

# Documents reveal the secret of the “Armenian miracle” of Karabakh

For some 100 years, from a 20% minority in Karabakh, the Armenians have turned into an absolute majority in its mountainous part, making up 94% of the population. That is exactly what allowed them to obtain autonomy there, which in the 1990s also acquired the lowland part of Karabakh, becoming the “Republic of Artsakh”. How such a miraculous transformation took place in such a relatively short time? 20% in 94% of the official documents of the 19th – early 20th centuries explain.

## The Ethnic composition of Karabakh before the migration of Armenians

Two years before the official inclusion of the Karabakh Khanate into the Russian Empire, on July 19, 1811, a memorandum was drawn up to the Minister of Internal Affairs Osip Kozodavlev “with a description of Georgia and some other regions of the Caucasus.” It reported:

*“In the Karabakh possession, there are residents of up to 12 thousand of families, including Armenians up to 2500 families, and the rest are Tatars or Mohammedans (Muslims).”*

[\[Accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia. Collection of documents. T. I \(1801-1813. Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1972. Pp. 1801-1813. Publishing of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1972. 562\]](#)

Thus, we have an official document showing that at the beginning of the 19th century only 20.8% of all families living in Karabakh were Armenians. This is already a clear rejection of the claim that Armenians had long been a majority there.

Ten years after Karabakh was officially incorporated into the Russian state (1813), two officials, having travelled all over the previous khanate, presented a “Description of the Karabakh Province” to their heads on 17 April 1823. This document indicated the ethnic origin of each village, as well as the number of families living there. This makes it possible to calculate the ethnic composition of the population. Thus, out of 614 villages, 450 are listed as “Tatar” (i.e. Turkic), and 150 as Armenian. There were 20,095 families living there: 15,729 (78.3%) were “Tatar” families, and 4,366 (21.7%) were Armenian families.

[Description of the Karabakh Province compiled in 1823, by order of the General Manager of Georgia, Yermolov, the real state councilor of Mogilev and Colonel Yermolov 2nd. Tiflis, 1866].

Both official documents cited show that in the first two decades of the century before the last the ethnic composition of Karabakh did not change, and Armenians made up about 20% of the population. In this context, a remark by the teacher of the Shushinsky city school Ambartsum Ter-Eliazarov is indicative. In the late 1880s, he prepared an overview of the major production and economic spheres of the Shushinskiy district, which just over 20 years later became the main territory for the establishment of the Armenian Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Describing the ethnic composition of this district, Ter-Eliazarov explains that the “Tatars” (i.e. Turks) are “natives”. Moreover, he did not make such explanations when mentioning Armenians.

[\[Collection of materials for description of localities and tribes in the Caucasus. Publication of the Caucasian Education District Administration. Tiflis, 1891 // Department I Field studies in some Transcaucasian localities, p. 2. 62-79\]](#)

## **Resettlement of Iranian and Turkish Armenians in Karabakh.**

In 1828-1830, the Russian authorities relocated some 140,000 Armenians from Iran and Turkey to the South Caucasus. They were settled in the former khanates of Karabakh, Erivan, and Nakhichevan. It is not known exactly how many Armenian

migrants were settled in Karabakh. But the following fragments of official documents of the time testify to the fact that this number was significant:

*“...The transfer of Christians from Aderbizhan to our regions, as can be seen from the last reports I received, is successfully carried out and there are already 279 families in Karabakh and 948 families in the Erivan region, and the number of all immigrants is confirmed by the regiment. More than 5000 families will be resettled in Lazarev”.*

[Report of I.F. Paskevich to I.I. Dibich about the resettlement of Armenians from Persia to Russia dated 26.05.1828. Cited from the following source: [Accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia. Collection of documents. Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1972. t. II \(1814-1830\), pp. 2. 497\]](#)

*“When more than 5000 families were approaching Araks ... I initially received an attitude from the Armenian Regional Government, in which it informed me that due to lack of bread it could not provide the necessary assistance to the resettled people and asked me to keep them until the harvest meeting. Soon after, in May 8 days, I also received Your Lordship's Order No. 926 of April 24, declaring that most of the resettlers, especially the poorest, should go to Karabakh, where they can be provided with everything.*

[Report of Colonel Lazarev, the Head of the resettlement of Armenians from Persia to the Commander of Russian troops in the Caucasus, General Paskevich, 24.12.1829. Quoted from the following source: [Glinka C. Description of the resettlement of the Adderbidjan Armenians within Russia. Moscow, 1831. Pp. 127\]](#)

“Head of the Bayazeta squad of Gen. m. (major-general) Reutt informed me on 20 December that the your-lordship (your lordship) was willing to provide Armenians in the city of Bayazeta (east of modern Turkey) among 1143 families to choose for resettlement of their land uninhabited in the Armenian province in Magalah: Talysh, Darachichag and Abaran; and two thousand families from the Sanjaks of Bayazet pashalik proposed to establish in Karabakh province. These last families, not willing to be separated ... with the urban

residents of Bayazet, sent their commissioners and asked to establish them with the first ones here in the province ... Only up to 800 families can be settled in the above-mentioned three Magalas of the Armenian province ...”.

[Report by M.Z. Argutinsky-Dolgorukov to I.F. Paskevich about the desire of Bayazet Armenians to move to the Armenian region, January 1830. Cited from the following source: [Accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia. Collection of documents. Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1972. t. II \(1814-1830\), pp. 2. 602](#)]

## **Changes in Karabakh’s ethnic composition following Armenian migration**

**In the 1830s**, a few years after the mass resettlement of Iranian and Turkish Armenians in the South Caucasus, Jean Baptiste Benoit Eyries (Jean-Baptiste Benoît Eyriès), one of the founders of the Paris Geographical Society, visited the area. He published his travel notes in Paris in 1839 as a book entitled “Voyage pittoresque en Asie et en Afrique, résumé général des voyages anciens et modernes”. Unfortunately, only shortened versions of this book have been saved in the central Paris libraries, including the Centre national d’art et de culture Georges-Pompidou, and the archives of the Geographical Society of Paris. But we do have its Russian translation, published in Moscow in 1840. It contains a two-page description of Karabakh. Regarding the ethnoreligious composition of the inhabitants, the French traveler noted:

*“The population consists mainly of Muslims, i.e. Tatars (Turks) and Kurds, who are 14,000 families. The population consists mainly of Muslims, i.e. Tatars (Turks) and Kurds, 14,000 of whom are families, and Armenians, half of whom are less”.*

[\[A picturesque journey through the Asia, made in French under the direction of Eyries \(Eyriè\) and decorated with engravings. Moscow, 1840. Page 25\].](#)

Thus, in the 1830s the number of families in Karabakh was about 21,000. This is almost the same number as in 1823. But the relationship between Armenians and Muslims has changed.

While in 1823 Armenians made up less than 22% of the total number of families living in Karabakh, in the 1830s their rate rose to 33%.

The reliability of Eyries's information is indirectly confirmed by the data contained in the document "Review of Russian possessions over the Caucasus", printed in St. Petersburg in 1836. It does not specify the ethnic composition of the population of the "Karabakh Province", but does contain data on the number of families – 20,449

[\[Review of Russian possessions beyond the Caucasus, in statistical, ethnographic, topographic, and financial relations. St. Petersburg, 1836. Part I, p. 20\].](#)

It turns out that from 1823 to 1836 the number of families in Karabakh increased slightly – from 20,095 to 20,449. But over the same period, the relationship between Armenians and Muslims has undergone significant changes:

- 1823: 78.3% of Muslim families; 21.7% of Armenian families.
- 1830s: 67% of Muslim families; 33% of Armenian families.

### **The expulsion of Muslims from Karabakh**

How was it possible for the proportion of Armenians in Karabakh to increase so markedly with such a small increase in the overall population? The answer can be found in the service note of 1828 from the Ambassador of the Russian Empire in Persia Alexander Griboyedov "on the resettlement of Armenians from Persia to our regions". It is noted in this document:

*"For the most part, the Armenians are settled on the lands of the Muslim landowners ... **The settlers themselves are in close quarters and oppress the Muslims**, who are all murmuring and thoroughly".*

[\[Griboyedov A.S. Works in two volumes. Moscow: Pravda Publishing House, 1971. T. II – pp. 339-340\]](#)

*"Despite the abundance of uninhabited land, the resettlers*

*naturally sought to settle in villages abandoned by the inhabitants. These were usually areas of the most fertile, irrigated land; finally, there were completed dwellings. Meanwhile, the indigenous people did not leave these villages forever. They fled to the mountains from the disasters of war (the Russian-Persian War of 1826-1828) and almost all returned by 1829. Having found their homes occupied, they argued with the new owners, sometimes came out victorious, but more often, forced to give in, settled nearby on less profitable plots, or went to the mountains, where they built new villages and settled for good".*

[\[Ghazaryan I. The resettlement of Armenians from Persia to the Armenian region in 1828 // Izvestia of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, No. 7, 1957. Pp. 69\]](#)

The fact that the expulsion of Muslims was widespread, and the Armenians occupied not only the villages from which all or part of the indigenous people temporarily fled during the Russian-Persian war but also completely inhabited, is evidenced by the report of Vasily Bebutov, head of the Armenian region, established in 1828 on the territory of the Erivan and Nakhchivan Khanates:

*"Armenians moving from Bayazet pashalik (i.e. from Turkey) to the Armenian region have already started to stay and are demanding occupied villages for their villages"*

[\[The accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia. Collection of documents. Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1972. t. II \(1814-1830\), pp. 1-4. 608\]](#)

**The expulsion of indigenous Muslim residents was carried out by Armenian settlers with the connivance of the Russian authorities.** The regulatory framework was even summed up under this. It was contained in the "Instruction of I.F. Paskevich to the Yerevan Provisional Government on the organization of reception and accommodation of migrants from Persia" dated 29 February 1828. Count Ivan Paskevich was the commander of Russian troops in the Caucasus. Giving instructions on how to organise the resettlement of Iranian Armenians, he decided:

*“Avoid in every possible way so that new villages of Christians would not be mixed with Muslim, but try to form separate districts or Magalas from Christians, and to enter into consideration whether it would be possible to move some Muslim villages to the places most populated by their fellow Christians; and Christian villages, which are currently among Muslims, would be moved to Christians.*

[\[Accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia. Collection of documents. The Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1972. II \(1814-1830\), pp. 2. 467\]](#)

Thus, by settling Armenian migrants from Persia, as well as the resettlement of Armenians from other parts of the Caucasus and the simultaneous expulsion of Muslims in the late 1820s, an artificial change in the ethnic composition of the population of Karabakh was initiated.

But despite this, in all four districts of Yelizavetpol (Ganja) Governorate formed in 1867 on the lands of the former Karabakh Khanate, Muslims continued to dominate numerically for more than half a century, the absolute majority of which were Turks (this also applies to **Zangezur** – according to Mirza Jamal, the former vizier of the Karabakh Khanate, “Zangezur Magals of Nakhichevan” were included in its composition in the 1750s.

[Mirza Jamal Javanshir of Karabakh. History of Garabagh; newspaper “Caucasus” 1855 №62, Tiflis // republished by the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan SSR, Baku 1959).

In the **1876** census, although the number of ethnic groups was not indicated, it was denoted as the “dominant ethnicity”. From the 14 districts in the four counties that existed on the territory of Karabakh, the first place was given to “Tatars” (i.e. Turks) in the 12 “predominant nationalities”. And only in two districts – Armenians (Khankends in Shushinsky district and Karaklis in Zangezur district).

Moreover, in the largest district in the territory of the former Karabakh Khanate, Shushinsky, which became the basis for the creation of the Armenian Autonomous Region of Nagorno-

Karabakh in 1923, of the four districts, two Armenians are not mentioned in the 1876 census.

[\[Caucasian calendar of 1891. Tiflis, 1890. Appendix "Data on Space and Population of Transcaucasia", pp. 9-11\].](#)

## **The consequences of the demographic boom among Armenian resettlers**

The first evident changes in the ethnic composition of the population of Karabakh became visible in the 1880s.

In **1886**, the Caucasian Statistical Committee published a collection of data from agricultural lists of Yelizavetpol (Ganja) province. It shows that "Tatars prevail" in all districts of the previous Karabakh Khanate except Shushinsky, where Armenians already made 58% of the population.

[\[Caucasian calendar. Tiflis, 1908. pp. 81-82\].](#)

According to **1889** statistics, of the four districts on the territory of the previous Karabakh Khanate in one, Shushinsky, Armenians retained the majority, although their share of the population from 1886 fell from 58% to 54.5%. In another district, Zangezour, they made up exactly half of the population (49.4%). And in the main city of Karabakh, Shusha, Armenians already dominated significantly (60%). Muslims remained in the clear majority in only two counties – Jebraïl (75.5%) and Javanshir (70%). Although Muslims still prevailed in Karabakh as a whole, accounting for 54.4% against 45.5% of Armenians.

[\[Caucasian calendar of 1892. Tiflis, 1891. Appendix "Data on Space and Population of Transcaucasia", pp. 24-25\].](#)

How could it happen that back in 1876 Muslims were in the majority in all four districts of Karabakh, and 1889 – only in two? The answer is not just in the policy of eviction of Muslims described above, but also the conditions that were created by the Russian authorities for Armenian settlers from Iran and Turkey in 1828-1830.

Thus, in one of the “instructions” of 26 February 1828, “on the organization of the resettlement of Armenians from Persia”, Commander-in-Chief Paskevich indicated:

*“...The settlers will be provided with comfortable land in sufficient quantity and will be exempt from taxes (national taxes) for 6 years, and from land obligations (regional and municipal taxes) for 3 years”.*

[\[The accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia. Collection of documents. Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1972. t. II \(1814-1830\), pp. 2. 464\]](#)

As follows from the same document, each family of displaced persons was entitled to one-time aid from the state in the amount of 10 silver rubles.

In another “instruction” dated February 29, 1828, Paskevich gives the following instructions regarding the settlement of Armenian migrants: *“To choose the most convenient, healthy and comfortable places for the villages where there is no shortage of clean water”.*

[\[The accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia. Collection of documents. Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1972. t. II \(1814-1830\), pp. 2. 467\]](#)

Paskevich’s subordinate Colonel Lazarev, who directly supervised the resettlement of Armenians from Iran, noted on 30 March 1828 in his appeal to the migrants:

*“...The Grande Monarch of Russia gives those who wish to resettle a safe, secure, and happy refuge in his state – in Erivan, Nakhchivan, and Karabakh, where you will choose, you will get an abundance of bakery land, partly sown ...”.*

[\[Glinka C. Description of the resettlement of the Adderbidjan Armenians to Russia. Moscow, 1831. Pp. 283. 108\]](#)

*“These resettled Armenians ... populated the valleys of the northeastern sides of the Karabakh Range and the irrigated parts of the Karabakh Steppe that are most favourable for agriculture”.*

[\[Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. Atlas of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.](#)

Thus, in addition to the fact that Armenians from Iran and Turkey were evicting Muslims from the best places, the authorities were also creating the most favourable socio-economic conditions for them. After all, the government did not introduce any benefits for Muslims. As a result, in the 1830s, resettled Armenians had special advantages. This could not have an impact on the birth rate. Thus, the consequences of mass migration and the demographic boom among the displaced Armenians by the 1880s led to fundamental changes in the ethnic composition of the Karabakh population. Besides, the influx of Armenian settlers, even on a smaller scale, continued throughout the 19th century.

“The number of Armenians ... grew steadily – due to the periodic immigration of Armenians and their natural growth, for which there were favorable conditions in Russia (i.e. in the South Caucasian regions of the empire).

[\[Tavakalyan N. The Accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia and its Progressive Importance // Journal of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR. Yerevan, 1978, No. 10, pp. 13\]](#)

The famous Soviet orientalist Ilya Petrushevsky, who led an ethnographic expedition to Nagorny Karabakh in the summer of 1928, mentions the Armenian village of Arakyul (Khojavand region). As one of the old residents said, “the grandfathers of today’s Arakyul villagers” came “from Persian Karadag (north-west Iran) seventy years ago”, that is, around the end of the 1850s – beginning of 1860s. This testifies to the fact that even after the mass migration of Armenians in 1828-1830, their tribesmen continued to move to Karabakh in whole communities, establishing their villages here (usually people from the same place in Iran or Turkey settled together after moving to the South Caucasus).

[Petrushevsky I. On the pre-Christian beliefs of the peasants of Nagorno-Karabakh. Baku, 1930. Page 21].

## **The ethnic composition of Karabakh on the eve of the collapse of the Russian Empire**

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries the effect of mass migration of Iranian and Turkish Armenians in 1828-1830, as well as the demographic boom that followed, began to weaken significantly. **From 1889 to 1914, the ratio of Muslims to Armenians in the territories of the previous Karabakh Khanate ceased to change in favor of the latter. In general, the proportion of Armenians in Karabakh decreased from 45.5% (1889) to 41% (1914)**, while the proportion of Muslims remained virtually unchanged at 55%.

For some districts of Karabakh, the ethnic dynamics were as follows:

- In Shusha, the proportion of Armenians decreased from 60% (1889) to 51% (1915); the proportion of Muslims increased from 40% to 44%.
- In the Shusha county, the share of Armenians decreased from 54.5% (1889) to 53% (1914).
- In Zangezur County the share of Armenians decreased from 49% (1889) to 43% (1914); the share of Muslims increased from 50% to 56%.
- In Jebraïl (Karyagin) and Javanshir counties, Muslims maintained a majority in the range of 65-75% throughout this period.

[\[Caucasian calendar of 1892. Tiflis, 1891. Pages 24-25; Caucasian calendar for 1897. Tiflis, 1896. Department V, pp. 44-45; Caucasian calendar for 1907. Tiflis, 1906. Appendix III, Distribution of the population of the Transcaucasian Region by Religion and Mother Tongue according to the 1897 census, p. 4. 105-110; Appendix "Indigenous population of Elizabeth Province by January 1, 1905", pp. 234-237. The Caucasian calendar for 1915. Tiflis, 1914. Department of Statistics, pp. 230-233\].](#)

The change in the ethnic ratio has been affected:

- 1) relocation of some Armenians to more industrial and economically developed Absheron and Baku;
- 2) the exodus of some Armenians to Erivan Province after the inter-ethnic clashes of 1905;
- 3) increase in the birth rate among Muslims due to the improvement of economic conditions of the Turkic population of Karabakh as a result of the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, and manufacturing industry in Karabakh at the end of XIX – beginning of XX centuries.
- 4) increase of the Slavic population in large settlements of Karabakh.

If the dynamics of 1889-1914 had continued and had not been interrupted by the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, in the next few decades the share of Armenians in the population of Karabakh would have decreased to 35-30%.

### **Ensuring the Armenian majority through ethnic cleansing**

The collapse of the Russian Empire led to the first-ever prolonged and full-scale conflict between Armenians and Turks. In the Shushinsky district, the clashes stopped and resumed from 1918 until the end of April 1920, and in Zangezursky, hostilities continued until the summer of 1921.

The Armenian Republic, which was proclaimed in 1918 under the leadership of the Dashnaktsutyun nationalist party, aspired to expand its territory to regions inhabited predominantly by Muslims. For this purpose, a policy of extermination and exile of the Muslim population was pursued to artificially provide the Armenian majority there.

That is how Ilya Petrushevsky, a well-known orientalist who worked in the Caucasus in the 1920s and 1930s, described the actions of the Armenian government:

“The policy of the Dashnaktsakans during the imperialistic war

of 1914-1918 and the civil war in Transcaucasia in 1919-1920 with their tactics of bloody adventures and artificially fomenting national enmity alien to the peasantry in the name of the ghost of the great Hayastan “from sea to sea” ...”.

[[Petrushevsky](#) I. On pre-Christian beliefs of the peasants of Nagorno-Karabakh. Baku, 1930. P. 12]

“The Armenian government, represented by the Dashnaktsutyun party, tried to clean Zangezur and other counties from the Muslim element to create purely Armenian territories ...”, [the newspaper “Communist” noted on July 20, 1920](#).

Taking advantage of the demographic situation in the Shushinsky and Zangezur districts in the 19th century as a result of mass Armenian migration from Iran and Turkey, as well as the expulsion of Muslims, Armenia declared these territories as its own. *“We can’t even temporarily recognize Azerbaijan’s authority over Karabakh, which is an integral part of Armenia,”* Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Khatisyan wrote on May 6, 1919, to Avetis Aharonyan, Chairman of the Armenian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference [Mahmuryan G. The Governorate of Karabakh-Zangezur and British policy in Karabakh 1918-1919. Gitutyun Publishing House, Yerevan 2007. pp. 159]. This is even though among the population of Karabakh at that time the Armenians made up about 40%, and [the territory itself belonged to Armenia more than one and a half thousand years ago, and only due to the occupation of the western outskirts of ancient Albania](#).

*“The Dashnak government again sent its emissaries to Nagorno-Karabakh with a large financial reserve and campaigned for the annexation of Karabakh with Armenia, which has nothing to do with it,”*– [the Bakinsky Rabochy](#) newspaper reported.

It was then **that the term “Nagorno-Karabakh” was first introduced by representatives of the Dashnaktsutyun party. The aim was to artificially separate the Shushinsky district,**

where Armenians made up about 50%, from the rest of Karabakh, where Muslims accounted for 70-75%. "The Armenian population in the territory of Karabakh lives in small groups only, not making up a whole mass anywhere ...", – said the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (ADR) Mamed-Yusif Jafarov on April 30, 1919, in a note to the commander of British forces in Transcaucasia.

[Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920) Foreign policy (documents and materials). Baku, 1998. pp. 175].

"Dashnaks – agents of the Armenian government are trying to get Karabakh to join Armenia, but for the people of Karabakh it would mean losing the source of their life in Baku and contacting Erivan, with which they have never been connected," noted Anastas Mikoyan, a well-known Armenian communist activist, after whom one of the streets of Yerevan is now named, in his report to Soviet Russia's leader Lenin on May 22, 1919.

[[From the report of a member of the Caucasian Regional Committee of the RCP \(b\) A. I. Mikoyan of the Central Committee of the RCP \(b\) and Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars V. I. Lenin, 22.05.1919 // To the history of the formation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of the Azerbaijan SSR 1918-1925 \(documents and materials\). Baku \(documents and materials\), 1989. P.16](#)].

Moreover, as explained by Soviet Caucasian scientist Natalia Volkova, the government of Armenia, led by the Dashnaktsutyun party, carried out the extermination and expulsion of the Muslim population in different parts of the South Caucasus: "Here the Dashnaks pursued a policy of "cleansing the country from foreigners" and primarily from Muslims who were expelled from Novobayazet, Erivan, Echmiadzin, and Sharuro-Daralaghez districts".

[[Volkova N. Ethnic processes in Transcaucasia in the XIX-XX centuries // Caucasian Ethnographic Collection IV. Moscow, 1969. P. 10](#)]

On 17 November 1919, ADR Prime Minister Nasib bey Yusifbeyli

said in an address to the Parliament of the Republic that the number of Muslim refugees expelled from Zangezur had reached 60,000 [Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920) Foreign Policy... Page 370]. “Meanwhile, there are reports that your government troops have defeated the villages of Ochunir, Davidan, Atkiz, Shabadan, Anishu, and Kushnilar in the Zangezur district. The mass of those killed,” said Jafarov in a note to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia on 29 November 1919 [the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920) Foreign Policy... Page 2 383]. “Up to now, information about the Armenian military operations in Zangezur has been continuously received, with the ruthlessly peaceful Muslim population being destroyed and many villages burned,” Yusifbeyli emphasised in a telegram to the High Commissioner of Allies (Western States) in the South Caucasus on 8 December 1919 [the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920) Foreign Policy... Page 388].

“When we talked about Karabakh, we meant four districts. Recently, we have been trying to show Zangezur district outside Karabakh with various intrigues and schemes. For hundreds and thousands of years Zangezur has been an integral part of Karabakh, and the latter is the soul of Azerbaijan, so nothing will come out of this intrigue. Now, gentlemen, three and a half counties of Karabakh are in our hands, while half of Zangezur district is under the power of some insurgents. We have been told that it is also possible to resolve the issue here by peaceful means, and representatives of great powers stand on this position. We are not against peace. We have chosen the peaceful way in general as a means to resolve all issues. Therefore, we are ready to wait for the peaceful resolution of this issue,” Yusifbeyli said in his address to the ADR Parliament on 22 December 1919 [Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920) Parliament (verbatim reports). Baku, 1998. pp. 431].

“In the last days, despite the agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Armenian regular units have been thundering Muslim villages in Zangezur and exterminating the population,” said Hasan bey Aghayev, Deputy Chairman of the ADR Parliament, at a

parliamentary session on 22 January 1920 [Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920) Parliament... Page 464].

*On 20-22 March 1920, Armenian armed groups attacked settlements also in Shusha and Jabrail districts. "I have received reports from my government that on 19 January Armenian government troops, together with armed gangs, launched an offensive from Zangezur in the direction of Shusha county, and all the Muslim villages lying along the way were exterminated, 9 of which have been defeated in recent days. Strongly protesting against this, I think it is necessary to tell you the following: immediately after the peace agreement of 23 November 1919 was signed. between the governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia and in the subsequent period Armenian troops destroyed up to 40 Muslim villages in the area of Zangezur district ... Armenian troops, apparently fulfilling a certain plan of their government, again began to destroy Muslim villages, subjecting residents to inhuman extermination," Khoysky reported to his Armenian counterpart on 25 January 1920 [Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920) Foreign policy ... Page 447].*

*Despite protests from official Baku, "on 14 April the Armenian government sends Dro (Kanayan) to Karabakh, and a few days later Garegin Nzhdeh joins Dizak from Kafan. Dro takes over power in Varanda, Dizak and Khachen and declares mobilization" [Abramyan G. From the History of the Karabakh Events, p.10].*

By the end of April 1920, ADR succeeded in regaining control of Karabakh, except for Zangezur. A few days later, ADR ceased to exist. Soviet power was established in Azerbaijan. In Zangezur, the Red Army continued fighting against Armenian armed groups until July 13, 1921

[Kadishev A. intervention and the Civil War in Transcaucasia. Moscow, 1960. Pp. 430].

**As a result of military operations, the western part of Zangezur was completely "cleansed" from Muslims.**

*“The impact of the events of 1918-1920 on the ethnic composition of the population of some areas of Transcaucasia can be seen in the example of Zangezur. In 1897, out of 137.9 thousand people, 63.6 thousand Armenians (46.2%), 71.2 thousand Azerbaijanis (51.7%), 1.8 thousand Kurds (1.3%) lived here. According to the agricultural census of 1922, the entire population of Zangezur numbered 63.5 thousand people, including 56.9 thousand Armenians (89.5%), 6.5 thousand Azerbaijanis (10.2%), and 0.2 thousand Russians (0.3%).”*

[[Volkova](#) N. Ethnic processes in Transcaucasia in XIX – XX centuries // Caucasian ethnographic collection IV. Moscow, 1969. pp. 10]

There was a mass exodus of the Turks from other parts of Karabakh. *“Almost the entire Muslim population of Javanshir district scattered in all directions”,* – noted one of the first Soviet Karabakh functionaries Armenak Karakozov in a telegram to the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party on June 19, 1920

[Niftaliev I. Azerbaijan SSR in the expansionist plans of Armenians (20s of XX century). National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. Institute of History. Baku, 2010. pp. 66].

Thus, **by expelling tens of thousands of Muslims and destroying over fifty Muslim villages in Nagorno-Karabakh and Western Zangezur, the Armenian majority was secured. This was the basis for the transfer of the latter to Soviet Armenia and the formation of an Armenian autonomy in Nagorno-Karabakh.**

On 26 November 1924, the “Regulations on the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh” were issued. A year later, the brochure “Nagorno-Karabakh” was published under the authorship of Gaik Kocharyan. [It was noted \(p.8\):](#)

*“The Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh was made up of parts of Shusha, Javanshir, Karyagin and Kubatly districts. From the former Shusha uyezd, it included up to 120 villages with the city of Shusha located in the mountainous part of the district; from Javanshir district – its western part*

*consisting of 55 villages; from Karyagin uyezd – 31 villages with Hadrut at the head, and several villages in Kubatly district.*

*...Nagorno-Karabakh was separated from Azerbaijan into the Autonomous Oblast based on its national majority: 94.4% of its inhabitants are Armenians and 5.6% are Turks”.*

In conclusion, it should be recalled that in 1914, just ten years before the formation of the ANCS, in Shusha County, which became the basis for the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenians made up 53%, in Javanshir – 33%, in Jebraïl (Karyagin) – 26.7%. And 100 years before that, in 1823, the share of Armenians among the population of these territories did not exceed 21.7%.

The fact that in such a short time it was possible to artificially completely change the ethnic composition of the population of Karabakh created a feeling of “unlimited opportunities” and political permissiveness in the Armenian national movement. 70 years later, the autonomy “turned” into the “Republic of Artsakh”, which absorbed almost the entire lowland part of Karabakh. It is only now that the natural course of Karabakh’s ethnic history, disrupted by the mass resettlement of Armenians from Iran and Turkey in 1828-1830, is returning to its previous course, and Armenian national leaders will have to return to reality.