj*, *Tabriz*, *Ardebīl*, *Zanjān*, *Marāghe*, *Dājermān*, *Ushneh* (Oshnaviyeh), *Khoy*, *Urmiya* and *Bubaire Kabutān* (Lake Urmiya)
- Armenia – *Khlāt*, *Dvin*, *Warthān* [Narzaqān], *Kāliklā* [Karin or Erzrum], *Arzan*, *Bitlīs*, *Miāfārgbin*⁴⁴ [outside the brown mountain range], *Bubaire Khlāt* [Lake Van] and *Jabal Hāridh* [Mount Ararat].

For the abovementioned cities and towns see Ibn Hawqal's map entitled Map of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Arran (Albania), depicted in Figure 4.

⁴² Yahyā ibn Jāber al-Balādhurī. *Kitābi Futūh ul-Buldān* (Leiden: Brill, 1866), Arabic section, 325-326. (*The Book of the Conquests of Countries*). Also see

- Баладзори, *Книга о завоеваниях Стран*, перевод П.К. Жузе (Баку: 1927), 23.

⁴³ Ibid., 193 and also Ibid., 5.

⁴⁴ The old city of Tigranakert (near Silvan in Turkey), which was one of the capitals of Armenia, built by King Tigran the Second, during 70s BC. Թ. Խ. Հակոբյան, Ստ. Տ. Մելիք Բախչյան, Հ. Խ. Բարսեղյան, *Հայաստանի և հարակից շրջանների պեղումների քառարևույն* (Երևան. 1991) հ.3, էջ 678, 818, նաև (Երևան. 2001), հ. 5, էջ 92. (*Toponyms of Armenia and Neighbouring areas*, Yerevan: vol. 3 – 1991, vol. 5 -2001).

Another Persian geographer, Hamd-Allah Mustawfī Qazwīnī in his *Nuzbat ul Qulub*, written in 1339/40 has the following to say about Albania (Arran):

*It has a warm climate, somewhat unhealthy. It borders Armenia, Shirwan, Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea.*⁴⁵

He lists the names of the important cities of Arran as:

*Bajervan, Barzand, Pilsawar, Hamsabir, Bilghan, Bardab, Ganje, Hirak.*⁴⁶

Regarding the cities of Azerbaijan, the book lists the following names:

*Tabriz, Ujan, Tasuj, Ardabil, Khalkbal, Shabrud, Anar, Ahar, Yaft, Salmas, Oshnaviye, Sarab, Mianeh, Dehbargan, Marand and others.*⁴⁷

Note that all of the above are located south of the Arax River, in the territory of the Iranian province of Azerbaijan.

The thirteenth-century English historian and geographer Gervais of Tilbury, who lived and worked in Italy and Germany. He wrote *Otia Imperialia* for Emperor Otto IV, and in his work he describes various countries and regions of the world. Regarding Caucasian Albania provides the following description:

*This land, which is called Albania, is inhabited by 26 tribes, who are famous for their dazzling white skin colour and come into the world with white hair. The area begins in the west of the Caspian Sea and extends along the coast to the northern ocean over many wild areas up to the Meotidi swamps [Sea of Azov].*⁴⁸

Zia Buniatov, one of the founders of anti-Armenian Azerbaijani hisotirography thesis, has translated into Russian and edited the 15th century Baku born geographer Abd ar-Rashid al-Bakuvi's work, originally in Arabic, entitled "*Kitab talkbis al-Asar wa Adjaib al malik al-Qabbar*". In this work Bakuvi describes Azerbaijan's location in this way:

*This country lies between Kubistan [Gilan and Deylam mountains of Persia], Arran [Caucasian Albania] and Armenia. There, between the cities of Tabriz and Ardabil stands Mount Savalan.*⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Mustawfī Qazwīnī Hamd-Allah, *Nuzbat ul Qulub*, Edited by Dr. Muhammad Dabir Siaghi (Tehran: Hadis-e-Emrooz, 2000),138. In Persian.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 139,140.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 121-137.

⁴⁸ Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia. Recreation for an Emperor*, Translators S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Book II, Ch. 5, 230-231.

⁴⁹ Abd ar-Rashi al-Bakuvi, *Kitab talkbis al-Asar wa Adjaib al malikal-Qabbar* (Moscow: Nauka publication of Institute of Oriental literature, 1971), 61-62.



Fig. 4 – Ibn Hawqal's map of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Arran (Albania), which shows their relative positions. Arran is north of the Arax and Kura rivers, while Azerbaijan is south of the Arax River. From Ibn Hawqal's *Surah ul-Ardh*, BNF Paris, MS Arabe 2214, p. 58, 1145 AD.

This fully fits the description of the Iranian province of Azerbaijan, a country separate and distinct from Albania. This is a fact that the current generation of Azeri historians repudiates.

One of the other best-known Azerbaijani scientists, poets and historians Abbas Qulu Agha Bakikhanov (1794-1847) in his history entitled *Gulistan-i Iram. History of Daghestan and Shirvan* writes:

*.. the right bank [south] of the river Kur, until where the Aras flows into it , was called Armenia. The right bank of the river Kur where Tiflis, Domanisi, Bolnisi and other as situated is called Sumokht [Somkheti], which in the Georgian language means Armenia.*⁵⁰

and adds:

*Shirvan and Daghestan jointly constituted Albania...*⁵¹

The distinguished French-English orientalist and historian Guy Le Strange (1854-1933), who was fluent in Persian and Arabic, after studying the writings of Persian and Arab geographers and historians wrote a book entitled *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*. The work dedicates one chapter (XI) to the Iranian Province of Adharbāyjān, where he describes the various cities of the province and their relationship with the Caliphate.⁵²

In the subsequent chapter of the book (XII), entitled “Gilan and the North-West Provinces”, Le Strange states the following:

*The provinces of Arrān, Shīrvān, Georgia and Armenia, which for the most part lay north of the river Araxes, were hardly counted amongst the lands of Islam, and hence are but perfunctorily described by the Arab geographers. From early days Moslems lived here, and governors were appointed at various times by the Caliphs, but the majority of the population continued to be Christian until the close of the Middle-Ages. Hence it was not till the resettlement subsequent to the Mongol invasion and more especially after the many campaigns which Tīmūr waged in Georgia at the close of the eighth century AH (fourteenth c. AD), when these lands came to be permanently settled by the Turks, that Islam became the dominant faith.*⁵³

⁵⁰ Abbas Qulu Agha Bakikhanov. *The Heavenly Rose-Garden: A History of Shirvan & Daghestan*. Willem Floor and Hasan Javadi translators (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2009), 11.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge: University Press, 1930), Chapter XI, 158-171.

⁵³ Ibid., 176-177.

The province of Arrān is included in the great triangle of land lying to the west of the confluence of the rivers Cyrus and Araxes – the Kur and Aras of the Arabs – and it is thus “between the two rivers” (Bayn-an-Nabrayn) as Mustawfi calls it.⁵⁴

Here once again the relationship of Arran and Azerbaijan is clearly delineated.

The famous German orientalist C. F. F. Lehmann-Haupt (1861-1938), during his expedition to Armenia, Persia, Assyria and Mesopotamia in 1898-99, writes about crossing the Arax from Armenia to Azerbaijan and continues describing his visit to Tabriz, the capital of Azerbaijan, confirming that Azerbaijan is a province of Persia (Iran).⁵⁵

As mentioned in the first chapter, when the new Azerbaijan was invented in 1918, Iranian Azerbaijani politicians and intelligentsia were opposed to their ancient name being given to the newly established country north of the Arax River. In the newspaper “Jangal” (Forest), the voice of the Iranian constitutionalist movement, the north Iranian revolutionary hero Mirza Kuchek Khan (1880-1921) writes:

Iranian Azerbaijan, a province which raised the leaders of the Constitution and was the birthplace of Zoroaster, has always been part and parcel of Iran, but now for what reason and why should the region south of the Caucasian Mountains, which has always had other names..... be called Azerbaijan?⁵⁶

A. K. Alekparov, in his book *Research on the Archaeology and Ethnology of Azerbaijan* says:

The terminology “Azerbaijani” came into use only around 1936. Prior to this the people of the country were called, Turks, a name used for counter-revolutionary actions of the pan-Turkists.⁵⁷

It is interesting to note that the Musavatists and Pan-Turkists, who named the country “Azerbaijan” are accused of being the enemies of the people of the same land. Furthermore, it is shown that although the country was called Azerbaijan, its people were not called Azerbaijani for over 16 years after its inception. In normal circumstances it is the country that is named after the people and not the reverse. In this case however, it appears that the reverse has happened, which makes one wonder whether the country was named correctly in the first place,

⁵⁴ Ibid., 177.

⁵⁵ Carl Ferdinand Friedrich Lehmann-Haupt, *Armenien einst und jetzt* (Berlin: B. Behr, 1910), volume 1, 181-199.

⁵⁶ Jangal newspaper, Iran, 06/01/1918 and Bayāt, Kāveh, *Storm Over the Caucasus* (Tehran: 1380/2000), 48-49.

⁵⁷ A. K. Alekparov, *Исследования по археологии и этнографии Азербайджана* (Баку: Изд. Академии наук Азербайджана, 1960), 71. (Alekparov, *Research in the Archeology and Ethnography of Azerbaijan*, Baku: 1960).

since, according to Alekparov, the population of the country was not called “Azerbaijani” until much later.

The above statement was confirmed by the head of the History Department of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Farid Alekperli, in his article entitled “Who are we, where do we come from and here are we going?”. It was published in the August 8, 2009 edition of *Zerkalo* newspaper printed Baku. He writes:

*Until 1936, People in the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920) and Azerbaijani Soviet Republic were officially known as Turks... Having lost our national self-identification, we got stuck in debates on who we are, i.e. whether we descend from Sumerians, Talish tribes, Albanians, Medes or some other ethnic group. There'll be no end to such tiresome and stupid debates unless we recognize that our true ethnic origins are disguised behind the featureless term 'Azerbaijanis'. We descend mostly from Turks, as well as Kurds, Tats, Lezgins etc.*⁵⁸

All the above evidence points to the fact that the name Azerbaijan does not rightfully belong to the territory north of the Arax River, but in spite of this, in 1918 this region was named the “Republic of Azerbaijan”. The leading Russian orientalist and academician V. Barthold specialized in the Caucasus and Eastern Europe, also weighed in on this geographical misnomer. In one of his series of lectures given in Baku at the Oriental Faculty of Azerbaijan State University during November and December of 1924 Barthold stated:

*...the territory that is now known as the Republic of Azerbaijan, which in the past was named Arran [Caucasian Albania], was given the name “Azerbaijan” thinking that when this country is established, the Persian and this Azerbaijan will become a united country ...*⁵⁹

The prestigious academic publication *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* confirms all the above and separates the real (Iranian Province of) Azerbaijan, as being south of the Arax and the Republic of Azerbaijan, as a newly established country, to its north.⁶⁰

Finally, the book *War against Azerbaijan* falsely claims that after sovietization and the influx of Armenians into Soviet Armenia, the country extended its territory at the expense of Azerbaijan. The relevant text reads:

⁵⁸ Фарид Алекперли, Кто мы, от кого произошли и куда идем?, *Зеркало*, 8 августа, 2009, Баку. (Farid Alekperli, *Who are we, where do we come from and where are we going?*, *Zerkalo* newspaper, 8 August, 2009, Baku.)

⁵⁹ Василий Владимирович Бартольд, *Работы по истории Кавказа и Восточной Европы* (Москва: Изд. Восточного Литературы, 1963), vol. 2, 703. (Barthold, *Studies on the History of the Caucasus and Eastern Europe*, Moscow: 1963).

⁶⁰ B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat, J. Schacht Editors, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: J. Brill and London: Luzac, 1960) Vol. I, 188-191.

Due to "sovietization" the territory of Armenia increased from 8,000-10,000 sq. km to 29,800 sq. km. mostly at the expense of Azerbaijani lands.⁶¹

As mentioned earlier, this political game was analogous to the case of one of the constituent republics of Yugoslavia, Macedonia, adopting the name of an existing Greek province of Macedonia. The tensions engendered by this move still reverberate.

The truth is that during the first years of the Soviet era, according to the Treaty of Kars (1921) the Armenian regions of Kars, Ardahan, Ani and Mt Ararat were ceded to Turkey by Communist Russia, and later on, in spite of the agreement with the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, who had declared Karabagh as Armenian, Joseph Stalin, overnight reversed the resolution and decided to give the region to Azerbaijan as an Autonomous Region (oblast) under Azerbaijani jurisdiction. The following is the sequence of events as they occurred.

After the establishment of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan and Armenia, on the 30th November 1920, the President of the Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan recognized Nagorno-Karabagh as a part of Armenia, and in June 1921, the government of Soviet Armenia did likewise.⁶²

The Azerbaijan's decision was confirmed by a telegraphed message to Armenia on December 1, 1920. This news was confirmed in Moscow's *Pravda* newspaper's issue No.273 published on the fourth of December, 1920. The *Kommunist* paper in Yerevan on December 7, 1920, published the following text:⁶³

The Worker's government of Azerbaijan greets the victory of the rebellious peasantry of brotherly Armenian nation and the establishment of Soviet Socialist rule. As of today the border disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan are declared resolved. Mountainous Karabagh, Zangezur and Nakhijevan are considered part of the Soviet Republic of Armenia.

Signed by

The President of Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan

N. Narimanov, and

Peoples' Commissar of Foreign Affairs

Huseynov⁶⁴

⁶¹ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 273.

⁶² *Nagorno Karabagh, A White Paper* (Washington DC: Armenian Assembly of America, 1997), 5. Also - Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia. The Survival of a Nation* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 323.

⁶³ Г. А. Галоян и К. С. Худавердян Редакторы, *Нагорный Карабах. Историческая справка*, (Ереван: Академия Наук АССР, 1988), 28-29. (Nogorni Karabakh, Yerevan, 1988)

⁶⁴ Г. А. Галоян и К. С. Худавердян Редакторы, Ереван: 1988), 28. See also

- Gerard J. Libaridian, editor, *The Karabagh File* (Cambridge-Toronto: The Zoryan Institute, 1988), 34.



Fig. 5 – Part of Senex’s map of the Caspian Sea, 1742.

The map shows Aderbajan (Azerbaijan – purple), the various regional khanates (green) as well as Armenia (yellow) and Georgia (red). The area known today as The Republic of Azerbaijan consists of parts of the khanate of Derbend, as well as Shamakhi, Gandja and Shirwan (all green). Aderbajan (purple) is shown inside the territory of Iran, south of the Arax River. Rouben Galichian collection, London.

On the third of June 1921, the Caucasian Bureau’s session instructed Armenia to announce the same news and confirmation of the above Agreement was announced by Soviet Armenia on 12 June 1921, in a communiqué signed by the Chairman of the National Committee (Sovnarkom), Alexander Miasnikian, stating:

Based on the declaration of the Revolutionary Committee of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan and the agreement between the Soviet Socialist Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is hereby declared that hereafter Mountainous Karabagh is henceforth an integral part of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia.

*Signed by
President of the Sovnarkom of Armenia
Al. Miasnikian (Al. Martuni) and
General Secretary of the Soviet Armenian Peoples
Commissars
K. Gharabekian.*⁶⁵

The above text was published in the June 22, 1921 issue of *Bakinskii Rabochik* in Baku.

Soon, however, the decision of the Azerbaijani government was reversed, and Narimanov openly threatened, saying, this action would revive anti-Soviet feelings in Azerbaijan and he even went as far as threatening Armenia with an oil embargo.⁶⁶

On July 4, 1921, the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the Russian Communist Party in the presence of Stalin resolved that Mountainous Karabagh would be included in the territory of Armenia. Narimonov protested and suggested that the decision be left for the party session in Moscow. The next day Stalin and Narimanov convened a special session of the party, where the previous decisions were reversed. In spite of Armenian protests, Azerbaijan soon unilaterally acted, incorporating Mountainous Karabagh in the territory of Azerbaijan as an Autonomous Region. This created a politically unstable enclave in the South Caucasus which would be manipulated and played against both sides, and whose aftershocks still rock the region today.⁶⁷

The re-assigning of Armenian lands continued into the 1930s, when strips of Soviet Armenian land in Siuniq and Zangezour were given to Azerbaijan and Nakhijevan. The two Soviet era maps shown in Fig. 6 and 7 bear witness to the shrinking borders of Armenia, all carried out for the benefit of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Note the changes to the region southeast of Lake Sevan, as well as the western and eastern borders of south Armenia. For comparison, the detailed regional maps are shown side-by-side in Fig. 8 and Fig. 9. Detailed study of the maps will reveal that those eastern regions “given” to Azerbaijan include the “Al Lijer” or “Aghi Lijer” mountain lakes near the village of Istisu, the villages of Istisu, Zar and Zivel, the local church as well as Lake Karagol and other areas.

This was a Soviet practice to re-assign the lands of various peoples to others, without giving due consideration about future problems that this action might create. Another much later example is the transfer of the Russian territory of the Crimean Peninsula to the Ukraine, which was made official by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in 1954. With 52% of the population Russian and

⁶⁵ Libaridian, *Karabagh File*, op. cit., 35, Also

- Г. А. Галоян и К. С. Худавердян Редакторы, *Нагорный Карабах. Историческая справка* (Ереван: Академия Наук АССР, 1988), 30-31.

⁶⁶ Г. А. Галоян и К. С. Худавердян Редакторы (Ереван: 1988), 33.

⁶⁷ Libaridian, *Karabagh File*, op. cit., 37. See also

- Г. А. Галоян и К. С. Худавердян Редакторы, op. cit., 31-34.

only 24% Ukrainian, this is another potential trouble spot created by the USSR and waiting to boil over.



Fig. 6 – The map of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia in 1928. The delineation between Siuniq, Zangezur and Azerbaijan appears quite different from the present border. In 1928 the westward projecting finger of Azerbaijani territory including the two lakes belonged to Armenia but this piece of land, along with other slices of territory, were “given” to Azerbaijan during the subsequent years. Soviet Armenia, map editor H. Elibekian, printed in Yerevan in 1928. Courtesy of Hamlet Sarkisyan, Yerevan



Fig. 8 – Detail of the southeastern section of the map Fig. 6, dated 1928. The small lakes are still inside Armenian territory. The region of Zangezur is wider than it is today.



Fig. 9 – Detail of the southeastern section of the map of Fig. 7, dated 1938. The small lakes are now in the territory of Azerbaijan. Other slices of territory have also been carved out of Zangezur (southeast) and given to Azerbaijan.

Comparison of the two maps of southern Armenia dated 1928 and 1938.

HISTORY

The recent book published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *War against Azerbaijan*, begins with a brief history of Azerbaijan, aimed at convincing the layman that this country had existed in its present location for millennia. It completely overlooks the fact that the real and historic Azerbaijan has been and remains the north-western province of Iran, first as the erstwhile country of Lesser Media, and later named Azerbaijan, always situated south of the Arax River. The name change of historic Azerbaijan originated during Alexander the Great's expeditions, when one of the patriotic Median generals named Atropat defended his homeland fiercely, and in his honour the province was renamed Atropatene, in time evolving into Adharabadgan, Adharbigan and Azerbaijan.⁶⁸ The Armenians still call it "Atrpatakan", which sounds much closer to its original name.

As seen in the previous chapter, when using the name Azerbaijan, one must be careful to indicate what is meant by this name, since, as mentioned above, for two millennia Azerbaijan has been the north-western province of Iran, located south of the Arax River, while the Republic of Azerbaijan is the name given to the territory across the same river only since 1918. As mentioned in the Introduction, in 1918 after becoming independent, this country was to be named "Eastern and Southern Transcaucasia" but this was changed to "The Republic of Azerbaijan" by the ruling nationalist Musavat party, thus reclassifying the local Tatar population as "Azeris".⁶⁹ This very same territory was for centuries named by the Greeks and others as Caucasian Albania. In Arabic it was known as Arran or Aran, and in Armenian, Ałvanq (Aghvanq). The population of this land was converted to Christianity during the fourth century. Albania lost its statehood during the sixth century and became the border provinces of Iran under Sassanid rule. Eventually during the tenth to twelfth centuries this country disappeared from maps and history books, and from then, the twelfth century onwards, the region was ruled by the Armenian Khachen family, known as Aranshahs, or shahs of Arran. In spite of the Mongol conquest, they managed to retain their hold on the region by finding a political solution and retaining the goodwill of their Mongol overlords.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Enayatollah Reza, Arran [Albania] wa Azerbaijan. Chegune Name Azerbaijan bar Arran Nahadeh shod? Ettelaat periodical "Siasi va Eghtesadi" (*Politics and Economics*), (Tehran: 2002), vol. 181-182, 4-25.

⁶⁹ Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918* (LA: University of California Press, 1967), 189.

⁷⁰ Հայկական Սովետական Հանրագիտարան (Երևան. 1980) Vol. 6, 246. (*Soviet Armenian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 6, Yerevan: 1980).

Later, the area was divided into various khanates such as Shirvan, Shamakhi, Derbend, Talish, Ganja (Elizavetpol), Qarabagh and others, parts of which were semi-autonomous under Persian or Russian suzerainty (see map of Fig. 5). According to Toumanoff:

*After the demise of the kingdom of Caucasian Albania in 1166 the power was transferred into the hands of the Armenian Khachen family, whose Meliks (Lords) ruled their territories and later shared power with various Muslim Khans until the nineteenth century.*⁷¹

In the quest to assert the claims that all the ruling tribes and leaders were Azerbaijani, the book *War against Azerbaijan* says:

*Different Azerbaijani Muslim state entities emerged in the territory of Albania, like Sajids, Salarids, Shaddadis, Atabays, Hulakids (Elkhanids), Garagoyunlu [Karakoyunlu], Aghgoyunlu [Akkoyunlu] and Safavids, who made great development to the Azerbaijani culture.*⁷²

If we are to believe the above, then all Mongol, Tatar, Turkic, Turkmen and Oghuz tribes, who had arrived in the region via the north Caspian or Iran during the ninth to fourteenth centuries were in fact descendants of the Albanians, who themselves were the forefathers of the population of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, according to these propositions, these tribes did not arrive from the steppes of the Central Asia, but had in fact **emerged** in Albania!

In the next paragraph of the same book the author talks about:

*The collapse of Azerbaijani Safavid state...*⁷³

claiming an Azerbaijani origin for the Safavids, which could be correct if it referred to Iranian Azerbaijan. But it is obvious that it refers to the area north of the Arax River, since it continues:

*...was accompanied by the emergence of independent and semi-independent entities, the khanates and sultanates, in the middle of the eighteenth century.*⁷⁴

In the second chapter the book continues repeating itself and stating:

During the existence of such Azerbaijani Muslim States as the Sajids, Salarids, Shaddadis, Atabays, Hulakids (Elkhanids), Garagoyunlu, Aghgoyunlu and Safavids,

⁷¹ Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, op. cit., 216 and 217.

⁷² Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 7.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

*the remaining Christian Albanians in different parts of the Caucasian Albania could restore their entities like Siuniq in the ninth to twelfth centuries and five melikates in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries.*⁷⁵

The above statement is only partially true, but it is not complete. It forgets to mention that the “Khachens” and that the five “Meliks” were Armenian families, who ruled in Mountainous Karabagh. This fact is confirmed by Toumanoff (see previous pages) as well as by the famous Karabagh historian Mirza Jamāl Javānshir Qarabāghi (1773-1853), who in his *Tarikh-e Qarabagh* (The History of Karabagh) written in Persian between 1840 and 1844 states:

*In ancient time the town [Bardaa in Qarabagh] was populated by Armenians and other non-Muslims.*⁷⁶

It should be noted that the Karabagh historian is talking about Bardaa, which was the capital of Arran⁷⁷. The book then adds:

*During the rule of the Safavid sultans of Iran, the Vilayet [province] of Qarabagh, its tribes, Khamsa [five] Armenian mahals [districts] of Dizaq, Varandeh, Khachin, Chalaberd and Talish were subordinates of beglarbegi of Ganja.*⁷⁸

The above sentence appears in the 1959 Russian translation of the book, however, since in Mirza Qarabaghi's manuscript any mention of indigenous Armenians ran counter to the latter-day preaching of the Azerbaijani historians, something had to be done about it. It was N. Akhundov, who in 1989, while re-editing the previously translated text, blatantly removed mention of Armenians from the new edition of the eighteenth century Azeri historian's book, so that on the subject of the Armenians, the two translations of the same book are quite different.⁷⁹

The Armenian Meliks, the Landlords of Khamsa (a quintet of regions), lived in the mountainous region of Karabagh and due to their strategically invincible positions generally remained autonomous, even when the rest of the region had fallen under Russian and Persian rule. If the recent Azerbaijani book is to be believed, the famous Armenian patriot Davit Bek (d. 1728), one of the political leaders of neighbouring Zangezur, is also of Albanian-Azerbaijani origin. So, allegedly, are all the Christians living in the vicinity of Qarabagh and the Republic of Azerbaijan, who are considered by the author to be the remnants of Christian Albanians.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁶ Mirza Jamāl Javānshir Qarabāghi, *Tarikh-e Qarabakh*, Manuscript B712/11603 (Baku, Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan), 4. English translation entitled *A History of Qarabagh* by George Bournoutian (Costa Mesa CA: Mazda Publishers, 1994), 15,16 and 37.

⁷⁷ Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphates*, op. cit., 177.

⁷⁸ Mirza Jamal, *Tarikh-e Qarabakh*, op. cit., MS, 6.

⁷⁹ George A. Bournoutian, “Rewriting History. Recent Alterations of Primary Sources Dealing with Karabakh”, *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (Fresno: SAS, 1992-1993), vol. 6, 185-191.

Johann Schiltberger⁸⁰ and Joseph Emin⁸¹ travelled to Armenia and Karabagh during the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries respectively, and have written much about the ethnic Armenians of Karabagh.. Schiltberger writes the following about the Armenians living in Karabagh:

I have also been a great deal in Armenia. After Tamerlin died, I came to his son, who has two kingdoms in Armenia. He was named Scharoch [Shabrokh]; he liked to be in Armenia because there is a very beautiful plain. He remained there in winter with his people, because there was good pasturage. A great river runs through the plains; it is called Chur [Kur], and it is also called the Tygris [Cyrus?]; and near this river, in this same country, is the best silk. The Infidels [Muslims] call the plain, in the Infidel tongue, Karawag [Karabagh]. The Infidels possess it all, yet it stands in Ermenia. There are also Armenians in the villages, but they must pay tribute to the Infidels.⁸²

Here again, what Schiltberger describes was not to the liking of Azerbaijani academician Ziya M. Buniatov (1921-1997) In 1984 Buniatov edited the translation of Schiltberger's book, misusing his authority and distorting the text by removing many references to the Armenians and as a "coup de grâce", completely eliminated the four last chapters of the book (chapters 63 to 66), which speaks mainly about the Armenians.⁸³

After the rule of the Turkmen Oghuz tribes up to the end of the fifteenth century, for almost 330 years the Persian Safavids and other dynasties ruled most of the Caucasus. Their suzerainty extended from Caucasian Albania to Armenia and most of Georgia. Persian rule ended after the wars between Russia and Persia, when in 1813 the Treaty of Gulistan and subsequently, in 1828, the Treaty of Turkmanchay were signed between Tsarist Russia and Qajar Iran, ceding all these territories to Russia.

If we are to believe the book *War against Azerbaijan*, the above treaties were signed not between Russia and Iran but between Russia and Azerbaijan, since here the khanates are given the title of the "Independent State of Azerbaijan" which is claimed to have risen from the ashes in 1918!

The occupation of these entities by Russia under the treaties of Gulustan (1813) and Turkmanchay (1828) suspended the centuries-old independent Azerbaijani statehood for about 100 years.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Johann Schiltberger, *Bondage and Travels – 1396 to 1427* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1879), Chapters 62-64.

⁸¹ Joseph Emin, *My Life and Adventures* (London: 1792), Chapters 17 to 26.

⁸² Johann Schiltberger, *Bondage and Travels* (London: 1879), 86.

⁸³ George A. Bournoutian, *Rewriting History* (JSAS, 1992-1993), vol. 6, 185-6.

⁸⁴ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 7

Here the author has decided to call the Persian khanates of Shirwan, Daghestan, Moghan, Karabagh, Shaki and others collectively as the **centuries-old independent Azerbaijan** (see above). The fact that the area north of the Arax was first Albania and then under the suzerainty of the Persian kings is completely overlooked and the Persian kings, themselves are called “Caucasian Azerbaijanis”. Instead, it claims that the name Azerbaijan had been taken away from these territories for only 100 years, that is between 1828 to 1918, once again conveniently forgetting that the name was **for the first time** given to the particular territory in 1918.

Elsewhere in the book the Azerbaijani authorities claim that:

Among the Azerbaijani states, which ruled in the territory of historical Azerbaijan, the most important and famous was the Safavid state (1501-1736). As already mentioned, the Chukhursad or Irevan beylarbeylik, one of the administrative-territorial units of the Safavid state and containing the territory of modern Armenia as well, together with the three other beylarbeyliks – Garabagh, Shirwan and Tabriz was unified under one beylarbeylik called Azerbaijan...⁸⁵

Here we note that the Safavids are once again given an Azerbaijani origin and the name of Irevan-Yerevan has been mentioned by the archaic name “Chukhursad”. Furthermore, all these lands are considered territories of the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan. The truth is that for a few centuries all the above-mentioned regions were ruled by the Persian kings and were considered to be the “vilayets” or provinces of Azerbaijan and other Caucasian provinces of Iran.

In Volume 1 of the *Russian Encyclopaedia*, published in 1890, under the heading “Azerbaijan”, we find the following:

Azerbaijan or Adherbijan (the land of Azer – fire, in Pablavi language – Athorpatkan, in Armenian – Athrpatakan) is the rich and industrial north-western province of Iran. Azerbaijan’s borders in the south are Iranian Kurdistan (Erdyal province) and Iraq-Ajami (Media). In its west it borders with Turkish Kurdistan and Turkish Armenia.⁸⁶ In the north, across the river Arax is Russian Armenia and the South Caucasus. The [Iranian] province of Gilan, by the shores of the Caspian Sea is to its east.... The area of Azerbaijan equals 104,840 square kilometres.... During the seventeenth century

⁸⁵ Ibid., 267.

⁸⁶ Part of Armenia was occupied by Turkey [the rest was occupied by Russia] and some of its important border cities were Kars and Ardahan. This is the reason why the Encyclopaedia mentions Turkish and Russian Armenia. But after the Genocide of the Armenians in 1915 these areas became devoid of their ethnic peoples and many had to leave their homeland.

*the Turks incurred much destruction on this land. Azerbaijan, as a border province and the residence of the Crown Prince (such as Abbas Mirza) was considered as a highly important province of Iran.*⁸⁷

Regarding the ethnic origin of the Caucasian Albanians, it is little contested fact that these people belonged to the Ibero-Caucasian group and that their language belonged to the Daghestani group of northeast Caucasian languages.⁸⁸ When the book talks about the ethnic origins of the people of Azerbaijan, there is much confusion and indecision. In one place the book talks of their ancestors as being the Turkic-speaking groups, the Agh-Koyunlu, Kara-Koyunlu Oghuz tribes and the Safavid kings of Persia, and then claims that the Christian Albanians are their ancestors.⁸⁹

When one speaks of the origin, although there may be diverse roots, logically speaking it is not possible to have two distinctly separate and geographically distant origins. If there are multiple origins, only one of them can be dominant, and the resultant race will be a mixed one.

The Russian academician and linguist Nikolay Yakovlevich Marr (1864-1934) suggested that the Arrans (Albanians) were the descendants of the tribes of Japheth. He also stated that the people of Azerbaijan were originally ethnically completely different from those of Arran and that the Arax River, the natural border, also separated the two ethnic groups. When writing about Azerbaijan, Marr, as quoted by Barthold, says:

*The river Arax, that now separates Iranian Azerbaijan from the Caucasus in ancient times acted as a racial and ethnic border between the lands of Media and Albania. As suggested by Nikolay Yakovlevich Marr, the people of Albania are the descendants of the tribe of Japheth.*⁹⁰

In the writings of Strabo and other ancient historians, we find that 26 different tribes lived in Caucasian Albania;⁹¹ however the present-day Azerbaijani authorities do not wish to admit that the population of this country is today a mixture of races and peoples coming from various backgrounds.⁹² There are the Muslim Lezgis (178,000), Christian Udis (4,200) both originating with the Albanians, Taleshis (Iranian peoples, 76,800), Tatars (30,000), Kurds (13,100), Tats (Iranian peoples, 10,900), Meskhetian Turks (43,400), Avars (50,900) and other minorities such as the Russians (141,700), Jews (8,900) and Ukrainians (29,000), as well as less numerous and officially unrecognised minorities such as the Kreezes, Khinaligs, Budughs,

⁸⁷ *Энциклопедический словарь* (Санкт Петербург: 1890), том 1, 212-213. (Encyclopaedic Dictionary, Leipzig: Brockhaus & St. Petersburg: Efron, 1890).

⁸⁸ Հայկական Մոկրակական հանրագրություն (Երևան. 1974 թ.), Հատոր 1, 262: (*Soviet Armenian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 1, Yerevan: 1974).

⁸⁹ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 7.

⁹⁰ Бартольд, *Сочинения*, 1963, vol. 2, op. cit., 775. (Barthold, *Studies*, 1963).

⁹¹ Strabo, *Geography*, op. cit., 11.4.6.

⁹² Enayatollah Reza, *Arran from the Ancient Times to the Beginning of the Mongol Era* (Tehran: Centre for Documentation and Research, 2003), 135-160.

Leks, Ghaputlins, Shakhurs and Aghuls, and finally, up until 1988 almost 384,000 Armenians, who were expelled from the country after the pogroms of Sumgait.⁹³ This figure excludes the Armenians living in Karabagh.

According to the official records of the USSR, on the 27-29th of February 1988 the Azerbaijani nationalist-extremist mobs slaughtered 32 Armenian civilians⁹⁴ and forced the deportation of over 17,000 Azerbaijani subjects of Armenian ethnicity from Sumgait, one of the largest cities of Azerbaijan.⁹⁵

Barthold's prediction that the naming of the territory north of the Arax River in 1918 "Azerbaijan" was intended to lay the foundation for the future annexation of Persian Azerbaijan (see the chapter "Historical Geography") became a reality when, during the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces (June 1941), Joseph Stalin instructed Mir Jafar Bagherov, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to organise the establishment of the Democratic Party in Iranian Azerbaijan, which incorporated the Azerbaijani branch of the Tudeh pro-communist party.⁹⁶ The Democratic Party of Azerbaijan was founded in September 1945 and organised local elections, actively lobbying to lead to full independence of province of Azerbaijan from Iran, aimed at its eventual annexation with the Azerbaijan SSR.⁹⁷

The relevant documents became accessible, when the 1939 to 1947 archives of the USSR and the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan were made public. The Azerbaijani historian Jamil Hasanly, in his twin volumes, *Struggle over Azerbaijan amongst Tebran-Baku-Moscow, 1939-1945*, and *The Beginning of the Cold War in Azerbaijan 1945-1946*, exposes the true expansionist intentions of the USSR and the concurrence of these plans with those of the Republic of Azerbaijan in separating the Iranian province of Azerbaijan from Iran and joining it with the Soviet Union as Southern Azerbaijan.⁹⁸ The books are based on the government archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, both having been translated and abridged by Mansur Hammami into a single volume in Persian.⁹⁹

The intention of "re-uniting" Iranian Azerbaijan with the Republic of Azerbaijan once again was brought to the attention of the world, when in 1992 President Abulfaz Elçibey of the already independent Republic of Azerbaijan raised the issue by proclaiming that he intends to unite the two, long since separated "brothers" together.

⁹³ Hranush Kharatyan, "The Problems of Ethnic Survival of Minorities in Azerbaijan", *Spectrum periodical* (Yerevan: 2005), vol. 2, 83-96. (All except the number of Armenians).

⁹⁴ John Eibner and Caroline Cox, *Ethnic Cleansing Worldwide* (London: CSI, 1999), 29. Eyewitnesses put the death toll into the hundreds.

⁹⁵ Հայկական Մովհակական հանրագիտարան (Երևան. 1974 թ.), հ. 1, Էջ 78-79: (*Soviet Armenian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 1, Yerevan: 1974).

⁹⁶ Fereidun Keshavarz, *Man Mottabam Mikonam (I Accuse)* (Tehran: 1980), p.61. In Persian. Бартольд, *Сочинения*, 1963, vol. 2, op. cit., 703. (Barthold, *Studies*, 1963)

⁹⁸ Jamil Hasanly, *Struggle over Azerbaijan amongst Tebran-Baku-Moscow, 1939-1945*, (Baku: Diplomat Publishing, 1998) and *The Beginning of the Cold War in Azerbaijan 1945-1946* (Baku: Diplomat Publishig, 1999).

⁹⁹ Jamil Hasanly, *The Rise and Fall of the Democrat Party of Azerbaijan*, translated by Mansur Hammami (Tehran: Ney Publications, 1383). In Persian.

This plan is still pursued and promoted by the Republic of Azerbaijan today. Azerbaijani TV GünAZTV station website on June 13, 2010 reported that Azerbaijani organizations abroad held their second conference in Brussels on 12-13 June 2010, where it was decided to establish a “National front for the liberation of Southern Azerbaijan”. The aim of this front is to take control of Iran’s northern provinces of Eastern Azerbaijan, Western Azerbaijan, Ardebil through the assistance and cooperation of Azeris living in these provinces of Iran, who are actively leading anti-government activities.

Many of these false allegations and claims owe their origins to the Soviet Union’s encouragement to the newly formed republics in Central Asia and Azerbaijan to claim nationhood.¹⁰⁰ To establish these nationhoods it was useless to refer to pre-1918 literature since there was no relevant information available in Persian, Arabic and European sources, or, for that matter in the books of the locally born historians mentioned earlier.¹⁰¹ To invent an Azeri nationhood there was no other choice than to attribute all Christian monuments to the Albanians and claim them Azeri’s ancestors, as well as claiming all persons born in the area or its vicinity as Azerbaijani and Albanian. These mandates are what have led academicians such as Bunyatov, Akhundov and others to make their false allegations and then to twist history to fit the aim.

In the introduction to his translation of Kat’oghikos Esayi Hasan Jelaleans’ *A Brief History of the Aghuanq Region* George A. Bournoutian has written in detail about the unscrupulous and heavy-handed editions and changes that Zia Bounyatov has made to various translations of the works of past historians.¹⁰² All of these fabrications and inventions are designed to serve the above-mentioned purpose.

These Azeri reversals and falsifications of history are continuing with the grants provided by the Aliev Foundation and will continue as long as there are extremists leading the country.

Another shining example amongst the former Soviet Republics in re-inventing and falsifying history is the case of the Republic of Turkmenistan, a country created by the USSR in 1924. After independence the former president for life, Mr Saparmurad Niyazov (1940-2006) gave himself the title “Türkmenbaşı” (Leader of the Turkmens) and wrote an all-encompassing history book entitled *Ruhnama*, which was a compulsory read for the population. The book is about the 5000 year history of the Turkmen people, whose genealogy is said to go back to Noah. In the process he claims that the Oghuz Turks, Anatolians, Seljuks, Mameluks, Safavids, Qajars and many other dynasties are actually Turkmen and furthermore, Turkey and Turkmenistan are two states but one nation. The complete text of this book, in 22 languages, is available on the internet in www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/ruhnama/ruhnama-eng.html site.

¹⁰⁰ Touraj Atābaki, *Azerbaijan, Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, op. cit., 25. This also is similar to Atatürk’s slogan of “One country, one nation” given to multi-ethnic Turkey.

¹⁰¹ These include Abbas Qulu Agha Bakikhanov, Mirza Jamāl Javānshir, Qarabāghi, Mirza Adigözal Beg et. al.

¹⁰² Kat’oghikos Esayi Hasan Jajaleants’, *A Brief History of the Aghuanq Region*, Introduction and annotated translation by George Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2009), 8-28.

THE ARMENIANS IN SOUTH CAUCASUS

As mentioned in the Introduction, since the 1960s the historians of the Azerbaijan SSR have been waging a propaganda war against all things Armenian and have tried to “prove” that the Armenians are newcomers in the South Caucasus, brought and settled there by the Russian army as late as in the nineteenth century.

The latest book in this series, *War against Azerbaijan*, carries out the same fabrications to the fullest extent and is no exception, writing:

*Although the Republic of Armenia does not have an ethnic Azerbaijani population now, its territory was a native land of Azerbaijanis long before Armenians appeared there for the first time.*¹⁰³

It also claims that the Armenians began to arrive in parts of Azeri lands only in the Middle Ages, followed up by the establishment of the Armenian religious centre – Echmiadzin, located in the town of Vagharshapat (the old name of this town, used until 1945, reinstated in the 1990s). About this matter the book states:

*It appears that the history of the settlement in Vagharshabad village by Armenians dates back to the early fifteenth century, the first Armenian settlement in the territory of the Caucasus, to which resettlement became substantial in the early nineteenth century.*¹⁰⁴

The book neglects the fact that the original Echmiadzin Armenian church was built during the fourth century, at the time of the conversion of Armenians to Christianity, because the town was located central to the territory of the Armenian kingdom. The town was not established in the 15th century as claimed, but was re-established as the Catholicate of All Armenians returned there in 1441 after a millennium of peregrinations. In any case, it does not need an expert to see that many ancient Armenian capitals such as Dvin (in Arabic, Debil, as shown on many Islamic maps) and Artashat (Artaxata), as well as well-known Armenian monasteries and other monuments are located in what is now called the South Caucasus, well before any land in this vicinity was named “Azerbaijan”. The authors of the book should check their facts and look them up in any standard encyclopaedia or history book before exposing their ignorance to the readers.

¹⁰³ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 266.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 272.

In the Introduction, when discussing the settlement of the Armenian population in the South Caucasus, the author alleges:

Thus, following the occupation [1813-1828], Russia achieved a considerable demographic change by settling a great number of Armenians in Azerbaijani territories.¹⁰⁵

The same book frequently calls the Persian Safavid king Shah Abbas the Great “Azerbaijani” king. Even if we were to assume that this is true, it is a well-known fact that in the course of wars with Ottoman Turkey, Shah Abbas decided to adopt a “scorched earth” policy and render the lands on the borders of the two empires useless. In 1603-4 he forcefully relocated over 300,000 (supposedly “non-existent”) Armenians from Nakhijevan and Julfa, most of whom were settled in New Julfa, a town built near Isfahan for these resettled Armenians, where their descendants still thrive. In addition to making the area of Nakhijevan barren and unusable for the Ottomans, his main aim was to bring skilled Armenian craftsmen and internationally experienced merchants to help realise his ambitious program of improving trade with foreign countries, especially with Europe, where Armenian tradesmen had already been established for hundreds of years.¹⁰⁶

The following question arises: if before the nineteenth century there were no Armenians living in the area of the South Caucasus, how did Shah Abbas, who is claimed to be an Azerbaijani king, manage to uproot 300,000 Armenian souls from that area and exile them to Iran in 1603-4?

It suffices to look into the narratives of the local historians Mirzā Jamāl Javānshir Qarabāghi and Abbās Qulu Agha Bakikhanov (see previous chapter) to find out that the Armenians were present in the territory of today’s Azerbaijan much earlier than claimed.

Further evidence comes from the Venetian diplomat, merchant and explorer Josafa [Giosafat] Barbaro (1413-1494) who travelled to Persia during 1471 and 1478. He reports in his memoirs that in crossing from Lori to Shamakhi he found a city of 4000 to 5000 houses, the majority of which were Armenian.¹⁰⁷

The British merchant Anthony Jenkinson (1529-1610) travelled to Moscow and thence to the Caucasus and Persia on behalf of the British Crown and the Muscovy Company. In his travelogue he writes about the city of Shamakhi, which is seven days journey by camel from the Caspian Sea, and confirms that it is basically populated by Armenians.

... this citie [Shamakhi] is distant from the sea side, with camels seuen dayes iourney, but now the same being much decayed, and chieflie inhabited with Armenians.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁶ Susan Babaie, Kathrin Babayan, Ina Baghdiantz-McCabe and Massumah Farhad, *Slaves of the Shah* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

¹⁰⁷ Josafa [Giosafat Barbaro] and Ambrogio Contarini, *Travels to Tana and Persia*, William Thomas translator (London: Hakluyt Society, 1873), 86.

¹⁰⁸ Anthony Jenkinson, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1886), vol. 1, 136.

Another Englishman, John Cartwright travelled to Persia and Armenia in 1603, immediately prior to the deportation of the Armenians by Shah Abbas. He writes the following in his memoirs:

... we arrived at Chiufula [Julfa], a town situate in the frontiers between Armenians and Atropatians, and yet within Armenia, inhabited by Christians, partly Armenians, partly Georgians: a people rather given to the traffique of Silkes, and other sorts of Wares, whereby it waxeth rich and full of money, than instructed in weapons and matters of warre. This town consisteth of two thousand houses and ten thousand soules, being built at the foot of a great Mountayne in so barren a Soile, that they are constrained to fetch most provisions, only Wine excepted, from City Nassuan [Nakhijevan].¹⁰⁹

Another famous traveller, Sir John Chardin (1643-1713) visited Georgia, Armenia and then Persia, including New Julfa in Isfahan. During his travels from Paris to Isfahan between the years 1671 and 1675, he writes a great deal about the Armenians, their lifestyle, customs and traditions. Regarding the geographical location of Armenia he writes:

To the small or Lesser Armenia they assign for Bounds, the Great Armenia to the East, Syria to the South, the Black-Sea to the West, Cappadocia to the North and they place the Great Armenia between Mesopotamia, Georgia, Media [Persian Azerbaijan] and Armenia the Lesser.¹¹⁰

About the city of Yerevan, as described by the local population, he has the following to say:

Erivan, by the report of the Armenians, is the most ancient inhabited place in the World. For they affirm that Noah and all his Family dwelt there, both before the Deluge, and after he descended from the Mountain where the Ark rested.¹¹¹

The above observations and the whole chapter of Chardin's book relate to the well-established local population of Armenians with their traditions and heritage, which the Azeris allege did not exist during that time.

The French traveller Alexandre de Rhodes visited Armenia in 1648 and describes the Armenian cemetery of Jufa, as well as the life of the Armenians living in Erzurum, Echmiadzin and Nakhijevan.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ John Cartwright, *The Preachers Travel wherein is set downe a true journal, to the confines of East Indies, through the great countreyes of Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Media, Hircania and Parthia* (London: Thames Thorpe, 1611), 35.

¹¹⁰ Sir John Chardin, *Travels to Persia and ye East Indies through the Black Sea and the country of Colchis* (London: Moses Pitt, 1686), 243.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹¹² Alexandre de Rhodes, *Divers Voyages et Missions du P. A. de Rhodes en la Chine, & Autres Royaumes avec son Retour en Europe par la Perse et l'Armenie* (Paris: Sebastian Cramoisy, 1653), Part 3, 62-74.

In the published archival records of the Russian officials in Shirvan, Baku and Daghestan, dating from 1728 to 1796 there are multitude of references to the Armenian population living in the area. The collection of reports have been prepared by various officials and include the following:

*Report by I. G. Gerber. Description of the Countries and Peoples along the Western Coast of the Caspian Sea. 1728. In Shamakhi ... during Persian rule ... there were variety of Persian, Russian, Turkish and Armenian merchants.*¹¹³

*In 1724 the majority of the population left Baku and those who stayed were the Armenian, Indian and some other merchants.*¹¹⁴

*Armenian people. They inhabit many villages in Musbkur, Rustav and many more in Qabala [Kabala]: many also live in the trading cities of Shamakhi, Baku and Derbend. Near Shamakhi they have monasteries where their bishops reside.*¹¹⁵

I. T. Drenyakin. Description of Shirvan. 1796.

*In Shamakhi live Persians and Armenians.*¹¹⁶

*Apsberon and the city of Baku. In the city of Baku there live 540 Persian and 40 Armenian families.*¹¹⁷

In his historical work *Gulistan-i Iram (The Heavenly Rose Garden)*, the earlier mentioned Baku born historian Abbas Qulu Agha Bakikhanov has the following to say about the Karabagh Armenians:

*From the region of Moghan Abdul-Rahman and from the region of Armenia Bakr occupied most of Shirvan either by force or by peaceful means. ... Most of the Armenians, who lived in remote and inaccessible locations escaped this occupation...*¹¹⁸

The respected Persian historian Firuz Kazemzadeh of Yale University, served as Commissioner of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, under President Bill Clinton. About the Armenians, he writes:

*The Armenians lived both in Transcaucasia and outside. In Transcaucasia they occupied the high mountains to the south of Georgia. Their country was rugged and unproductive, but it lay on the paths of every conqueror, and the Armenians suffered the faith of a perpetual battleground.*¹¹⁹

¹¹³ М. О. Косвен, Х. М. Хашав, редакторы, *История, география и этнография Дагестана* (Москва: 1958), 94.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 98.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 116.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 164.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 167-168.

¹¹⁸ Bakikhanov, *Gulistan-i Iram*, op. cit., 41.

¹¹⁹ Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia*, op. cit., 3-4.

Returning to the Azeri book *War Against Azerbaijan* the author claims that the Christian population of the “Qarabagh Highlands” (Mountainous or Nagorno-Karabagh) are not Armenian but Albanian. Concerning this he states the following:

*...the majority of Albanian Christian population adopted Islam, whereas the population of Albanian highlands remained Christian.*¹²⁰

The latest DNA researches at London University, based on the “Y” male chromosomes for the most spread genetic lineage in North European populations and performed on Siuniq and Karabagh Armenians resulted in a 20-25% frequency.¹²¹ This proves that the ancestors of at least this proportion of the Armenians presently in the areas of Siuniq and Karabagh have been living in the same areas since Palaeolithic times, almost 40,000 years.¹²²

In another section of the book, when discussing the repatriation and immigration of Armenians to their homeland, the following is presented as “proof” of Armenians being newcomers to the area:

*In 1914-1916, about 350,000 Armenians settled in the Caucasus and according to the “Caucasian Calendar” the number of Armenians in Irevan [Yerevan] province in 1916 reached 669,871.*¹²³

How could facts be so inhumanely abused? The refugees who filled the villages and cities of Erivan province of Tsarist Russia, as well as those of neighbouring Iran, Syria and Georgia, were the remnants of the indigenous population of West (Turkish) Armenia, who were lucky enough to escape with their lives from the Genocide being carried out in Turkey under the direction of the Ottoman Turkish Committee of Union and Progress. These atrocities were supervised by the German Kaiser's and Axis Powers' military advisors, and were carried out under the guise of “resettlement”. This is a historical fact, which, however, both Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan deny.

Whenever Azerbaijani historians claim that the Armenians are newcomers to Karabagh and the Caucasus, they invariably refer to the French ethnographer and historian Ivan Chopin (1798-1870), who lived and worked in Russia. However, they are highly selective of those portions of Chopin's work they chose to use. In his volume entitled *Historical Survey of the Conditions of the Armenian Province at the Time of its Unification with the Russian Empire*, Chopin gives the number

¹²⁰ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 12.

¹²¹ J. F. Wilson, D. F. Weiss, M. Richards, M. G. Thomas, N. Bradman, D.B. Goldstein, “Genetic evidence for different male and female roles during cultural transitions in the British Isles” (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, USA, 2001), 5078-5083.

¹²² M. E. Weale, L.Yepiskoposyan, R. F. Jager, Hovhannisyan, A. Khudoyan, O. Burbasge-Hall, N. Bradman, M. G. Thomas, “Armenian Y chromosome haplotypes reveal strong regional structure within a single ethno-national group” (*Human Genetics*, 2001), vol. 109, 659-674. See also

- Левон Епископосян, *Коды Генетика и История Стакиваются* (Ереван: 2008). (Yepiskoposian Levon, *When Genetics and History Clash*, Yerevan: 2008).

¹²³ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 273.

of émigrés from the Persian Empire into Russia in a tabular form as follows: 23,568 to Yerevan Oblast (Province), 10,652 to Nakhijevan and 1,340 to Ordubad, making it a total of 35,560 souls.¹²⁴ According to another contemporary Russian historian Sergei N. Glinka (1775-1847), the total number of immigrant Armenians from the Persian Empire after the Treaty of Turkmanchay was about 40,000.¹²⁵ Thus it can be concluded that the number of Armenians settling in the area of Karabagh was about 4,500. (See also George Bournoutian, Mazda, 2009.) After all, these few thousand returning Armenians were a small percentage of those forced to move to Persia by Shah Abbas during the early seventeenth century.

An indisputable fact about the presence of Armenians in this region is further confirmed by the mainly religious manuscripts produced by the Armenian scribes and priests in the large towns and cities of the region, namely Ganja (Gandzak), Shamakhi, Shaki, Baku and others, once again confirming the existence of well established Armenian communities in the region prior to the nineteenth century, and responsible for the production of the manuscripts. A short list of the manuscripts dating before 1820 which are kept in the Matenadaran (depository of manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia) together with the names of their production centres, reference numbers and dates (in brackets) are given below:

Gandzak – No.3992 (1484), No.8967 (1576), 9398 (16-18th c), No.7980 (1639), No.6771 (1667), No.3541 (1671), No.3576 (1673), No.3994 (1683), No.3044 (1779), No.5234 (1783), No.9517 (1819).

Shatak, near Gandzak – No. 728 (1621), No. 713 (1636), No 5072 (1661).

Karbat, Dashkhesan – No.3196 (1655), No.10044 (1656), No.9448 (1665), No.3856 (1669), No.8965 (1675).

Madrassa, Shirvan – No.5232 (1403).

Masally, Shirvan – No.5997 (18th c.).

Salyan, Shirvan – No.4013 (1803).

Shamakhi – No.8361 (1742), No.8492 (1717-1720), No.9729 (1765).

Shaki – No.4228 (1681), No.4422 (1783).

Baku – No.3853 (1779).

Manuscript production can only be accomplished in well established communities which have centres of learning and scriptoria. This can further be seen from many manuscripts made in the same towns and villages during the nineteenth century, not included in the above list.

So much for the Azerbaijani claims of Armenians being newcomers to their ancestral lands! Some historians may try to bend and even reverse the facts, but science and truth will eventually prevail and the evidence cannot be hidden for long.

¹²⁴ Иван Шопен, *Исторический памятник состояния Армянской-области в эпоху ея присоединения к Российской-империи* (Санкт Петербург: Императорская Академия Наук, 1852), 635-638. (Chopin, *Historical Survey of the Conditions of the Armenian Province at the Time of its Unification with the Russian Empire*, S. Peterburg: 1852).

¹²⁵ Сергей Н. Глинка, Н. *Описание преселения армии адербиджанских в пределы России* (Москва: Типография Лазаревых Института Восточных Языков,1831), 92. (Glinka, *The Account of the Immigration of the Armenians from [Iranian] Azerbaijan to Russia*, Moscow: 1831.)

CULTURAL MONUMENTS

Azerbaijani claims

As mentioned earlier, since the 1960s the historians and political scientists of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan have been trying gradually to promote the theory suggesting that the Christian cultural monuments located in the territory of their republic are all Albanian, and that the Armenians have no connection with any of these monuments. They also claim that today's population of the country is the legitimate heir to the Albanians, and with the stroke of a pen they wish to establish and own a rich past and culture which rightfully belongs to the local Armenians who have lived in the same region for millennia.

As we can see from the chapter on History, the people of Azerbaijan and Albania have had different origins and cultures and even assuming that the monuments were Albanian, the present-day population of Azerbaijan, being a melange of Albanian, Persian, Turkic, Tatar, Taleshi and Mongol ethnicities could not consider themselves pure Albanian. The only people living in the territory who are the true descendants of the Albanians are the Christian Udis, who number around 4,200 and live mainly in the northern Shaki district, in the villages of Vartashen and Nij; and the Lezgis, who converted to Islam in larger numbers and now live in the Dagestan Autonomous Republic of Russia and northern Azerbaijan, some distance away, north of the Armenian-populated areas.

According to the historian Koriun, during the fifth century the Armenian Saint Mesrop, who is famous for inventing the Armenian alphabet, invented another alphabet of 52 characters for the Albanians, which, due to the scarcity of samples and texts, has not yet been deciphered.¹²⁶ For the past ten years a number of specialists have been analysing a palimpsest, consisting of ten pages of vellum located in St. Catherine's Monastery in Mt. Sinai, on which there originally had been an Albanian text, before being reused and overwritten.

Other samples of Albanian script must have existed, in fact there must have been many texts written in this language, regrettably none of them have survived.

Present day Azerbaijanis claim to be the heirs of the Albanians, as well as that of the Muslim rulers who reigned in the region until the early nineteenth century. In *War against Azerbaijan*, we find the claims that:

¹²⁶ Կորյուն, *Վարք Մաշտոցի* (Երևան. Երևանի պետական համալսարան, 1981), էջ 288-9. (Koriun, *Life of Mashtotz*, Yerevan: 1981).



Fig. 10– Sample of Albanian script from a carving from the Mingechaur Museum.¹²⁷

A considerable portion of the territory of modern Armenia until the occupation by Russia in the early nineteenth century was part of different states established by the ancestors of Azerbaijanis, namely Caucasian Albania, and after the arrival of the Arabs, different Azerbaijani Muslim states such as Sajids, Salarids, Haddadids, then Atabays, Hulakids (Elkbanids), Garagoyunlu and Aghgoyunlu, with its peak during the Azerbaijani Safavid state from 1501 to 1736 ...¹²⁸

Today, looking at the facts one can only ask, “How could it be that not even a fragment of a book in the Albanian script has survived in this country”? If, as claimed above, the country was always populated by the local Albanians and their heirs, the present day Azerbaijani people, who could have destroyed all the Albanian books and documents so thoroughly?” Could it not be possible to presume that the destruction was done by the other “ancestors” of the Azerbaijanis, such as the Tatar, Mongol and Turkic peoples, who had ample opportunity and reason to perform these acts? This is a paradox in need of an acceptable explanation.

Regarding the prehistoric monuments, in the Hadrut District of Nagorno-Karabagh, on the road to the town of Hadrut, near the village of Azokh there is a Lower Palaeolithic cave which contains early human and animal remains. The site was left unattended and not properly explored by the authorities of Azerbaijan. When the region passed under Armenian control, visiting European archaeologists, realising the importance of this cave for international palaeo-anthropology, began professional excavations with the help of Spanish, Irish, Portuguese, British and

¹²⁷ Serge N. Mouraviev, “Trois études l’écriture Alouannaise” J.-P. Mahé Rédacteur, *Revue des Études Arméniennes* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1998-2000), Tom 27, 1-79, photo 46.

¹²⁸ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 265.

Karabaghtsi scientists, and during next several years the group published a number of reports. The Azeri authorities protested, saying that the excavations and reports were done without their permission. In 2007 they published the infamous book *War against Azerbaijan* where it was calimed that the Armenians were destroying all Azerbaijani cultural monuments and archaeological sites, adding that the current state of the Azokh cave is “unknown”.¹²⁹

Prior to coming under the control of Karabagh Armenians, none of the Christian monuments, monasteries or tombs in that territory was protected. In fact most were systematically and intentionally damaged and destroyed. It is only after the Armenians gained control of their historical monuments and ancestral lands in 1995, that the local population and authorities had a chance to repair and restore these historic monuments. One example is the monastery of Dadivank (Khutavank, or as cited in the book, the Khudavang cloister), whose importance is mentioned in page 8 of the book, yet as seen in the photo, under the Azeri rule, it had been left to decay and Armenian specialists have only recently restored some of the churches in this monastery to their original state (see Fig. 11/12). The restoration work is ongoing.¹³⁰

In the table of monuments that the book provides, this is the only medieval monument whose geographical coordinates are known, while none are provided for the other monuments. The Azerbaijani authorities claim that the fate of this monastery is unknown to them! These authorities, who have access to all sorts of satellite photos, as seen in the book, claim that they are unaware of the publicly acclaimed and advertised restoration work and consecration ceremonies performed in the complex during the last few years. Instead, they officially claim that the current state of this medieval monastery is “unknown” to them.¹³¹

The Monastery of Gandzasar, which the Azerbaijani authorities have decided to rename as the “Ganjasar cloister”, was treated in the same manner. The top photograph, Fig. 13, shows the monastery as it was prior to 1993, that is, while under the control of the government of Azerbaijan. This important and supposedly “Albanian-Azerbaijani” historic monastery was left to decay, even though, if we believe the Azerbaijani claims, it is part of Azerbaijan’s cultural heritage. When the control of the territory reverted into the hands of the Armenians, the complex was cleaned and restored, once again becoming an active and important religious centre. It must be mentioned that during the war the Azerbaijani army bombarded the church with missiles, as a result of which, one of the periphery walls was knocked down, revealing many hitherto unknown medieval Khachkars (cross-stones), which had been hidden from view for many centuries. Notwithstanding the widespread newspaper reports about the monastery, the Azerbaijani authorities claim that the fate of this monastery is “unknown”.¹³²

¹²⁹ Ibid., 209-211 and item 42 listed in the table of page 221.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 80.

¹³¹ Ibid., item 18 on table of page 87.

¹³² Ibid., 16 and item 1 of the table on page 87.



Fig. 11 – Monastery of Dadivank under Azerbaijani control in the 1990s.

Fig. 12– The same monastery in 2005, partially restored by the Armenians. Photo – R. Galichian.





Fig. 13 – Gandzasar monastery as it was before 1993. Page 16 of the Azeri book.

Fig. 14– The present state of Gandzasar monastery. Photo – www.yanarthusbertrand.org.





Fig. 15 – Church of Tzitzernavanq as depicted on page 103 of the book.

In order to “prove” their point, the recently published book *War against Azerbaijan: Targeting Cultural Heritage*, repeats the false claims of official Azeri historians. Here, the author presents a table of “destroyed” buildings for each region of Nagorno-Karabagh and the peripheral regions now in Armenian hands.

The tables in the book list all sorts of religious and cultural buildings and monuments, but the overwhelming number of objects listed, are private houses, cultural centres and libraries. It is interesting to note that in the small area occupied by the Armenian forces of Nagorno-Karabagh there were supposed to have been 572 libraries. Some of the monuments come with detailed location coordinates, but the exact location of the majority is unknown. These are just described as, for example “house” or “library” in the village of “X”, claiming that it has been “destroyed”.

The satellite photos accompanying some of the claims are yet another matter altogether, which will be discussed later. Many monuments have been renamed and now bear names deemed to be acceptable to the Azerbaijani authorities and “scientists”.

The compiler then laments the destruction of monuments and buildings, citing 1881 such instances (see Table on page 57) and starts with naming the “Aghoghlan (allegedly Albanian) cloister”, whose faith is unknown to the author.¹³³

¹³³ Ibid., 8, 102, 103 and item 1 of table on page 112.



Fig. 16 – The Church of Tzitzernavanq after liberation and during its reconsecration. The renovation of the museum on the right is now complete.

This is in fact the famous fourth to fifth century Armenian church of Tzitzernavanq, whose roof had collapsed in 1986 and which, since the liberation, has been restored by the Armenians and is now a functioning church (see Fig. 16). It is interesting to note that even the Azerbaijani Albanian historian Akhundov, as recently as 1986, called this church “Tzitzernavank” located on the “Agh-Oghlan River”, but lately the name of the church has also been changed to “Aghoghlan”.¹³⁴ The opening and re-consecration of Tzitzernavanq was officially announced, but the Azerbaijani authorities, pleading ignorance, claim that the status of the church is “unknown”.

The book goes on to name Amaras (fourth century, built by Gregory the Illuminator), Gandzasar (built in the tenth century, extended during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and later) and Dadivank (Khutavank – churches built during twelfth and thirteenth centuries) monasteries as being Albanian, while all the historic documentation, founding and dedicating inscriptions and carvings in these complexes bear witness to their Armenian origin.¹³⁵

The list of the supposedly “destroyed” monuments continues in the same vein. It also persists re-naming and re-attributing the major monuments and religious historic buildings. Subsequent chapters of this book are dedicated to each

¹³⁴ Давуд Ага-оглы Ахундов, *Архитектура древнего и ранне-древневекового Азербайджана* (Баку: Азербайджанское Госд. Изд., 1986), 222-3. (Akhundov, *The Architecture of Ancient and Early Medieval Azerbaijan*, Baku: 1986).

¹³⁵ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 8.

“occupied” district, with some satellite imagery of the sites, small photos of the objects and a table of various monuments, with columns for their names, date, location, coordinates and present status. The lists include the following categories:

- Castles and towers
- Churches and cloisters [monasteries]
- Temples and pre-Islamic monuments
- Mosques
- Caravanserais
- Ancient and modern cemeteries
- Bridges, springs and mills
- Museums and archaeological artefacts
- Residential houses
- Schools and theatres
- Libraries
- Social clubs
- Houses of culture, other buildings

As mentioned above, the sum of the objects in the tables from the various districts adds up to 1881 items, listing everything from cloisters or monasteries and churches to mosques and houses, claiming that 1421 of these have been destroyed by the Armenians, the fate of the rest being unknown.

At first glance, the pages and pages of tables seem to be very impressive, but after proper scrutiny the list reveals that 1189 of these allegedly “destroyed” objects fall in the residential house, library, social club and house of culture categories, with few of them being identifiable, due to the absence of names, coordinates or any sort of photographic evidence.

Of the 357 public monuments listed, 138 are claimed to be destroyed, while the fate of the remaining 60% is said to be “unknown”, which, looking at the list, we can surmise means either “untouched” or “has been repaired”.

For further clarification, the chapters of the book have been scrutinised and the following are some of the misleading and intentional falsifications introduced in the book.

1 – Shusha (or Shushi) District

From the 167 allegedly “destroyed” houses, libraries, social clubs and houses of culture, only 67 have photographic representations. Curiously thirteen of these images show them as intact buildings with no apparent damage, such as those numbered 131, 134, 187, 191, 231, 256 and others.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Ibid., sequentially, 55/67, 55/67, 46/70, 52/70, 56/73 and 41/74.

DETAILS OF THE CLAIMED DESTRUCTION AS SHOWN IN THE TABLES OF THE BOOK "WAR ON AZERBAIJAN", Baku: 2007

TYPE OF MONUMENT	Shushi		Kalbajar		Lachyn		Gubadly		Zaqalan		Jubrayil		Fuzuli		Khojav.		Khojali		Aghdam		Tartar		Gazakh		Karki/Sadrak		Total	
	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des	Unk.	Des		Unk.
See Below (*) and (**) Castle/Tower	4	1	4	0	1	0	5	0	6	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	35	
Church & Monastery			5	0	4	1	1	0		0			3	0			3	0				3			3	0	19	
Monument/Temple			12	0	19	0	5	7	4	0	4	0	29	0	12	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	89	
Mosques	4	13	1	0	0	2	8	10	0	0	0	5	13	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	59	
Caravansaray	0	4										0	1														5	
Bridge/spring & Mill	5	13	4	0	25	0	2	8	2	0	2	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	39	27	
Ancient Cem./Tomb			1	1	3	4	5	2	2	0	0	1	1	3	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	
Cemetery	3	0	4	2							2	4			1						1	0	1	0	1	0	12	
House	38	109	1	0	4	2																					45	
Other bldg	1	6			5	0					0	0	2	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	8	17	
Arch. Site & Museum	2	13	8	3	69	13	21	4	4	9	20	11	8	6	13	13	2	13	13	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	172	
School	1	10	0	2	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	
Library	2	26	0	115	0	109	80	73	0	0	0	0	1	7	2	8	15	19	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	45	
House of Culture	0	8	0	42	0	32	11	10	0	0	0	0	2	12	3	5	3	16	16	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	567	
Social Club, Park etc.	2	14	1	48	1	47	43	48	0	0	0	19	10	25	0	4	28	4	28	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	6	
Total unknown	62	217	41	214	131	216	40	19	30	30	11	139	47	25	34	15	111	16	111	2	16	2	0	15	0	15	461	
Total destroyed							169	155					137		28													1420
Grand total																												1881

The book claims: Total house/school/library/club/cultural house in "unknown" state = 62 and Total of same types claimed as "destroyed" = 1189.

Photos in the book	226	35	45	39	24	25	27	25	21	50	10	3	1	531
(*) UNK = Unknown condition														
(**) DES = Claimed to have been destroyed														

2 – Kalbajar District

The fate of Gandzasar monastery is shown as “unknown”. As stated earlier, this complex has been restored and is once again the focal point of the Armenian Church in the district. Given the publicity it has received, this fact and the photos in the various websites could hardly have escaped the author’s attention.

From the 44 historic monuments and buildings listed, only seven are claimed to have been destroyed and the rest are classified as “unknown”.

Out of 208 houses, libraries, social clubs and houses of culture only five are shown on satellite photos. Moreover item 207 shown in the photos (listed as “unknown”) appears to be an upstanding building.¹³⁷

3 – Lachin District (Berdzor)

Out of the 137 listed artifacts, temples, churches, tombs, springs etc. only 9 are claimed to be “destroyed” and the rest are classified as “unknown”. No doubt these have been included to enlarge the tables.

Out of the 196 houses, libraries, social clubs and houses of culture the status of only one is “unknown” and the rest are allegedly “destroyed”. Yet the satellite photos include only four of the listed buildings, object numbers 150, 151, 266 and 299.



Fig. 17 – Hamza Soltan (Melik Haykaz) palace under Azeri rule. See page 104 of the book *War against Azerbaijan*.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 84/97.



Fig. 18 – Melik Haykaz (Hamza Soltan) palace in 2006, after being repaired by the Swiss-Armenian philanthropists. Photo – Rouben Galichian.

To pinpoint the outright lies contained in the table, it is sufficient to look at page 104 of the book *War against Azerbaijan* (see Fig. 17), where the photo of the partially ruined Hamza Soltan palace in the village of Husulu (now Melikashen), which, in fact is Melik Haykaz' summer palace, located in the District of Lachin is depicted, and then refer to page 112 of the book, where item 14 of the table claims that this building has been “destroyed”. In 2007 this writer stayed in a small guesthouse in the village of Melikashen, Lachin District, which was the renovated and refurbished summerhouse of Melik Haykaz, (Hamza Soltan) mentioned above. The present condition of the building is shown in the photo, Fig. 18.

To expose other false and deceitful allegations presented in the tables contained in *War against Azerbaijan* as “the truth”, three more samples are shown in the following photographs.

In Fig. 19, the present condition of the Islamic tomb of Mir Ali situated in the village of Ashaghy Veysaly (Lower Veysali), in the district of Fizuli is depicted. On page 193 of the book *War against Azerbaijan*, however, this monument and its plan are shown and the reader is led to believe that this is one of the monuments described in the book which has been “destroyed” by the Armenians. On page 200 of the book, under item 1 of the table, the same monument is described as “destroyed”. This constitutes a complete fabrication and lie, which the photographic evidence in Fig. 19 proves.

The next photograph is of a fourteenth century Islamic tomb in the village of Kangarli, Aghdam District, also shown on page 236 of the same book. On page 248, item 27 of the table claims this tomb is now “destroyed”, while the photographic evidence of Fig. 20 shows the same tomb very much intact, as it stands today. Once again proof of the false allegations contained in the book.

The list pertaining to the remaining ten districts continues predictably in the same vein. Suffice it to say that from the 615 houses, libraries, social clubs and houses of culture listed, none have names or specific coordinates and only 25 have attendant satellite imagery and/or photographs, leaving the fate of the 590 in the hands of the anonymous author who has chosen to classify them as “destroyed”.

War against Azerbaijan claims that the Armenians have destroyed the Islamic tombs in the cemetery of the city of Aghdam. This claim is tabulated on page 247 of the book, and under line item 12 – Tomb of Ughurlu Bey, where its status is indicated “destroyed”. The satellite photo of page 241 also claims the same. The photograph, as depicted in the book is shown in Fig. 21, where the shadows cast by the two larger tombs, one of which is the “Ughurlu Bey” tomb, are clearly visible, proving these tombs, like all the others to be upstanding structures.

Fig. 19 – The tomb of Mir Ali in Ashaghy Veysali under Armenian rule during 2006.
Photo – Hamlet Petrosyan.





Fig. 20 – The fourteenth century Islamic tomb in Kangarli as it stands today.
Photo – Rouben Galichian, 2009.



Fig. 21 – Satellite photo of the Ughurlu Bey tomb, Number 12, as shown in the book, page 241.
(Text in blue has been added by the author)

In the Summer of 2009, the author travelled to Aghdam and stopped in the cemetery where he took the photographs of the tombs shown in Fig. 22, just off the road connecting Aghdam with Askeran.



Fig. 22 – The tomb of Ughurlu bay, surrounded by many other upstanding tombstones.
Photo – Rouben Galichian, July 2009.

Some of the bridges shown as “destroyed” are most probably war casualties. It is not unusual for a retreating army to destroy bridges to be left behind, such that they are useless to the enemy. In all probability the retreating Azerbaijani army destroyed many bridges, which are now claimed to be “proof of Armenian atrocities” and “war on culture”!



Fig. 23 – The so-called “Albanian cross” as illustrated on page 18 of the book *War against Azerbaijan*.

Fig. 24–Tiflis, 1718.



Fig. 25 –Telet, Georgia, 1681.





Fig. 26 – St. Stephen Protomartyr monastery, near Darashamb, Iran, seventeenth century. Decoration on the church windows.



Fig. 27 – St. Stephen Protomartyr monastery, near Darashamb, Northwest Iran. A typical Khachkar

Fig.24 to 27. Various Crosses from Armenian churches and monasteries.

The book also claims that the Armenians have replaced Albanian crosses with Armenian ones:

*.... Albanian crosses were replaced by Armenian ones and many other methods useful to change their Albanian identity were applied.*¹³⁸

In the book there are two images of crosses: one is an Armenian cross on a stone carving, while the so called “Albanian” cross is a modern wooden cross on a pedestal, with slightly different arm endings, nevertheless very similar to all Armenian crosses as the images on the previous two pages demonstrate.¹³⁹

The ancient and medieval crosses have reached us mainly in the form of stone carvings, but the majority have been executed as so-called “cross stones”, in Armenian – “Khachkars”. These monuments, of which tens of thousands still exist in all territories where Armenians once lived or still live, are used as tombstones, memorials and decorations in religious buildings and cemeteries. The khachkars are uniquely Armenian, though other types of stone crosses were used by Celtic peoples. Ancient khachkars were very basic and simple, but during medieval times they became more and more elaborate and decorative, adding various geometric and floral elements to the background as well as to the crosses.

From the crosses depicted in Figures 24 to 27, it can clearly be seen that the allegation, that Fig 23 is an Albanian cross is incorrect, as other crosses of the same design can be seen on diverse Armenian monuments ranging from the banks of the Arax River to the banks of the Kura. The so-called Albanian cross in the book is shown in Fig. 23. The images on the following page show other crosses of very similar design, which are taken from various Armenian churches. The list of false and unsubstantiated claims is lengthy and not worthy of individual consideration.

Concerning mosques, author of the book claims that in Armenia all mosques have been destroyed, conveniently forgetting that during the early Soviet era the Communists’ religious phobia led to the destruction of thousands of churches and mosques all over the Soviet Union, indiscriminately obliterating most of the historic heritage and monuments of different nations. The sole exception was Azerbaijan, where during the same period few mosques were demolished. In Armenia scores of churches were dynamited, along with most of the mosques, while in Azerbaijan all the mosques were protected, while during the years 1920 to 1940 in the Republic of Azerbaijan over 34 churches and monasteries were demolished and completely obliterated.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Ibid., 18.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Սամվել Կարապետյան, Հայկական պատմական հուշարձանների վիճակը Ադրբեջանում (Երևան. ՌԱԱ հոդված, 2007). (S. Karapetyan, *The State of Armenian Historical Monuments in Azerbaijan*, Yerevan: RAA research paper, 2007).

As for the preservation of mosques in the territory of Armenia, the authors claim that since 1988 in Yerevan the Azerbaijani Blue (Goy) Mosque has been renovated and is presented as a Persian mosque:

The Göy (Blue) Mosque [of Yerevan] was turned into the Museum of History of Yerevan in the Soviet period, and then “restored” and presented as a Persian mosque after 1991.¹⁴¹

In 1995 the Armenian authorities decided to renovate the Blue Mosque of Yerevan, originally built by the Persians. It was thought that the renovation could only be properly done with the help of Iranian master builders and tilers. Specialists from Iran were invited to perform the work and eventually the Iranian authorities took over the renovation project with enthusiasm.

The Blue Mosque was built by the Persians in 1765 in the Khanate of Irevan (Yerevan), which, at the time was under the Persian rule. At the time there was no country titled “Azerbaijan” north of the Arax River and the mosque was an Islamic Shia worship centre, built for the Muslim population of the city of Yerevan. In 1893-4 the British traveller and geographer H. F. B. Lynch (1862-1913) visited Yerevan and concerning its mosques he had the following to say:

One might expect to find mosques of considerable age in a city, which flourished under the Mohammedan masters. One must, however, recollect that the Ottoman Turks are Sunnis and the Persians Shias; what the one may erect the other loves to destroy. We are expressly told that when Shah Safi took the place in AD 1635 all the mosques built by the Turks were razed to the ground.¹⁴²

It must be said that all mosques built between the 1635 and 1820s were erected by the Iranians and bearing in mind that the local Muslim population, as well as the Persians were both Shias, their mosques were identical. Hence, it is very difficult to understand how the Blue Mosque could be an “Azeri” mosque, since such a classification did not exist.

Regarding Islamic monuments in Armenia, as an example of the protection offered to medieval Islamic tombs, it is sufficient to pay a visit to the village of Argavand, located just outside the city of Yerevan, south of the road leading to Zvartnotz airport. Here, just off the main road one cannot help but to notice the fifteenth century Islamic tomb shown in Figs. 28-30. It is properly fenced and protected by the Committee for the Preservation of Historic Monuments of Armenia.

¹⁴¹ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 276.

¹⁴² H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia. Travels and Studies* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1901), vol. 1, 210-211.

The tomb's plaque (Fig. 29), written in Armenian and Turkish, states that the Karakoyunlu Turkmen tomb was erected by the order of Emir Pirhusseyn son of Emir Sad in the year 1418 [AD]. The figurine on the next image is a Ram, symbol of the tribe erecting the monument.

Finally, the compiler neglects to point out the fact that during three years of warfare (1991-94), Azeri forces rained Grad missiles and artillery bombs, as well as using aircraft, to bombard the populated areas of Karabagh indiscriminately, causing a great many civilian casualties as well as destroying many commercial and residential buildings and above all, historic and religious monuments of all types, which the Azerbaijani authorities claim to be representations of their own heritage.



Fig. 28 – Fifteenth century Karakoyunlu tomb in the village of Argavand, near Yerevan.

Concerning the more recently built Islamic cemeteries in the territory of Armenia, these can be seen in villages all over Armenia where Muslims once lived. Such examples are the two villages of Aghvorik (ex. Yenyol) and Ardenis (ex. Gyolli) in the Amasia district of Shirak Marz. These cemeteries are fenced and all the tombstones, bearing Turkish inscriptions are intact. See the two following figures.



Fig. 29- The plaque in front of the tomb, stating "The Karakoyunlu Turkmen tomb built by the order of Emir Pirhusseyn son of Emir Sad in the year 1418".
Photo – A. Kirakossian, 2008.

Fig. 30 – Figurine of the ram, representing the Karakoyunlu tribe.
Photo – A. Kirakossian, 2008.





Fig. 31 – The Islamic cemetery in the village of Aghvorik. Photo – Rouben Galichian, 2009.

Fig. 32 – The Islamic cemetery in the village of Ardenis. Photo – Rouben Galichian, 2009.



CULTURAL MONUMENTS

Azerbaijani Vandalism

Looking back into the history of the Republic of Azerbaijan, it can be shown that what they accuse the Armenians to be doing is, in fact, what they have done to Armenian monuments found in their territory since the birth of their country in 1918.

Let us look back into recent history, the same period that the book *War against Azerbaijan* is talking about. During this time frame any Armenian monument in Karabagh, located in the territory controlled by Azeri forces, suffered a terrible fate by being systematically dynamited and demolished. Northern regions of Nagorno-Karabagh suffered the most, since even now this area is occupied by Azeri forces.

The following are only a few samples of what went on.

A – Village of Azat, Khanlar District.

One of the sites in this district was the seventeenth century church, Saint John (Hovhanness) or Holy Mother of God (Sourb Astvatzadzin) church in the village of Azat (Suluk), Khanlar region of northern Karabagh. Due to the strong construction of this church the vandals were only able to inflict major damage by dynamiting the church and even then could not demolish it fully. (See photos Fig. 33 and. 34 on the following pages).¹⁴³

B – Village of Kamo (Baghshik), Khanlar District.

The seventeenth century Saint Saviour church in the village of Kamo, in Khanlar district of northern Karabagh was badly in need of repair, since its roof had caved in and the only part with a roof cover was the altar. The photos in Fig. 37 and 38 show the church in 1989, as it stood before the conflict.¹⁴⁴ After the Azeri takeover of the village and the expulsion of the last Armenians in 1990, the church was dynamited and, only a few remaining stones where its altar once stood, mark where the church used to be.

¹⁴³ Սամվել Կարապետյան, *Հյուսիսյին Արցախի, ՌԱԱ Գիտական ուսումնասիրություններ մատենաշարից* (Երևան. ՀԱ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատարակչություն, 2004) Գիրք 2, 312-315: (S. Karapetyan, *Northern Artsakh [Karabagh]*, vol. 6 of series "Research on Armenian Architecture", Yerevan: 2004).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 367-373.



Fig. 33 – St John church in Azat village. Exterior view.

Fig. 34 – The same church after Azeri inflicted destruction. Photo – Frederic Berlemont, 2007.





Fig. 35 – Interior of the same church in 1989.

Fig. 36 – The interior of the same church after Azeri inflicted damage. Photo – Frederic Berlemont, 2007.





Fig. 37- The church in Kamo village, in 1989.

Fig. 38 – The remains of the church of Kamo in 2007.



C – The Church in Nij (Nic).

War against Azerbaijan talks about the Albanian church in the village of Nij in the Shaki district without recounting the whole story. Nij is one of the villages where the Udis, the remnants of Christian Albanians, are still living, who are the followers of Armenian Apostolic Church.¹⁴⁵ The village had a church in need of repairs. The following is the sequence of events, as they occurred.

In 2004 through the assistance of the Norwegian Ambassador in Azerbaijan, Steinar Gil, the charity “Norwegian Humanitarian Enterprise” decided to renovate and refurbish the Church of St. Elisha, built in 1823 in the village of Nij. The repairs were to be carried out by the local Azerbaijani authorities. Regarding the developments, Steinar Gil writes:

*In the end of 2004 or beginning of 2005 all Armenian inscriptions on the church walls and on tombstones outside the church were erased with erasing machines. The Norwegian Embassy and Norwegian Humanitarian Enterprise issued a joint press release protesting against this act of vandalism. The restoration work was halted for some time, but having received a letter of apology from the Udi community Norwegian Humanitarian Enterprise decided to resume the financing of the restoration. Personally, I found the apology unsatisfactory in substance and also owing to the fact that it was not publicised. Neither has anyone been brought to account for the vandalism. Together with other ambassadors in Baku I was invited to the opening ceremony. I informed my colleagues that because of the vandalism and the lack of proper reaction to it, nobody from the Norwegian Embassy would attend the opening ceremony. No ambassadors attended the ceremony.*¹⁴⁶

Note the photo of the entrance (Fig. 40, as it was prior to the erasure). Because of the boycott and restrictions no new photographs are available. This vandalism and the subsequent scandal was reported at the time in an article that appeared in the 17 February 2005 issue of the magazine *WorldWide Religious News*, under the title “Christian minority in Azerbaijan Gets Rid of Armenian Eyesore” has reported the case in detail.¹⁴⁷ (See Appendix A). However *War against Azerbaijan* speaks of:

The restoration of Albanian churches in the village of Kish in Shaki district, which was completed in 2004,

¹⁴⁵ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 12 and 19.

¹⁴⁶ Gil Steinar’s personal communication with the author, August 2008.

¹⁴⁷ AFP, “Christian Minority in Azerbaijan Gets Rid of Armenian Eyesore” *WorldWide Religious News*, 17/02/2005, <http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:Kbv0jicIGkj:http://www.wwrn.org/article.php?idd=6795&sec=13&cont=7+armenian>,



Fig. 39 and 40 – The main entrance of the church of Nij (built in 1823) before the restorations, with the Armenian inscriptions above, which have since disappeared.



the Nij village in Gabala district, completed in 2006 and the ongoing conservation of the basilica in Gum village... testimony to the [reservation and protection of the Albanian Christian heritage, despite the past and continuing [Armenian] policies of destruction or Armenianization.¹⁴⁸

Now it is crystal clear what is meant by the word “restoration”, wherein the Armenian inscriptions, which are “an eyesore”, are removed.



Fig. 41 – House of the priest near the Armenian church of Getashen in the 1980s.

D – Getashen Town (Elendorf), Khanlar District, North Karabagh.

Getashen used to be one of the largest Armenian populated villages in northern Karabagh. It had many beautifully constructed traditional houses, one of which was built near the church. This was a large house with a long veranda adorned with latticework, wooden columns, and railings.

After the Azerbaijani pogroms perpetrated on the Armenian population of Azerbaijan’s main industrial city of Sumgait, and the expulsion of Armenians from various Azerbaijani towns and villages in May 1991, the entire population of Getashen was driven out of the city by the Soviet army. The history of the town goes back to the early seventeenth century. The surrounding areas contained many Armenian churches, cemeteries and monuments, the fate of which can only be guessed. The town, which in 1986 had an all-Armenian population of 3568 souls, is now a derelict ghost-town.¹⁴⁹ (See photos of Fig. 41 and 42).

¹⁴⁸ Imranli, *War against Azerbaijan*, op. cit., 19.1

¹⁴⁹ Սամվել Կարապետյան, *Տրուխսային Արցախ*, ՌԱԱ Գիտական ուսումնասիրություններ մատենաշարից (Երևան, ՀԱ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատարակչություն, 2004), Գիրք 2, 334: (S. Karapetyan, *Northern Artsakh [Karabagh]*, Yerevan: “Research on Armenian Architecture”, 2004), vol. 6 of series.

Fortunately, all the records, photos and details of the monuments that existed in the 1980s are still extant, and it is easy to discover whether any Armenian monuments have survived.¹⁵⁰

E – Parin-Pij church and chapel, Shushi District. Village of Metzshen.

Further casualties of Azerbaijani vandalism and intentional destruction are the church and the chapel in the village of Metzshen near Berdzor (Lachin), Shushi District. The village had a chapel as well as a church on the nearby hill. Both were in average condition. The buildings had intact roofs and walls and were usable.



Fig. 42 – The same house after the Azerbaijani occupation of the village.

After Azerbaijani forces left the area and the district of Shushi, it was discovered that the chapel had been dynamited and the area was partially cleared, with only a few stones remaining to show where it used to stand. (See Fig. 43 and 44).

The village church, however, stood its ground and in spite of attempts to wreck it, most probably by using it as an artillery target, it survived due to sturdy structure and the quality of the mortar used in its construction. Only parts of the entrance and the nearby wall were damaged, and a gaping hole can be seen on the side of the church. (See Fig. 45 and 46).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.



Fig. 43 – The chapel of Parin-Pij in Metzshen village, near Berdzor, in the 1980s.

Fig. 44 – The same chapel, after the withdrawal of Azerbaijani forces in the 1990s.





Fig. 45 – The Parin-Pij church in 1980s.



Fig. 46 – Parin-Pij church after the artillery bombardment, in 1990s.

F – St. John (Hovhannes) Armenian church in the City of Ganja (Gandzak)

This church dates from 1633 and its entrance was repaired in 1860, as the Armenian inscribed memorial plaque above the entrance door testified. Until the 1990s this was a working church (see Fig. 47), but when the hostilities ended with the Armenian forces taking control of Nagorno-Karabagh, the Azerbaijani authorities decided to convert the church into a concert hall (Fig. 53 & 54) and, in order to hide the Armenian origin of the building, all Armenian-language inscriptions inside and outside the church were chiselled away and painted over.

The following photographs show the same church building and some of its details before and after these acts of vandalism.

Fig. 47 – St. John church in Gandzak (Ganja) during 1985. The side entrance.





Fig. 48 – The Armenian inscriptions in the 1990s.



Fig. 49/50 – The same inscriptions today.

Fig. 51 – The Armenian inscribed memorial plaque above the entrance, as it used to be.

Fig. 52 – The same memorial plaque in 2008.





Fig. 53 and 54 – The St. John church of Gandzak in 2008, less its cross, now used as a concert hall.



G – Monastery of Amaras, Martuni district, Karabagh.

Under Azerbaijani control this monastery dating from the fourth-century located near the village of Machkalashen, was left to decay and was restored only after it came under the control of the local Armenians. The most important tombstone in the church, the tomb of St. Grigoris, the first Catholicos of Caucasian Albania and the founder of the Albanian church, was vandalised and broken into pieces by the retreating Azeri forces. Some of the original fragments were lost and the tombstone was beyond repair. The local Armenian authorities, therefore decided to replace it by a replica.

This is yet another example, of the supposed heirs and descendants of the Albanians destroying the heritage of Caucasian Albania which they claim to be their own!



Fig. 55 – The vandalised tombstone of Catholicos Grigoris of Albania, who was the grandson of St. Gregory the Illuminator, who converted the Armenian state to Christian faith. The inscription on the tombstone, now partially missing, reads “Tomb of St Grigoris, Catholicos of Albania, the grandson of the Parthian Gregory the Illuminator”.

Fig. 56 – The replacement tombstone, a replica of the destroyed original, made and placed by the Armenians.





Fig. 57 – The liberated Amaras monastery. The main church today.

During Soviet rule and after independence, thousands of Christian monuments and artifacts in the territories of Karabagh and the Republic of Azerbaijan were at best neglected and at worst destroyed. Most of these acts of vandalism were not witnessed or recorded by outsiders, since the borders were closed. The one exception is the case of the medieval Armenian Cemetery of Julfa (Jugha in Nakhijevan), destroyed by the Azerbaijanis after their independence. At the beginning of the twentieth century over 5,000 imposing carved tombstones (Khachkars) with Armenian inscriptions stood there. The location of this cemetery on the north bank of the Arax River meant that it could be observed from Iran. The destruction was witnessed and photographed from that point.

The population of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhijevan, which was administered by Azerbaijan, had, from antiquity and the Middle Ages up to the nineteenth century, been mainly Armenian populated and constituted part of Armenia. As mentioned earlier, this is one area from where Shah Abbas exiled 300,000 Armenians in 1603-4. The fact is that the Muslim population of

Nakhijevan was so small that as late as the early nineteenth century there were only six mosques in the region, while at the same time Nakhijevan had over 200 Armenian monasteries, churches, and chapels.¹⁵¹

One of earliest English travellers to Persia and Armenia was John Newbery, who visited Armenia in 1581-2. He entered Armenia travelling from Tabriz and in his memoirs writes:

*The fourth day from Merent [Marand] and the same day at Jolfa: and there is Bridge of wood upon Boates, there was a stone Bridge, but it is broken. And Aras is the name of the River which runneth before the Towne, and the Towne standeth under Mountayns. There are in this Towne three thousand houses and they have seven Churches...*¹⁵²

As mentioned in the previous chapters and footnote 109, John Cartwright states that in 1603 the population of the city of Julfa consisted of Christians only, and totaled about ten thousand souls.

Fig. 58 shows the Armenian monuments that had survived in that region until the early 1990s either intact or in partially ruined form. This was before the final decision of the Azerbaijani authorities that they did not need these Armenian monuments on their soil. Within a period of just a few years they had them destroyed and removed.

Since the mid 1990s all Armenian churches, monasteries, chapels, cemeteries and other monuments in the Nakhijevan Autonomous Republic have, without exception, been demolished and their debris removed or buried. The local population has been banned from speaking about any Armenian monument or even of Armenians living in the region. In August of 2006, the Scottish architect and researcher Steven Sim, who was on a visit to Nakhijevan, while in the village of Aprakunis enquired as to the whereabouts of the local Armenian Church. One of the village elders replied: "There have not been any Armenians living here, and we have had no churches in this village". This is despite the fact that Aprakunis until the 1980s had an Armenian church built in 1360 and an Armenian school established in 1896. The photographs of both still survive today. The old man must have been a witness to the destruction of the church, but had no choice except to deny it.¹⁵³

The fact is that in various parts of the world there have lived or still live many Armenians whose passports state their birthplace to be various towns and villages in the Nakhijevan Autonomous Republic. Some of those who are well-known and were active during the twentieth century are the following:

- Argam Aivazian, historian, born 1947 in Arinj village, Nakhijevan.
- Levon Khachikian, academician, 1918-1979, born in Hajivan village, Nakhijevan.

¹⁵¹ Argam Aivazian, *Nakhijevan. Book of Monuments* (Yerevan: Anahit, 1990). Collection of multitude of photos of Armenian monuments.

¹⁵² John Newbery, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Parchas His Pilgrimes, contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells, by Englishmen and others* (Glasgow: James MacLehore & Sons, 1905), vol. VIII, 468.

¹⁵³ Shant TV, *Yerevan, Interview with Steven Sim*, August 2006.

- Hovhannes Haghazarian, linguist, 1900-1979, born in the city of Agulis, Nachijevan.
- Aram Merangulian, composer, 1902-1967, born in Zghna village, Goghtn district, Nakhijevan.

Could there be more telling proof of Armenians having lived in Nakhijevan?¹⁵⁴

But the Azeri authorities were not content with the elimination of Armenian monuments on their own soil and tried to extend the destruction into Iranian territory. According to Iranian tourist guide Nasser Khan and Iranian border guards, in the summer of 2008, Azerbaijani border guards clandestinely crossed the Arax River in the middle of the night and partially demolished the Armenian Shepherd's chapel situated on the southern shore of the river, which the Iranian authorities had already renovated and were protecting. When the author visited this chapel in the Summer of 2009, the Iranian Committee for the Protection of Historical Monuments had once again begun the renovation of this chapel.

A few words about the destruction of the medieval Armenian cemetery of Julfa, the largest Armenian medieval cemetery located in Nakhijevan, on the northern bank of the Arax River. As reported by the French traveller Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660), who visited the area in 1648:

*Out of the walls of this city [Julfa] which now is only a desert, I saw a beautiful monument to the ancient piety of the Armenians. It is a vast site, where there are at the very least ten thousand tombstones of marble, all marvellously well carved. On each tomb, one sees a large white marble stone of twelve feet height and eight of broad, engraved with a multitude of beautiful figures around a large cross. This great quantity of marble is extremely beautiful to see.*¹⁵⁵

In 1903-1904, when the area was under Russian control, some of these tombstones and Khachkars were used as construction material for the building of the railway running along the Arax River. Notwithstanding this destruction, over 5,000 khachkars were still standing in 1905 (see Fig. 63). In his 1986 book *The Architecture of Ancient and Early Medieval Azerbaijan* D. A. Akhundov claimed that all these khachkars of Julfa in Nakhijevan were, in fact, Albanian monuments.¹⁵⁶ However, even the alleged Albanian heritage of these khachkars (tombstones) could not prevent the Azerbaijani authorities from completely destroying this medieval cemetery. The entire cemetery, all the tombstones and khachkars were first toppled over, then broken into pieces, some were later carried away by rail and the rest loaded on dump-trucks and dumped onto the Arax River.

¹⁵⁴ Արգամ Ավագյան, *Նախիջևան, Քննախարհիկ պարկերագարի հանրագիրսյ* (Երևան. ԳԱԱ Հրատարակչություն, 1995): (Aivazian, *Nachijevan, Illustrated Country Encyclopaedia*, Yerevan: Arm Academy of Sciences, 1995).

¹⁵⁵ Alexandre de Rhodes, *Divers Voyages et Missions du P. A. de Rhodes en la Chine, & Autres Royaumes avec son Retour en Europe par la Perse et l'Armenie* (Paris: Sebastian Cramoisy, 1653), Part 3, 63. Second edition (Paris: Julien, Lanier et Co., 1854), 416. Author's translation.

¹⁵⁶ Давуд Ахундов, *Архитектура древнего и ранне-средневекового Азербайджана* (Баку: Азербайджанское Государственное Изд. 1986), 246-7. (Akhundov, *The Architecture of Ancient and Early Medieval Azerbaijan*, Baku: 1986).



Fig. 59 –The church in the village of Aprakunis, as it was in 1987. Photo – Artak Vartanyan.

Fig. 60 – Site of the demolished church of Aprakunis in 2006. Photo – Steven Sim.





Fig. 61 – The church of Shorot village, Nakhijevan, in the 1980s. Photo – Argam Aivazian.

Fig. 62– The site where the church stood. Photo – Steven Sim, 2006.



The first steps towards the realization of this plan were taken in November 1998, when observers from the Iranian side across the Arax River noticed that some of the khachkars were being dislodged and broken into pieces. Soon all were lying flat on the ground. The first protest letters were sent out by the NGO Research on Armenian Architecture (RAA, Aachen and Yerevan), followed up by Armenian authorities and various organizations, who also made official protests through the United Nations and UNESCO. For a while the destruction appeared to have stopped, then, in December 2005, the final phase of destruction began. Azerbaijani regular army conscripts were seen breaking the remaining khachkars into pieces and loading them on dump trucks. These were driven to the riverbank and the contents dumped in the river. In a very short period of time the ancient cemetery site was completely flattened and a military target-practice field was constructed in its place (see Figures 63 to 72).¹⁵⁷

A more detailed description of the events can be found in the booklet entitled *The Destruction of Jugha and the Entire Armenian Cultural Heritage in Nakhijevan* published by the Switzerland-Armenian Association in Basel, 2006, ISBN 3-9070-1291-7, as well as the booklet *Jugha. The Annihilation of the Armenian Cemetery by Nakhijevan's Azeri Authorities between 1998 and 2006*, published in Yerevan by Research on Armenian Architecture, 2006. The website www.djulfa.com also provides pictorial and video information about these events.

On 16 January 2003 the religious leader of Armenia, Catholicos of All Armenians Garegin the Second, wrote to the religious leader of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pasha-Zadeh, expressing his concerns over the destruction of the Julfa Armenian cemetery in Nakhijevan and asking for his support in saving these important medieval monuments. (Letter ref. 176, 16.01.2003.)

On 27 February the Sheikh ul-Islam replied (letter Ref. 194, 27.02.2003) saying that the Catholicos has been misinformed, and that there is no cause to worry about the monuments in the territory of Nakhijevan. It is unfortunate to note that a religious leader would also try to hide the truth and fall in line with the official propaganda machine.

On 13 February 2003 the Vice President of the German Parliament (Deutsche Bundestag) Dr. Antje Vollmer telephoned the Azerbaijani Ambassador in Germany, Huseynaga Sadigov, enquiring about the news of the destruction of the Armenian cemetery in Julfa. After a delay of over four months, on the 24th of June the Ambassador replied saying:

I beg your understanding for the delay in my reply. I needed time to "research" the problem and reply to this complicated historical-political issue.

¹⁵⁷ Photographs were taken by concerned Iranians from across the Arax River forming the southern border between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

There existed and still exists an ancient cemetery in the above mentioned region, whose history goes back to the fourth century. In the Armenian sources this cemetery is named "Khatkara" [possibly "kbachkar"], which belonged to the pre-Islamic Azeri culture, at the time known as Caucasian Albania. The allegations about their destruction, fortunately, do not correspond with the truth. The cemetery is located on a seismically active zone and its upright parts, over the centuries, have fallen due to centuries of seismic activity.¹⁵⁸

To the question of the security of the Armenian cemetery of Julfa, the Sheikh ul-Islam and the Ambassador both replied, "there is no cause to worry", while at that time many tombstones had already been broken into pieces (see Fig. 66 and 67). The Ambassador confirmed the existence of the ancient cemetery, which he claims to be Albanian. The same cemetery has now vanished completely. As for the Ambassador's reasoning, blaming earthquakes for the falling over of the upright khachkars, the photos of Fig. 63, 64 and 65 provide ample evidence to the contrary.

The European Parliament has formally called on Azerbaijan to stop the demolition as a breach of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.¹⁵⁹ According to its resolution regarding cultural monuments in the South Caucasus, the European Parliament "condemns strongly the destruction of the Julfa cemetery as well as the destruction of all sites of historical importance that has taken place on Armenian or Azerbaijani territory, and condemns any such action that seeks to destroy cultural heritage."¹⁶⁰ In 2006, Azerbaijan barred the European Parliament from inspecting and examining the ancient site¹⁶¹ (see Appendix B), stating that by adopting the previously-mentioned resolution the Parliament had committed a hostile act against Azerbaijan. The Institute for War and Peace Reporting reported on April 19, 2006 that "there is nothing left of the celebrated stone crosses of Jugha."¹⁶² (Jugha is the alternative name for Julfa).

After repeated complaints sent by the Armenian authorities and the Catholicos of All Armenians to the United Nations, in late 2006 UNESCO resolved to look into the matter and send a fact-finding mission to the area. This mission however, is still waiting for the formalities, which in all possibility will not be forthcoming, as the Azeri authorities have nothing to show them. In July 2008 the European Union resolved to look into the matter, and Robert Palmer, Council of Europe Director for Culture, Cultural and Natural Heritage visited Azerbaijan on July 15,

¹⁵⁸ Translation of two of the paragraphs of the letter of Ambassador Sadigov's letter dated 24 June, 2003, Berlin, addressed to Dr. Anje Vollmer, Vice-President of the German Parliament.

¹⁵⁹ European Parliament Resolution on the *European Neighbourhood Policy* (Bruxelles: EU, January 2006).

¹⁶⁰ European Parliament *On Destruction of Cultural Heritage*: 2006.

¹⁶¹ Stephen Castle, "Azerbaijan Flattened Sacred Armenian Site", *The Independent* (London: 30 May 2006).

¹⁶² "Azerbaijan: Famous Medieval Cemetery Vanishes" *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* (London: 19 April 2006). http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=261191&apc_state=henicrs2006

where he announced that the Council of Europe's Ministerial Cabinet would visit the region in September of the same year.¹⁶³ So far no permission has been forthcoming.

The photos on the following pages provide only a partial idea of how majestic the huge khachkars, some of them over two metres high, looked with their intricate carvings and decorations. The gradual destruction of the cemetery unfolded in front of observers on from the south bank of the river, on the Iranian side of the border.

The question is the following: **If these Christian tombstones were the cultural heritage left by the Albanian forefathers of the Azerbaijanis, why were they destroyed and not preserved?**

Furthermore, after all the above destruction was completed, in the summer of 2009, the President of the Heydar Aliev Foundation , Mrs. Mihreban Alieva, donated 40,000 Euros to the European Parliament for the repairs of another Christian monument, the Strasbourg Cathedral. Could this be aimed at making the EU organizations “forget” the cultural Genocide perpetrated by the Azeri authorities, as well as gaining a favourable status regarding the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict?

¹⁶³ *“Destruction of Armenian Monuments in Azerbaijan”* <http://realarmenia.wordpress.com/2008/07/09/destruction-of-historical-monuments-in-azerbaijan-eu-will-monitor-in-september/>

Photo Credits

The following photos show the fate of the Julfa medieval Armenian cemetery between the years of 1915 and 2006 while under the control of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Fig. 63 –The cemetery as it was in 1915, from the Nakhijevan side of the Arax River, seen flowing in the background.
Photo – Aram Vruyr, 1915.

Fig. 64 and 65 – Some of the typical khachkars standing on tombs as seen in the early 1980s.
Photos – Argam Aivazian.

Fig. 66 – The flattened and broken khachkars, showing marks of drilled holes to facilitate their destruction. Some of these were used as construction materials.
Photo – Zaven Sargissian, 1998.

Fig. 67 – Broken khachkars lying on the ground, readied for use as building materials.
Photo – Zaven Sargissian, 1998.

Fig. 68 – Low-loader rail car brought in order to transport the broken khachkars. Photo from Iranian border. Some still standing khachkars are seen in the background.
Photo – Arpiar Petrossian, 1998.

Fig. 69 – Conscripts of the Republic of Azerbaijan’s army in the process of breaking the khachkars into pieces, as seen from the Iranian side of the border.
Photo – Arthur Gevorgian, Dec. 10-14, 2005.

Fig. 70 – Azerbaijani conscripts caught in the process of trying to dump the broken and crushed khachkars into the Arax River.
Photo – Arthur Gevorgian, Dec. 10-14, 2005.

Fig. 71 – The same location after the removal of the tombstones.
Photo – Arthur Gevorgian, Dec. 10-14, 2005.

Fig. 72 – The newly built Azerbaijani army shooting range and practice ground which replaces the demolished and cleared medieval Armenian cemetery in Julfa.
Photo – Arthur Gevorgian, March 2006, taken from the Iranian side.



Fig. 63 – Medieval Armenian cemetery of Julfa (Nakhijevan) in 1915. River Arax and Iranian territory in the background.

Fig 64 – Part of the cemetery in the 1980s.





Fig. 65 – Part of the khachkars in the 1980s.

Fig. 66 – 1987, some recently broken khachkars, prepared for use as building materials.





Fig. 67 – 1987, khachkars broken into smaller pieces, ready for use as building materials.

Fig. 68 – Low loading rail-car being readied to carry away the broken khachkars, 1998.





Fig. 69 – 2005, Azerbaijani conscripts breaking the khachkars.



Fig. 70 – Conscripts dumping broken pieces into the river Arax River.

Fig. 72 – The Armenian cemetery of Julfa, where once over 10,000 Khachkars and tombstones stood.





Fig. 71 – The same area in 2005, now devoid of khachkars.

In March 2006 this was converted into a military target shooting range and the Azerbaijani authorities classified it as a restricted zone.



The very same question applies to the hundreds of well-documented churches and other Christian monuments that once dotted the territory of Nakhijevan (or Nachjevan, as named by the Azeris), as well as that of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which have now disappeared without trace. According to the book *War against Azerbaijan* they were all Albanian-Christian monuments, the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijanis, which, oddly enough, were destroyed at the hands of the same Azerbaijani authorities. This is a paradox which is somewhat difficult to comprehend.

The destruction of **all** Armenian monuments in the area of Nakhijevan in 1980s has allowed the Azerbaijani academician Ismayil Hajiyev, in his article “Armenian Claims: Fiction and History” to brazenly lie and allege that:

*There were no Armenian ancient cemeteries in Nakhijevan, as they [Armenians] had migrated to Nakhijevan only in recent centuries. ... On the other hand, Armenians were not the local residents of the Caucasus or present day Armenia [which is] West Azerbaijan, Nakhijevan.*¹⁶⁴

After the destruction of all Armenian monuments and the expulsion of the remnants of the Armenian population from Nakhijevan, the first part of the above claim has been carried out. However, the actions of the Azeri authorities, which have led to the achievement of this result, are another matter.

The final two photographs show the destruction of the Armenian cemetery in Baku. Until 1989 this was a city that was home to about 300,000 Armenians in a community of long standing. Since then, the cemetery has been targeted by various groups of Azeris and the result of their vandalism is shown in the two photos Fig. 73 and 74.

¹⁶⁴ Ismayil Hajiyev, “Armenian Claims: Fiction and History”, *IRS Heritage* (Baku and Moscow: 2007, No.3 (27)), 32.



Fig. 73– The Armenian cemetery in Baku, in March 2001. Photo – G. Hovanissian.



Fig. 74 – Some of the vandalized tombstones in the Armenian cemetery of Baku.
Photo – G. Hovanissian, March, 2001.

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APPENDIX A

WorldWide Religious News – 17/02/2005

Website address:

<http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:Kbv0jc-ilGkJ:http://www.wwrn.org/article.php?idd=6795&sec=13&cont=7+armenian>

Russia and the CIS – Christianity – Other Groups

“Christian minority in Azerbaijan gets rid of Armenian eye sore” (AFP, February 17, 2005).

When a Christian people in this predominantly Muslim republic ground away the Armenian inscriptions from the walls of a church and tombs last month to erase evidence linking them to Azerbaijan’s foe, they thought they had the interests of their small community in mind.

But now the tiny Christian church in the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan has become the focus of a big scandal as the Udi minority struggles to find its identity in an ideological minefield.

The church, which has not been used since Azerbaijan became part of the Soviet Union, has become the center of a dispute between the Norwegian backers of the reconstruction, who consider the alterations to be vandalism, and the Udi community.

“We have no God, our people lost their religion under communism and this church is our only hope of reviving it,” said Georgi Kechaari, one of the village elders who doubles as the ethnic group’s historian.

“But we live in Azerbaijan, and when people came into the church and saw Armenian letters, they automatically associated us with Armenians,” he said.

The Udi, who once used the Armenian alphabet, have struggled to separate their legacy from that of their fellow Christians, the Armenians, who fought a war with Azerbaijan and have been vilified here.

Erupting just before the break-up of the Soviet Union, the war cost both countries tens of thousands of lives but Azerbaijan lost Nagorno-Karabakh – an ethnic Armenian enclave – and seven other surrounding regions, which have been under Armenian control since the countries signed an uneasy ceasefire agreement in 1994.

Since then nearly everything associated with Armenia in Azerbaijan has been wiped away, although hundreds of thousands of Armenians lived here before the war.

Armenian-sounding city names have been changed, streets named after Armenians have been replaced with politically correct Azeri surnames, while Soviet history glorifying Armenian communist activists has been rewritten in school textbooks.

But the white-stone church in Nij, some two centuries old, had not been tampered with until the Udi undertook to reconstruct it with help from the state financed Norwegian Humanitarian Enterprise (NHE).

“It was a beautiful inscription, 200 years old, it even survived the war,” Norway’s Ambassador to Azerbaijan Steinar Gil told AFP. “This is an act of vandalism and Norway in no way wants to be associated with it.”

But the Udis insist they erased the inscriptions to right a historic wrong.

Kechaari alleged that the Armenian inscriptions, which stated that the Church was built in 1823, were fakes put there by Armenians in the 1920s so that they could make historical claims to it.

The Udis are the last surviving tribe of the Caucasus Albanians, a group unrelated to the Mediterranean Albanians, whose Christian kingdom ruled this region in medieval times before Turkic hordes swept in from Central Asia in the 13th and 15th centuries.

They number under 10,000 people and Nij is the only predominantly Udi village to survive to this day, and although they call themselves Christian, there is little that Christians from other parts of the world would find in common with them.

The Udis have not had a pastor for nearly a century and celebrate Islamic holidays together with their Muslim neighbors. But while the Udis soul search for an identity, Azerbaijan has used their legacy to strengthen its claims to Karabakh.

Armenians argue that the multitude of churches in the occupied region proves that they as a Christian people can lay a historic claim to it. But Azeris, who consider themselves to be the descendants of Albanians who were assimilated into a Turkic group, say the area is rightfully theirs because the churches were actually built by their ancestors the Albanians.

To the Udi, who used Armenian script when their church was built, toeing the official Azeri line has become more of a priority than historical accuracy. The perception that they are one with the Armenians has meant that there has been little trust from the authorities; Udi men for example were only allowed to start serving in the Azeri Army two years ago. But their use of power tools to fit the status quo took their Norwegian sponsors by surprise. “They think they have erased a reminder of being Armenian ... instead they have taken away the chance to have a good image when the church is inaugurated,” the director of the NHE in Azerbaijan, Alf Henry Rasmussen said, adding that a visit to the church by Norway’s prime minister will probably now be cancelled.

“Everyone will stare at the missing stones, I’m not quite sure if we can continue our work there,” Rasmussen said.

APPENDIX B

Azerbaijan ‘flattened’ sacred Armenian site

By Stephen Castle in Brussels

The Independent, London, Tuesday, 30 May 2006

Fears that Azerbaijan has systematically destroyed hundreds of 500-year-old Christian artefacts have exploded into a diplomatic row, after Euro MPs were barred from inspecting an ancient Armenian burial site.

The predominantly Muslim country’s government has been accused of “flagrant vandalism” similar to the Taliban’s demolition of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan.

The claims centre on the fate of rare “Khachkars”, stone crosses carved with intricate floral designs, at the burial ground of Djulfa in the Nakhichevan region of Azerbaijan, an enclave separated from the rest of the country by Armenia.

The works – some of the most important examples of Armenian heritage – are said to have been smashed with sledgehammers last December as the site was concreted over.

The Azerbaijan government, which denies the claims, is now at the centre of a row with MEPs, some of whom it accused of a “biased and hysterical approach”. Its ambassador to the EU also says the European Parliament has ignored damage to Muslim sites in Armenia. Azerbaijan has refused to allow a delegation of Euro MPs permission to visit the 1,500-year-old Djulfa cemetery during their trip to the region last month.

Most of original 10,000 Khachkars, most of which date from the 15th and 16th century, were destroyed by the early 20th century, leaving probably fewer than 3,000 by the late 1970s.

According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos), the Azerbaijan government removed 800 Khachkars in 1998. Though the destruction was halted following protests from UNESCO, it resumed four years later. By

January 2003 “the 1,500-year-old cemetery had completely been flattened,” Icomos says.

Witnesses, quoted in the Armenian press, say the final round of vandalism was unleashed in December last year by Azerbaijani soldiers wielding sledgehammers.

The president of Icomos, Michael Petzet, said: “Now that all traces of this highly important historic site seem to have been extinguished all we can do is mourn the loss and protest against this totally senseless destruction.”

Some MEPs believe that, boosted by its oil revenues, Azerbaijan is adopting an increasingly assertive stance in the region. Charles Tannock, Conservative foreign affairs spokesman in the European parliament, argued: “This is very similar to the Buddha statues destroyed by the Taliban. They have concreted the area over and turned it into a military camp. If they have nothing to hide then we should be allowed to inspect the terrain.”

When MEPs passed a critical resolution in February, Azerbaijan’s Foreign Minister, Elmar Mammadyarov, made a formal protest. Then, when the parliament’s delegation for relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, asked to combine a mission to Armenia with a visit to the Djulfa archaeological site, their request was refused.

The Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly hopes to visit the site and its secretary general has offered to set up an expert group to examine cultural sites in Azerbaijan and Armenia. MEPs insist that the authorities in Azerbaijan should open their doors if they have nothing to hide.

Hannes Swoboda, an Austrian socialist MEP and member of the committee barred from examining the site, said he hopes a visit can be arranged in the autumn. He added: “If they do not allow us to go, we have a clear hint that something bad has happened. If something is hidden we want to ask why. It can only be because some of the allegations are true.”

And he warned: “One of the major elements of any country that wants to come close to Europe is that the cultural heritage of neighbours is respected.”

APPENDIX C

Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Caucasus Reporting Service

Azerbaijan: Famous Medieval Cemetery Vanishes

http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=261191&apc_state=henicrs2006

IWPR reporter confirms that there is nothing left of the celebrated stone crosses of Jugha.

By IWPR staff in Nakhichevan, Baku and Yerevan (CRS No. 336, 19-Apr-06).

Jugha Cemetery (13th-16th centuries)
Photographs from 1970s and 2006. View
more...



It has become one of the most bitterly divisive issues in the Caucasus – but up until now no one has been able to clear up the mystery surrounding the fate of the famous medieval Christian cemetery of Jugha in Azerbaijan.

The cemetery was regarded by Armenians as the biggest and most precious repository of medieval headstones marked with crosses – the Armenians call them “khachkars” – of which more than 2,000 were still there in the late eighties. Each elaborately carved tombstone was a masterpiece of carving.

Armenians have said that the cemetery has been razed, comparing its destruction to the demolition of two giant Buddha figures by the Taleban in Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan has hit back by accusing Armenia of scaremongering, and of destroying Azerbaijani monuments on its own territory. Now an IWPR contributor has become the first journalist to visit the site of the cemetery on Azerbaijan's border with Iran – and has confirmed that the graveyard has completely vanished.

The European Parliament, UNESCO and Britain's House of Lords have all taken an interest in the fate of the Jugha cemetery. A European Parliament delegation is currently visiting the South Caucasus. But so far none has been allowed to visit the site itself.

If international observers can confirm that the cemetery has been razed, it is sure to spark a new high-voltage row between the two countries, which have engaged in a bitter war of allegation and counter-allegation since fighting ended in the Nagorny Karabakh conflict in 1994.

The IWPR contributor was accompanied by two Azerbaijani security service officers and was restricted in his movements. He was unable to go right down to the River Araxes, the site of the former cemetery, as it lies in a protected border zone. However, he was able to see clearly that there was no cemetery there, merely bare ground. Nor was there, as some Armenians have claimed, a military training ground.

He did manage to see a 20th century cemetery with Armenian tombstones that lay untouched in a nearby village.

This is one of the most inaccessible parts of Europe, located in the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhichevan, which is surrounded by Armenia and Iran and – because of the unresolved Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute – is only accessible from the rest of Azerbaijan by air.

Old Julfa, or Jugha as it is known by the Armenians, sits on the northern bank of the River Araxes which divides Nakhichevan from Iran.

According to Armenian and other historians, Julfa was a flourishing Armenian town in the Middle Ages. But in 1604, Shah Abbas of Persia forcibly resettled the inhabitants to Isfahan, where to this day there is still an Armenian quarter known as New Julfa.

The ruined town and its cemetery remained, and were visited by a number of travellers over the years. British Orientalist Sir William Ouseley arrived in July 1812 and found “a city now in perfect decay”, and the remains of what had been one of the most famous stone bridges in the world. He wrote, “I examined the principal remains of Julfa, where 45 Armenian families, apparently of the lowest class, constituted the entire population. “But of its former inhabitants, the multiplicity was sufficiently evinced by the ample and crowded cemetery, situated on a bank sloping towards the river, and covered with numerous rows of upright tombstones, which when viewed at a little distance, resembled a concourse of people or rather regiments of troops drawn up in close order.”

Historian Argam Aivazian, the principal expert on the Armenian monuments of Nakhichevan, said that Jugha was a unique monument of medieval art and the largest Armenian cemetery in existence. There were unique tombstones shaped like rams, a church and the remains of a massive stone bridge. Nowhere else in the world, he said, was there such a big concentration of thousands of khachkars in one place.

Aivazian last visited the site in 1987, when it was still mostly intact, despite its poor upkeep during the Soviet period.

Artist Lusik Aguletsi, a Nakhichevan-born Armenian, also last visited the cemetery in 1987, although she was under escort.

“There is nothing like it in Armenia,” she said. “It was a thrilling sight. Two hills completely covered in khachkars. We weren’t allowed to draw or photograph them.”

Armenian experts now accuse Azerbaijan of a deliberate act of cultural vandalism.

“The destruction of the khachkars of Old Jugha means the destruction of an entire phenomenon in the history of humanity, because they are not only proof of the culture of the people who created them, they are also symbols that tell us about a particular cultural epoch,” said Hranush Kharatian, [previous] head of the Armenian government’s department for national and religious minorities.

“On the entire territory of Nakhichevan there existed 27,000 monasteries, churches, khachkars, tombstones and other Armenian monuments,” said Aivazian. “Today they have all been destroyed.”

Although the historical provenance of the cemetery is disputed in Azerbaijan, its cultural importance is confirmed by the 1986 Azerbaijani book “The Architecture of Ancient and Early Medieval Azerbaijan” by Davud Akhundov, which contains several photographs of the cross-stones of Jugha.

In Akhundov’s book, the stones are said to be of Caucasian Albanian origin, in line with the official theory taught in Azerbaijan that the Christian monuments there are the work not of Armenians, but of the Albanians. The Caucasian Albanians – a people unconnected with Albania – lived in the south-eastern Caucasus but their culture began to die out in the Middle Ages.

Nowadays, there is a village of some 500 inhabitants known as Gulistan near where the cemetery used to lie. The climate is harsh and dry and the houses are mostly built of wattle and daub and stones from the river. The local inhabitants are tight-lipped, denying there was ever an Armenian cemetery here.

“In some parts of Julfa there are historic Christian cemeteries, but they are monuments of Caucasian Albania and have nothing to do with Armenians,” said political scientist Zaur Ibragimli, who lives in Julfa.

He added that there is a large Armenian cemetery and church, still preserved, near the village of Salkhangaya.

Husein Shukuraliev, editor of the Julfa local newspaper Voice of Araxes said the destruction of the cemetery began as early as 1828, when Azerbaijan became part of the Russian empire. Thousands of tombstones were then destroyed at the turn of the 20th century when a railway was constructed, he said.

Safar Ashurov, a scholar with Azerbaijan's Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography disputed that the cemetery was Armenian, calling the ram shapes an "element of exclusively Turkish Muslim grave art".

However, two other witnesses told IWPR that there has been more recent destruction of the cemetery – though it may have started much further back than Armenians allege.

A man named Intigam who works repairing tin cans in Baku said he was posted in Julfa with the Soviet army in 1988-89. At the end of 1989, the radical Azerbaijani nationalist politician Nemat Panahov dismantled the border-posts on Nakhichevan's border with Iran. Intigam said that part of the Julfa cemetery was destroyed at that time.

Panahov himself declined to comment when contacted by IWPR, saying, "Journalists always deceive me, and I don't want anything more to do with them."

A second witness, who asked for his name not to be given, said that there were khachkar stones on the site up until 2002, but they were then removed on the orders of the Nakhichevan military command.

An Armenian architect, Arpiar Petrossian, told IWPR he visited the Iranian side of the border in 1998 with a friend in order to look at the monuments on that side. They also viewed the remains of the bridge. Looking across the river into Azerbaijan, he said, they noticed a flat-bed train apparently removing the cross-stones from the cemetery.

Armenian deputy culture [ex] minister Gagik Gyurdjian said his government raised the alarm in 1998.

"Then we got the entire international community up in arms and stopped the destruction," he told IWPR. "But in 2003 the destruction started again. Many khachkars were buried under the earth, and the rest were destroyed and thrown into the Araxes."

In the last few months, the propaganda war over Jugha has reached a new intensity – just as the latest round of Karabakh peace talks between presidents Ilham Aliyev and Robert Kocharian, held in February, ran into trouble.

Azerbaijani president Aliiev angrily denied Armenian allegations about the Jugha cemetery last week, saying the claims were "a lie and a provocation". International institutions are now demanding to be allowed to visit the site of the cemetery. The European Parliament passed a resolution in February condemning the destruction of the cemetery.

However, Azerbaijan said it would only accept a European parliamentary delegation if it visited Armenian-controlled territory as well. Around one seventh of what is internationally recognised as Azerbaijani territory has been under Armenian control since the end of the Karabakh conflict.

“We think that if a comprehensive approach is taken to the problems that have been raised, it will be possible to study Christian monuments on the territory of Azerbaijan, including in the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic,” said Azerbaijani foreign ministry spokesman Tahir Tagizade.

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry says old Muslim monuments have disappeared from Armenia. In a statement, it said that at least 1,587 mosques and 23 madrassas had been destroyed in what was once the Muslim-governed Yerevan Khanate – now part of Armenia. In the Zangezur and Echmiadzin areas alone, more than 830 mosques have been demolished, it said, adding that more than 500 Muslim cemeteries have been destroyed within the territory of Armenia. The statement did not specify when this destruction occurred.

Avetik Ishkhanian, president of Armenia’s Helsinki Committee, blames the international community for not reacting sooner to the razing of Jugha, contrasting the response with the outcry that followed the Taleban’s demolition of the Buddhas of Bamian in 2001.

“Why has there not been the same reaction in this case?” asked Ishkhanian. “At that time, world public attention was directed against the Taleban regime, and this act of barbarism was used as a propaganda weapon to launch military action against them.”

Reporting by Idrak Abbasov in Nakhichevan; Shabin Rzayev and Jasur Mamedov in Baku; and Seda Muradian, Narine Avetian and Karine Ter-Sabakian in Yerevan.

APPENDIX D

History of Karabagh

Reprint by the kind permission of the Zoryan Institute, from *The Karabagh File*, edited by Gerard J. Libaridian, First edition, Cambridge-Toronto, 1988.

Karabagh (Gharabagh, in Armenian) is known in official Soviet parlance as Nagorno-Karabagh or, “Mountainous Karabagh Autonomous District.” It is a region of 1,699 square miles with a current population of approximately 153,000 people, of whom 80 percent are Armenian. Its name means “black garden.” The area is known for its rugged beauty, its wild mountains, and its inaccessibility to the rest of the Caucasus.

In ancient times, the region of Karabagh and most of eastern Transcaucasia was partly inhabited by a people called [Caucasian] Albanians, not to be confused with the people of the same name now living in the Balkans. According to the Greek geographer Strabo (1st c. B.C.), Karabagh, which then encompassed both the mountainous Nagorno-Karabagh of today and the larger lowlands, surrounding it, had a highly developed economy and was famous for its cavalry. Caucasian Albanians maintained close contacts with the Armenians. In the fifth century, shortly after the Armenians converted to Christianity, the Albanians too adopted the Armenian brand of Christianity. The first church established in Karabagh, in the region now known as Martuni, was established by Gregory the Illuminator, first Catholicos of Armenia. Tradition has it that Mesrob Mashtotz, the monk who created the Armenian alphabet, founded the first school in Karabagh.

Given the centrality of religion to social life during that period, it is not surprising that in the following two centuries the Albanians merged with the Armenians. The nobility intermarried, the region’s bishops were often Armenians, and by the seventh century the separate identity of the Albanians was lost.

The territories of both Mountainous Karabagh and the larger surrounding lowlands became parts of the Armenian provinces of Utik, Sunik and Artsakh. In the seventh and eighth centuries much of this area was conquered by Arabs, who converted a portion of the population to Islam. In Karabagh, only a very small minority was converted. The situation of Karabagh changed radically in the eleventh century when the ethnic Turkish invasions began. The Turks had emerged from Central Asia, had conquered Iran, and founded the Seljuk Turkish dynasty, which first raided, then invaded Armenia. From 1020 on, these invasions destroyed much of Armenia, and Karabagh, especially its lowlands, suffered greatly. By the mid-eleventh century, the Armenian kingdom was destroyed.

But the feudal principality of Sunik, which occupied the mountainous territory in the southeast of today's Soviet Armenia and Mountainous Karabagh survived and became beacons to the rest of Armenia. In the following centuries, thousands of Armenians found refuge in Karabagh, under the protection of native lords.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Karabagh gave rise to the pioneers of the Armenian emancipatory struggle. Representatives of the region attempted to interest the monarchs of Russia and other European powers in embarking on a "crusade" to liberate the Armenian plateau, the eastern portions of which were occupied by the Ottoman Turkish and Persian Empires. During the 1720's, the rebellion of the Armenians of Sunik and Karabagh, led by David Beg, achieved notable though temporary success. The Russian Empire, expanding southwards in the Transcaucasus, annexed the territory of Karabagh in 1805.

The Russian annexation of Karabagh was officially recognized by Persia in the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813. Thus Karabagh came into the Russian Empire earlier than the areas of Yerevan and Nakhichevan, which were ceded to Russia by Persia in the Treaty of Turkmenchai in 1828. This earlier annexation benefited Karabagh in some ways, but also created a major problem for the future. Because of the time it came into the Russian empire, Karabagh was made part of Elizavetpol Province, which later became Azerbaijan. Administratively, then, Karabagh could not be joined in 1813 to the as-yet un-annexed Armenian territories of which its history and population made it a natural part. Yerevan and Nakhichevan, when they were attached to the Tzarist empire in 1828, were organized in the Armianskoy region, later the Yerevan province. Here, as in other empires, decisions made by colonial administrators laid the foundations for future difficulties.

During the first months of the Russian revolution of 1917, the situation in Karabagh was relatively calm. The Russian army had penetrated deep into the Ottoman Empire, and there was no Turkish threat to Karabagh. But by the end of 1917 the Russian army had disintegrated, and in February 1918 the Ottoman Turkish army moved into Armenia. The Ottoman Turks threatened Yerevan and made a desperate drive to oil-rich Baku, then held by a multi-ethnic coalition of Bolsheviks (headed by the Armenian Stepan Shahumian) and small Armenian military forces. While this struggle went on, representatives of the Armenians, Georgians and Azeris met and formed a short-lived Transcaucasian Federation. By May, 1918 this federation failed and three separate, independent republics were proclaimed: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia formed the cores of today's Soviet republics in the same region.

The capital of the Azerbaijani Republic was at Elizavetpol (Ganja). The new government, indifferent to the wishes of its Armenian inhabitants, claimed Karabagh, as part of the territory of the new republic. The commander of Ottoman Turkish forces, Nuri Pasha (brother of the Minister Enver Pasha), ordered the Armenians of Karabagh to submit to the new government of its ethnic ally, Azerbaijan.

In August 1918, the Armenians of Karabagh formed their own national assembly, called the First Assembly of Karabagh Armenians, which then elected a People's Government of Karabagh. This government rejected the demand that Turkish

troops be permitted to enter their capital of Shushi. By the end of the summer, on September 15, the Turks took Baku. With the ethnic Azerbaijani Turks at their side, they carried out a systematic massacre of the Armenians in the city, during which it is estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 Armenians died. When the news of that massacre came to Karabagh, Armenians understood they too were incapable of resisting successfully the regular troops of the Ottoman Turkish army. On September 25, they submitted to the Turks and 5,000 Turkish soldiers entered Shushi. Within a week, 60 prominent Armenians had been arrested, the townspeople disarmed, and gallows ominously erected in the central square of the town. There is no telling what would have happened had the Turks stayed much longer.

Faced with this Turkish occupation, the Karabagh Armenians were looking for aid from armed Armenians outside their borders. The newly-founded Armenian Republic around Yerevan was much too weak to help. The only force of any consequence was the independent command of General Andranik, an ingenious guerrilla fighter and military leader, in Zangezur. General Andranik decided to help and he moved toward Shushi. This advance, however, was hindered by Muslim resistance and by lengthy discussions among Armenians, which resulted in a fatal delay. Before Andranik could reach Shushi (he got within 26 miles), the First World War ended and Turkey, along with Germany and Austria-Hungary, surrendered to the Allies.

The British occupation forces would now play the key role in eastern Transcaucasia. The British ordered Andranik to stop all further military advances and to await the solution of the Armenian Question at the Paris Peace Conference. Andranik, not wanting to antagonize the British, retreated to Goris in Zangezur. Thus the Armenians placed the fate of Karabagh in the hands of the British and the Western Allies. The Armenians had every reason to expect that they would be treated well by the British; after all, Armenians had fought with the Allies and had been the victims of their enemy, the Ottoman Turks. President Wilson had pledged support for the Armenians. At the same time, the Azerbaijanis had been allies of the Turks in 1918. Despite all this, within a few months the British shifted their support in eastern Transcaucasia to the Azerbaijanis, motivated both by a traditional Turkophilia and by their geopolitical assumption that they needed to favor and dominate emerging Muslim entities in the Middle East, between the Suez and India, particularly those controlling petroleum reserves.

The Armenians of Karabagh could expect help from no one, and so, on August 22, 1919, their leaders signed an agreement with the Republic of Azerbaijan, accepting its authority until the final decision on Mountainous Karabagh was made at the Paris Peace Conference. By this agreement, the Armenians of Karabagh were granted cultural autonomy. This agreement established an important precedent concerning the relations of Mountainous or Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan.

In the same month, August 1919, the British began their withdrawal from Azerbaijan. But the effects of their short stay in that region are felt to the present day. It is as a result of British support of the Azeri-Turkish position on Karabagh, despite the predominant Armenian majority in the area, that this region was included in the independent Republic of Azerbaijan.

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