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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**ISLAMIC POLICY OF TSARIST RUSSIA
IN THE CAUCASUS**

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Applicant: **Rashad Eldar Jabarov**

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The work was performed at the department History of philosophy and cultural studies of Baku State University

Scientific supervisors: Full member of ANAS

Vasim Mammadali Mammadaliyev

Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor
Irada Mehtigulu Guseinova

Official opponents: Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor
Allahshukur Hummat Pashazadeh

Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor
Rena Rza Mirzazadeh

Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy
Taleh Elton Hadjiyev

BFD 4.03 - One-time Dissertation Council of the Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating under the Azerbaijan Institute of Theology

Chairman of the Dissertation

Council:



Zakiya Aghababa Abilova

Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Associate Professor

Scientific secretary of the Dissertation



Babashli Mammadali Allahverdi

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology, Associate Professor

Chairman of the scientific seminar:



Sakit Yahya Huseynov Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

The relevance and development of the topic. The implementation of religious policy has been a significant aspect of the regional strategies pursued by major states seeking to expand their territory and assert dominance across vast geographical expanses. In this context, the Russian Empire stands out for its aggressive policies, particularly evident in its actions in the Caucasus from the 18th century onward. The religious and national rights of the peoples living in this region were continuously violated during the period when Russia began to occupy the Caucasus and completed its activities in this direction.

Russia's expansion into the Muslim world spanned from the mid-16th century to the late 19th century, resulting in the occupation of territories along the Volga, Crimea, Siberia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The inhabitants of these regions found themselves practicing their religious beliefs not solely based on historical traditions but under the authority of the Russian state. The Russian Empire pursued a policy of patronage towards the Christian populations in the Caucasus, which encompassed various ethnic groups. This policy led to close relations being established with the Armenian Church. It is an undeniable historical fact that representatives of the Armenian Church played a significant role in the relocation of the Armenian population to the South Caucasus.

The study of this topic remains highly relevant due to Russia's continued influence in regional, global, and local affairs. A significant portion of Russia's population consists of millions of Muslims, with a notable concentration in the North Caucasus region. Following the dissolution of the USSR, a substantial portion of protests against the Russian central government took on a military character, particularly in the North Caucasus. The resurgence of national identity among the Caucasian peoples, who had endured deportation and discrimination during the Soviet era, became increasingly evident during this period. Islam played a pivotal role in this inevitable process of awakening national consciousness.

Just as in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Russian government strategically employs certain aspects of its religious policy to exert control over the North Caucasus nowadays. Recent events have

highlighted Russia's ability to exploit tensions not only on a national level but also along religious lines within the diverse peoples of Dagestan and Chechnya. The examination of Russia's religious policy in the Caucasus carries significant importance from historical, philosophical, and political perspectives. It is worth noting that Azerbaijan's relationship with Russia has undergone fluctuations since 1991. The challenges faced in Azerbaijan's relations with Russia between 1991 and 1993, along with Russia's overt or covert support for Armenia in well-documented incidents, speak volumes about the complexities of this bilateral relationship.

After National leader Heydar Aliyev came to power, significant changes occurred in Azerbaijan's approach to Russian policy. Under Heydar Aliyev's deliberate and visionary leadership, Russia's alignment with Armenia ceased to be unequivocal. While there were moments when Armenian influence surfaced in Russia's foreign policy during certain periods, the genius of Heydar Aliyev successfully addressed and resolved the repercussions of this influence. He astutely recognized that Islam served as the primary unifying factor between the peoples of the North Caucasus and the Azerbaijani people.

The national leader consistently emphasized the essence of Islam, highlighting its progressive nature and its vital role in the life of our nation.¹ In the decree signed on the 200th anniversary of Sheikh Shamil, who held an important place in the history of the Caucasian peoples, Heydar Aliyev emphasized, the personality of Sheikh Shamil, who has become a symbol of the struggle for freedom, is a pivotal figure in shaping the correct perspective on our historical past and nurturing a sense of loyalty to the motherland among the citizens of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan, and noted that extensive research has been conducted on Sheikh Shamil's legacy and contributions by our scientists.²

Studying the history of Russia's relations with the Caucasus countries, along with its political dynamics and the role of religion in

¹ Şeyx Şamilin 200 illik yubileyi haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı: [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://e-qanun.az/framework/3806>.

² Əliyev, H. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir (çıxışlar, nitqlər, bəyanatlar, müsahibələr, məktublar, müraciətlər, fərmanlar): [46 cildə] / H.Əliyev – Bakı: Azərnaşr, – c.13. – 1998, – s.141.

these developments, remains a perpetually relevant endeavor. Recent events in the modern era serve as a poignant reminder of the enduring significance of this research topic.

In our national historiography, the predominant focus has been on examining topics related to the Russian occupation of Azerbaijan. Notably, during the Soviet era, the literature on this subject was significantly influenced by political factors. The events were often portrayed not as the occupation of Azerbaijan, and the broader Caucasus region, by Russia, but rather as a process of unification with Russia.³

Presenting the issue in this manner fails to capture the full complexity of the historical process. In reality, Azerbaijan did not willingly join Russia; rather, Russia directly subjugated it through a war of aggression.

Several studies have highlighted the significant influence of the freedom movement in the North Caucasus on the struggles of the South Caucasus peoples, including Azerbaijan and Georgia.⁴ It has been observed that Russia's occupation of Azerbaijan, along with the establishment of an "Armenian province" in the western territories of Azerbaijan, played a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for the future Armenian state in the region.⁵

The policy of the Russian Empire regarding the North Caucasus has been extensively discussed and analyzed by numerous scholars. These scholars include Academician Z. Bunyadov⁶, R. Aslanova,⁷ V.

³ Мустафаев, Дж.М. Северные ханства Азербайджана и Россия (конец XVIII-начало XIX вв.) / Дж.М.Мустафаев. – Баку: Элм, – 1989. – 128 с.; Ибрагимбейли, Х. Россия и Азербайджан в первой трети XIX века (из военно-политической истории) / Х.Ибрагимбейли. – Москва: Наука, Главная редакция восточной литературы, – 1969.

⁴ Алиева, С.И. Азербайджан и народы Северного Кавказа (XVIII – начало XXI вв.). – Баку: Şərq-Qərb, – 2010, – s.198.

⁵ Mahmudov, Y.M. Azərbaycanlılar (etnik-siyasi tarixə ümumi baxış). – Bakı: Aspoliqraf, – 2008, – 64 s.

⁶ Bünyadov, Z.M. Azərbaycan VII-IX əsrlərdə / Z.M.Bünyadov. – Bakı: Azərnəşr, – 1985, – 336 s.

⁷ Aslanova, R. Qloballaşma və mədəni müxtəliflik /R.Aslanova. – Bakı: Elm, – 2004. – 264 s.

Guliyev,⁸ I. Aliyeva,⁹ A. F. Mammadov,¹⁰ F. Agayev,¹¹ A. Balayev,¹² and T. Svetakhovski¹³. Among the significant works that have contributed to our understanding of this topic is "History of the Caucasian Peoples" by I. Huseynova.¹⁴

The author places significant emphasis on the fact that the accomplishments of the Caucasian peoples, who have made substantial contributions to the global cultural, scientific, and educational heritage over centuries, primarily stem from their own endeavors. Despite varying living conditions, development rates, and the considerable geographical distances that separate the peoples within the Caucasian Union, there are numerous connections and commonalities that unite them. The author's "Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the Caucasus," published in 2010, holds particular significance in shedding light on this topic.¹⁵

⁸ Кулиева, В.А. Роль и позиция мусульманского духовенства в социально-культурной жизни Нахичевани, Эриванской губернии и Зангезура в XIX-начале XX в. / В.А. Кулиева. – Баку: ЭЛМ, – 1999. – 64 с.; ее же. Роль и позиция мусульманского духовенства в социально-политической и культурной жизни Азербайджана в XIX - начале XX вв. / В.А. Кулиева. – Баку, – 2003. – 240 с.

⁹ Əliyeva, İ. İngiloyların çar Rusiyasının pravoslavlaşdırma siyasətinə qarşı mübarizəsi // – Bakı: AMEA A.A.Bakıxanov adına Tarix İnstitutunun Elmi əsərləri, – 2007. – s.131-137.

¹⁰ Məmmədov, Ə.F. Şimal-Qərbi Azərbaycan: Zaqatala dairəsi / Ə.F.Məmmədov. – Bakı: Adiloğlu, – 2001. – 115 s.

¹¹ Агаев, Ф.А. Строительство православных церквей в рамках переселенческой политики царизма в Северном Азербайджане в конце XIX - начале XX вв. // – Bakı: Bakı Universitetinin Xəbərləri. Humanitar elmlər seriyası. – 2012. № 2, – с.150-156.

¹² Балаев, А.Г. Азербайджанская нация: основные этапы становления на рубеже XIX-XX вв. – Москва: ООО ТиРу, – 2012. – 403 с.

¹³ Swietochowski, T. Azerbaijan: The Hidden Faces of Islam // World Policy Journal, – vol. 19. – No. 3 (Fall 2002). – 69 p.

¹⁴ Гусейнова, И. История народов Кавказа (с древнейших времен до наших дней). Учебное пособие для высших учебных заведений / И.Гусейнова. – Баку: ЭЛМ вя тяхсил, – 2018. – 1248 с.

¹⁵ Гусейнова, И. Историческая энциклопедия Кавказа / И.Гусейнова. – Баку: Чашыюглу, – 2010. – 950 с.

During the course of the research, the works of foreign authors were also examined, and the information gathered from them was integrated into the study. Notably, Ahmet Akmaz's book dedicated to the development of Muridism in the Caucasus was consulted.¹⁶

Additionally, Selim Deringil's book,¹⁷ which sheds light on Russia's policy of genocide in the Caucasus and the subsequent population transfer to the Ottoman Empire as well as the emigrant movement, was considered. V.V. Degoyev's comprehensive book, containing detailed information about the events in the North Caucasus, particularly regarding Imam Shamil and his life, was another valuable resource.¹⁸ Furthermore, the works of V.H. Hacıyev,¹⁹ which illuminate how the researched topic is reflected in historiography, were of particular interest.

Both national and foreign historiography have extensively investigated the occupation of the region by Tsarist Russia and the broader state policies that were implemented during that period. However, there is a pressing need for more comprehensive research within our national historiography, particularly concerning Russia's religious policies in the region.

The researches of young scientist R. Jabarov are a great example in this direction. Thus, in the articles²⁰ of R. Jabarov, some aspects of the

¹⁶ Ahmet Akmaz. Kafkasya Müridizm Hareketinin Önderi İmam Mansur // Yeni Türkiye, – yıl: 3, – s.1970-1988.

¹⁷ Selim Deringil. 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na Göç Olgusu Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler // Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan'dan ayrı basım. – İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Araştırma Merkezi, – İstanbul. – 1991, – s. 435-442.

¹⁸ Дегоев, В.В. Имам Шамиль: властитель, воин / В.В.Дегоев. – Москва: Русская панорама, – 2001, – 374 с.

¹⁹ Гаджиев, В.Г. Движение кавказских горцев под руководством Шамиля в исторической литературе / В.Г.Гаджиев. – Махачкала, – 1956. – 48 с.

²⁰ Cabarov, R. Rusiyanın işğalından sonra Qafqazda dini siyasətin bəzi aspektləri // – Bakı: Sivilizasiya. Elmi-nəzəri jurnal. Bakı Avrasiya Universiteti, – 2019. №1 (41), – s.75-82; yenə onun. XIX əsrin sonu - XX əsrin əvvəllərində panislamizm və onun Qafqazda yayılması // – Bakı: Geostrategiya. Beynəlxalq ictimai-siyasi, elmi-nəzəri jurnal. – 2020. №3/4 (57-58), – s.88-94; yenə onun. Müridizm hərəkatı və onun güclənməsində İmam Şamilin rolu // – Bakı: Din araşdırmaları. Azərbaycan İlahiyyat İnstitutu, – 2020, №2 (5), – s.129-143; yenə onun. Влияние ислама на

problem were investigated, the main results of the research were published in prestigious local and foreign journals, reports²¹ were made at regional and international level conferences and brought to the attention of the scientific community.

The object and subject of the research. The object of the research is the religious policy of Tsarist Russia in the Caucasus, and the subject is the religious-historical processes experienced in the Caucasus as a result of this policy.

The aim and objectives of the research. The primary aim of this research is to delve into the essence of the Russian Empire's policies concerning the Muslim populations of the Caucasus region and its stance towards Islam as a whole. It also aims to analyze the nature of the Christianization policy, specifically the relocation of Christian populations to the region, and to identify the key facets of this transformative process. To accomplish these objectives, the following tasks have been delineated:

- Investigating the influence of Islam and the composition of the population in the Caucasus before the Russian occupation;

- Evaluating the impact of the outcomes of the Caucasus invasion on subsequent historical developments and the dynamics of religious politics;

- Evaluating the effectiveness of the measures implemented as part of the invasion policy against the Islamic religion and its followers in the Caucasus region;

социокультурные структуры кавказских народов в XIX веке // ВГО УАН, Видавництво «Гілея». – Київ: Національний педагогічний університет імені М. П. Драгоманова. – 2019. – випуск 141, № 2, ч.2, – с.35-39 və s.

²¹ Cabarov, R. Ermənilərin Cənubi Qafqaza köçürülməsi // “Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti tarixi tədqiqatlarda” mövzusunda Respublika elmi konfransının materialları, – Bakı: BDU, – 2021, – s. 81-85; yenə onun. Rusların və almanların Cənubi Qafqaza köçürülməsi // Dövlət suverenliyinin möhkəmləndirilməsi yolunda sosial və humanitar problemlərin həlli xüsusiyyətləri. Gənc tədqiqatçıların Respublika elmi-praktik konfransının materialları, – Bakı: BDU, – 20 oktyabr 2021-ci il, – s.114-119; yenə onun. Колониальная политика царской России в отношении ногайского народа // Нові дослідження пам’яток козацької доби в Україні. Збірник наукових статей. Присвячується 30-річчю проголошення Незалежності України, Ніжин. – 2021, – с. 425-428.

-Analysing the political, religious, economic, military, and social factors that contributed to the formation of Islamic political structures, sheikh-Islamic councils, and mufti administrations following the occupation of the Caucasus;

- Investigating the causes of the Muridism movement and its role in the Caucasus peoples' resistance against Russia;

- Investigating the core principles and objectives of the Russian Empire's resettlement policy, and conducting an in-depth examination of the mechanisms and strategies employed;

- Analysing the operations of legal and administrative institutions in the context of the relationship between Russian authorities and the Muslim clergy;

- Conducting a study on the consequences associated with the emigration of Caucasian peoples who were victims of Russia's genocidal policies and the subsequent alterations to the local political-geographical landscape;

- Conducting research and summarizing the phenomenon of Pan-Islamism and its propagation.

The methods of the research. The theoretical and methodological basis of the research is the principle of a systematic approach to the analysis of archival, historical, scientific-social, statistical materials. In the course of the research, monographs, dissertations and archival materials dedicated to the study of this topic were referred to, historical events and processes related to the topic in the period covering the 19th and early 20th centuries were studied in chronological order, and various scientific research methods such as analysis, synthesis, and comparative analysis were used. The dissertation relies on a methodological framework based in dialectical, logical, comparative-legal, historical, and systematic methods of analysis.

The main provisions of the defense. The following provisions are submitted for defense:

- Imperial interests consistently took precedence as the dominant factor in Tsarist Russia's religious policy in the Caucasus;

- It is imperative to periodically reassess Russia's religious policy in the Caucasus within the context of evolving realities, emerging challenges, and contemporary threats. This approach helps bridge the

past with the future, formulate a religious and political direction, and cultivate an atmosphere of tolerance;

- It is of utmost importance to delineate the role and significance of Islam in fostering the holistic development of the Caucasian peoples, safeguarding their national identity, enhancing their sense of national consciousness, promoting integration with other communities, notably within the Islamic Ummah, and contributing to the advancement of science, culture, art, and philosophy in the region;

- When characterizing the developmental attributes of the Caucasian peoples, it is crucial to acknowledge the role of Islam in shaping ideological processes, influencing the formation of political trends, and underpinning the definition of national priorities.;

- Evaluating the historical role and position of Islam is instrumental in defining its significance in the socio-political, scientific, and cultural history of Azerbaijan, as well as in shaping its present-day dynamics and future development;

- Investigating the role of Islam is of paramount importance when investigating the challenges posed by the national struggle against Russia and delving into the nature of Russia's assimilation policies in the region. This aspect warrants particular attention in scholarly research.

The scientific novelty of the research. The scientific novelty of the dissertation can be characterized by the following provisions:

- From the first years of occupation, a comprehensive analysis was undertaken to scrutinize the measures taken in organizing the activities of the Muslim clergy in the region. This analysis encompassed political, religious, military, and economic dimensions, offering a multifaceted perspective on the situation;

- A systematic analysis was conducted to examine the normative framework governing the relationship between Russian authorities and the Muslim clergy, serving as a crucial component of the occupation policy and religious discrimination;

- It was determined that the influence of Islam on the sociological challenges faced by the Caucasian peoples varies among different ethnic groups. However, this influence notably strengthens during periods of external threats, and Islam has evolved into an integral and inseparable part of the lives of the Caucasian peoples.

- -In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the spread of pan-Islamic ideas in the North and South Caucasus and in Azerbaijan, which is part of it, and the processes of organization in this direction, as well as the struggle of the Russian special services against it, have been systematically studied;

- A comprehensive study of the ethnosocial dynamics among the Chechen, Ingush, Kabardian, Circassian and Adyghe peoples, both pre- and post-Islamic influences, including their processes of nationalization, the evolution of political institutions and shifts in public perception, as well as the complex religious hierarchy and interactions between clergy and other socio-political layers are now revealed in detail for the first time in Azerbaijan.

The theoretical and practical significance of the research. The scientific results obtained on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of the materials in the dissertation work, the proposed scientific propositions, as well as generalizations and conclusions can be used in the study of the Islamic policy of Tsarist Russia in the Caucasus, as well as in the preparation of further scientific works in this field. The results of the research can also be used in the activities of the relevant institutions - the State Committee for Work with Religious Institutions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Theological Institute and other institutions and organizations, including institutions that determine the foreign policy of our country and ensure national security.

The approbation of the research. The dissertation was developed within the Department of "History of Philosophy and Cultural Studies" at Baku State University, extensively deliberated upon within the department, and subsequently approved for a formal defense. Scientific articles and abstracts of conference reports related to this topic have been published.

The structure of the dissertation. Dissertation consists of Introduction, three Chapters, Conclusion, List of Literature. Title page and Table of Contents 821 characters in 1 pages, Introduction 20 pages 33815 characters, Chapter I -35 pages 68476 characters, Chapter II - 35 pages 66303 characters, Chapter III -30 pages 58257 characters, Conclusion- 7 pages 12617 characters, List of Literature consists of

20839 characters on 15 pages. The total volume of the dissertation is 142 pages.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the Introduction part of the dissertation, the relevance of the topic is justified, the extent of its scientific development is investigated, the goals and objectives of the research, methods, the main propositions defended, the scientific novelty, theoretical and practical importance of the work is determined, and its approbation and structure are informed about.

Chapter I of the dissertation, titled **"Russia's Occupation of the Caucasus and the State of Islam Preceding Occupation,"** is comprised of three sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter, **"The Influence of Islam and the Demographics of the South Caucasus Before Russian Occupation,"** the study delves into various aspects, including the rapid proliferation of Islam in the region, particularly in Azerbaijan. It also examines the evolution of Sunni Islam into the official ideology of states within the area during the Middle Ages, the widespread adoption of Shia interpretations among the populace, and the development of Islamic thought. Furthermore, the sub-chapter highlights the significant role played by Hurufism in shaping religious-mystical ideologies among various schools of thought. It is well-documented that the rise to power of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722) marked a pivotal phase in the history of Shia Islam in the North Caucasus, with the establishment of the Safavid state by Shah Ismail Khatai serving as a catalyst for the growth of Shiism in Azerbaijan. Traditionally, Shias in Azerbaijan identified themselves as integral parts of the Iranian cultural sphere and maintained Persian as their literary language. In contrast, Sunnis in the region often leaned towards the cultural influence of Ottoman Turkey. Despite the prevalent presence of Shiism among the population, there have historically been Sunni communities in Azerbaijan. As scholars have

observed, Shiites and Sunnis have coexisted in Azerbaijan for centuries.²²

On the eve of the Russian occupation of Azerbaijan, the region's populace predominantly comprised Turkic-speaking Muslim Azerbaijanis. Although our demographic statistics date from after the occupation, they substantiate this fact and enable us to illuminate the ethno-demographic composition of the area. Our research examining the population dynamics of Azerbaijan from 1863 to 1897 reveals that between 1863 and 1886, the population experienced a notable surge. Over these 23 years, the average annual population growth rate stood at 1.52%. However, between 1886 and 1897, spanning the following 11 years, the average annual growth rate stood at 1.12%. This deviation from earlier figures can be attributed not to variances in natural population growth but rather to shifts in migration dynamics. During the period from 1863 to 1886, a series of conflicts unfolded between Russia and the Ottoman state, culminating in territorial losses for the latter. In the aftermath of each of these conflicts, the Armenian population was resettled from Ottoman lands to the southern Caucasus, which notably included Azerbaijan.²³

In the latter half of the 7th century, Islam began to gain ground in Georgia, one of the South Caucasus countries with a significant Muslim population. The earliest known evidence of Islam's introduction to Georgia can be traced back to 704 when dirhams, bearing the Arabic inscription "Allah," were minted in Tbilisi. During the 16th to 18th centuries, Iran wielded considerable influence in the eastern regions of Georgia, leading to the conversion of numerous Georgian nobles to the Islamic faith. Additionally, during the Ottoman period, a substantial portion of the population residing in Meskheta, Ajaria, and Abkhazia in the western and southern parts of Georgia

²²Абасов, А. Ислам в современном Азербайджане: Образы и реалии. Сборник «Азербайджан и Россия: общества и государства» / А.Абасов. – Москва, – 2001. – 283 с.

²³ Muradov, Ş.M. Azərbaycan Respublikasında etno-demografik proseslər: tarixi dəyişikliklər və reallıqlar / Ş.M. Muradov, Ç.Ə.Baxış. – Bakı, – 2013, – s.11-12.

embraced Islam. Georgia's subjugation to Russian rule in the 19th century resulted in the migration of many Muslims to Turkey.

In general, Islam exerted a significant influence on the lives of the people in the South Caucasus until the Russian invasion, serving as a foundational element in shaping the mentality of Muslim communities.

The second sub-chapter of Chapter I, titled **“The Peoples of the North Caucasus and Islam on the Brink of Russian Occupation”** delves into a comprehensive examination of how Islam profoundly impacted the socio-economic and cultural life of North Caucasus peoples during the 19th century.

Although the Arabs launched an attack on the Khazarian Turks in the 8th century and managed to conquer a portion of the Caucasus region, the resilient Khazars successfully resisted their advances, preventing the spread of Islam to Eastern Europe through the Caucasus. The introduction of Islam to Dagestan began with the settlement of certain Muslim Arab tribes in the region. In the 8th century, some Lezgins embraced Islam, and in the 10th to 11th centuries, a significant number of Chechens followed suit. While we can pinpoint a more precise period for the spread of Islam in Dagestan, establishing the exact timeline for its adoption in Chechnya remains a challenging endeavor. According to researchers, there is a lack of reliable evidence to pinpoint a specific period for the introduction of Islam into the Chechen and Ingush communities.²⁴ The Ottoman Empire had a substantial influence on the Islamization of the Chechens, with the Turkish element playing a significant role in the Islamization of Ingushetia.

In contrast to Dagestan and Chechnya, the introduction of Islam to the regions inhabited by the Circassians primarily occurred through influences from the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate. However, the adoption of Islam among the Circassians was not a straightforward process due to their distinct social structure, which consisted of different social classes including princes, nobles, free

²⁴ Ахмадов, Я.З. История Чечни с древнейших времен до конца XVIII века / Я.З.Ахмадов. – Москва, – 2001, – с. 208.

peasants, and slaves. It wasn't until the late 18th century that the Karachays, living in the mountainous Caucasus region, embraced Islam, thanks to the influence of the Kabardins. Among the Circassian tribes characterized by a more democratic structure, Islam only became the predominant religion during the second half of the 19th century.

At the outset of the 19th century, significant shifts in the ethnic makeup of the North Caucasus region began to take place, accompanied by considerable population migrations. The available data on the region's demographics remain both incomplete and inconsistent. Information regarding the populations of North Caucasian peoples, primarily stemming from the mid-19th century, is reliant on approximate estimates. This is largely due to the fact that the local residents refrained from registering their populations, as counting people was considered a religious taboo.

The third sub-chapter in Chapter I, titled **“The Occupation of the Caucasus and its Initial Consequences”** delves into the circumstances that unfolded following Russia's occupation of the Caucasus. It is widely recognized that Russia emerged as a mighty state during the reign of Peter I. During this period, Russia's era of defensive wars came to a close, and the nation's political and economic interests became centered around its own economic growth and the imperative of expanding its borders by overcoming maritime blockades and securing access to the Black and Caspian Seas. Peter I's strategic plan for the Caucasus encompassed the expansion of Russian influence from Azov region to Kuban, stretching from Astrakhan to Iran with access to the lucrative silk market, and reaching from Pyatigorsk to Tiflis, the heart of Georgia.²⁵ As a consequence of the Caspian campaign in 1724, the Treaty of Constantinople played a pivotal role in delineating the boundaries of the South Caucasus, encompassing territories held by Turkey, Russia, and Iran.

Russia's pursuit of its military and political interests in the Caucasus began with its victory in the war against Turkey from 1768 to 1774, resulting in the acquisition of territories that Turkey had lost

²⁵ Бушуев, С.К. Из истории внешнеполитических отношений в период присоединения Кавказа к России / С.К.Бушуев. – Москва, – 1955. – 59 с.

in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca.²⁶ The most significant outcome of the war was initially securing the autonomy of the Crimean Khanate and subsequently its full incorporation into Russia's territories.

The second Russo-Turkish war and its subsequent outcomes significantly bolstered Russia's position in the region. As a result, it paved the way for Russian expansion into the Caucasus, making the inclusion of the South Caucasus, a key part of the Eastern question, into Russia a practical consideration during the latter half of the 18th century. The process of relocating North Caucasus peoples to Russian territories occurred at times through forceful means and at other times through voluntary and contractual agreements. By 1812, nearly all of Dagestan had come under Russian rule. Ingushetia fell under Russian authority in 1770, followed by Chechnya in 1781.²⁷ Additionally, in 1774, both Ossetia and Kabarda were brought into the Russian Empire's sphere of influence.

The pivotal moment in Russia's Caucasian policy took place following the Napoleonic wars of 1805-1815, and this shift was closely tied to the appointment of General A.P. Yermolov as the governor of the South Caucasus. General Yermolov initiated his tenure with a firm military-colonial approach, effectively bringing Chechnya and Dagestan under Russian control. This marked the beginning of Russia's invasion of the South Caucasus, with Georgia being the initial target, eventually leading to the broader campaign in Transcaucasia.

At the turn of the 18th century to the 19th century, Azerbaijan found itself in a precarious political landscape, both internally and externally. Initial efforts to unite Sheki and Guba khanates in order to establish a unified Azerbaijani state ultimately proved unsuccessful. In this challenging environment, Azerbaijan lacked the necessary resources and power to thwart the aggressive ambitions of both Iran and the Tsarist Russian Empire.

²⁶ Сухотин, Н.Н. Война в истории русского мира / Н.Н.Сухотин. – СПб., – 1898, – с. 20.

²⁷ Гриценко, Н.П. Социально-экономическое развитие притеречных районов в XVIII - первой половине XIX в. / Н.П.Гриценко. – Грозный, – 1961, – с. 29.

After Peter I's initial unsuccessful attempts to seize Azerbaijan, Catherine II continued this policy at the outset of the 19th century. Russian troops had first occupied Caspian regions of Azerbaijan in 1722, but withdrew from these areas in 1735. However, during Catherine II's reign, Russia's military and political endeavors in the region escalated, marking the second phase of its annexation of territories that had been under Iran's influence for over a century. By the late 18th century, significant divisions among the Azerbaijani khanates prevented them from forming a united front against Russian encroachment. Following the passing of Gubali Fatali Khan, who had played a pivotal role in establishing the state of North-Eastern Azerbaijan, the region began to experience gradual fragmentation. In the spring of 1803, Russian forces launched an invasion of Balakan, resulting in the slaughter of a portion of the local population. Subsequently, Ganja was invaded by Russian forces in January 1804.

On May 14, 1805, an agreement was signed between P. Sisianov and Ibrahim Khalil Khan, compelling Karabakh Khan to submit to Russian rule.²⁸ The fact that this agreement was made with Azerbaijanis indicates that there were no Armenian state institutions in this geographical area. A week later, a similar agreement was signed with Sheki Khan. The conquest of the strategically significant Karabakh Khanate marked the onset of Azerbaijan's complete occupation. In October 1806, the Baku Khanate was seized and dissolved. Shortly thereafter, the Guba Khanate also fell under Russian control. Russia significantly extended its dominion over the states of Northern Azerbaijan.

In the years 1804-1813, during the Russo-Iranian War, Russia emerged victorious, leading to the signing of the Treaty of Gulistan on October 13, 1813, as a historically notable peace agreement. According to the terms of this treaty, with the exception of the Khanates of Iravan and Nakhchivan, the entire territory north of the Aras River, encompassing Ganja, Karabakh, Sheki, Lenkaran, Shamakhi, Baku, Guba, and Derbent Khanates, came under Russian

²⁸ Акты Кавказской археографической комиссии (АКАК) / Под ред. А.Д.Берже. – Тифлис, – 1868. – т. II., док. 1436, – s.702-705.

suzerainty. In February 1828, Russians and Iranians signed the Treaty of Turkmenchay. In this document, the Khanates of Northern Azerbaijan, including Karabakh, Nakhchivan, and Iravan, were incorporated into the empire and abolished as provinces.

Thus, as a consequence of Russia's occupation of the North and South Caucasus regions, the presence of independent states in this geographical area came to an end.

Chapter II of the dissertation, titled **“The Colonial Character of Tsarist Russia's Islamic Policy in the Caucasus”** comprises three sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter, **“Islamic Policy Following the Occupation of the Caucasus: The Emergence of Sheik hulism and Mufti Administrations, and Tsarist Laws on the Islamic Religion”** several factors are examined regarding the considerations of the Tsarist government in shaping its Islamic policy in the Caucasus. These factors encompassed religious distinctions between Shiites and Sunnis, as well as the religious resistance that had persisted in the mountainous regions of Dagestan since the time of Imam Shamil.²⁹ It is noteworthy that within the Tsarist administration and military leadership, differences arose concerning the nature and methods of implementing religious policies in the Caucasus. Some forward-thinking Russian politicians advocated for a hands-off approach toward the Muslim religion, while others held contrasting viewpoints.

The Russian authorities first encountered Shiite Muslims during the reign of Alexander I, particularly when Ganja Khanate was incorporated into the Russian Empire. The Shiite Azerbaijanis residing in this region were referred to as "Transcaucasia Tatars" until 1917. Following the annexation of Shirvan, Karabakh, Nakhchivan, and Iravan khanates into the Russian Empire as per the terms of the Gulistan and Turkmenchay peace treaties, the majority of Shiite Muslims became Russian subjects. During the Caucasian War, the government implemented measures to ensure the loyalty of Transcaucasian Muslim clerics, including Shiite clerics who supported the Russian authorities. Drawing inspiration from the existing mufti

²⁹ Матвеев, В.А. Российское мусульманство на Северном Кавказе: исторические аспекты проблемы / В.А.Матвеев. – Армавир-Ростов-на-Дону, – 2004. – 64 с.

models within Russia, they established the Transcaucasian Sunni Muhammadi Spiritual Council, led by a mufti, and the Transcaucasian Shia Muhammadi Spiritual Council, led by a sheikh-ul-Islam.³⁰

In the North Caucasus and Dagestan, during the early stages of tsarist rule, officials implemented stringent measures. However, they later opted for a more lenient approach. Recognizing the adverse effects of impeding the Muslim pilgrimage, tsarist officials began to actively assist in resolving the issues faced by a substantial number of pilgrims making their way to holy sites. Moreover, they refrained from prohibiting the restoration and construction of mosques and places of worship by Muslim communities.

Nevertheless, the empire's policy of Russification and Christianization of the population in the Azerbaijani territory persisted for many years. In 1828-1829, the tsarist government attempted to enlist the support of the Shiite population of Azerbaijan in the war against the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, they exercised stricter control over the madrassas located in proximity to the mosques in the region.

Following the occupation of Northern Azerbaijan by Russia in the early 19th century, the Tsarist regime initiated a series of measures aimed at deepening its colonial policies in the region. One significant aspect of these measures was to exert influence over the religious beliefs of the local population, the Azerbaijanis, with the intention of aligning them with the colonial norms of Russian Tsarism, both in terms of legal and political matters, as well as on a moral and psychological level. Russification and Christianization of the Azerbaijani population emerged as one of the primary objectives of Russian Tsarism in the early 19th century. During this period, the Tsarist government facilitated the relocation of numerous families belonging to religious sects such as the Malokan and Doukhorbor from the central provinces of Russia and Ukraine to Northern Azerbaijan. This mass migration resulted in the establishment of up to 20 villages

³⁰ Гаврилов, Ю.А. Ислам и православно-мусульманские отношения в России в зеркале истории и социологии / Ю.А.Гаврилов, А.Г.Шевченко. – Москва: Культурная революция, – 2010, – с. 42.

in the region between 1833 and 1843, as a consequence of these sect members being relocated from Russia to Azerbaijan.

Following Russia's occupation of the Caucasus, they implemented a biased policy against the Muslim population, curbing their religious rights and suppressing the Islamic faith. Paradoxically, this approach didn't yield the desired results; instead, it solidified the people of the Caucasus in their commitment to their religion.

The second sub-chapter of Chapter II, titled **"The Muridism Movement and Imam Shamil's Role in Strengthening this Movement"** delves into the resistance movement that swept across the North Caucasus. Renowned historians from the Tsarist era characterized the conflicts within the Muridism movement in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as a religious struggle pitting Muslims against Christians.³¹ Muridism, ultimately led by Sheikh Mansur in the 1880s, etched its mark in history as the primary ideology of resistance against the Russian invasion.

V. A. Potto, one of the early historians of the Caucasian War, documented, *"In 1785, a figure known as Sheikh Mansur emerged in the Caucasus. He initiated a doctrine that was part-political and part-religious, galvanizing the Muslim population of the Caucasus to vehemently resist both Christianity and Russian rule."*³² By the 1830s, during a period of intense class and national tensions, the highlanders of Dagestan and Chechnya managed to unite under the banner of Muridism. Sufi sect teachings played a pivotal role in their struggle against the Russian authorities. This resistance movement among the Caucasian highlanders saw leadership from influential figures like Imam Gazi-Mohammed and Imam Hamza Bey at various times. Eventually, the reins of the resistance movement passed to Imam Shamil. Sheikh Shamil garnered immense respect not only within the Caucasus but also in the Ottoman Empire and other Islamic nations, leaving an indelible mark on the history of the Caucasus. He also wielded considerable influence over Russian officials and the tsar.

³¹ Дубровин, Н.Ф. О народах Центрального и Северо-Западного Кавказа / Н.Ф.Дубровин. – Нальчик, – 2002. – 532 с.

³² Потто, В.А. Кавказская война: [в 5-ти томах] / – Ставрополь: Кавказский край, – 1994, – т.1. – с.134.

Following his arrest, he was not treated as a mere prisoner but rather as an esteemed guest, with his adversaries showing him great respect and reverence. Upon assuming the role of the third imam of Chechnya and Dagestan, Shamil waged a successful 25-year campaign against Russian forces, uniting the highlanders of Dagestan and Chechnya. He established the Imamate state, which was divided into viceroyalties within Dagestan and Chechnya, and introduced a taxation system. In the early 1840s, Imam Shamil orchestrated a notable military operation in the Caucasus march into Kabarda. The details of these events are meticulously chronicled in the dissertation, presented in chronological order.

Following the Muridism movement, there was a widespread effort to relocate those who did not wish to continue living under Russian rule in the Caucasus. General A. Yermolov proposed the dissolution of Azerbaijani khanates, advocating for the implementation of the Russian administrative system and the traditional Russian model of administrative-territorial division across all the newly acquired territories in the Caucasus. Consequently, Sheki, Shirvan, and Karabakh khanates in Azerbaijan were abolished under various pretexts.

The Muridism movement, originating with Sheikh Mansour, stands as a notable historical example of the Caucasus peoples' resistance against Russian influence, firmly grounded in Islamic ideals. This movement exerted a profound and positive impact on the collective self-awareness of the Caucasian peoples, concurrently serving as a steadfast bastion in safeguarding their religious beliefs, even in the face of formidable oppression.

The third subchapter within the second chapter, bearing the **title "Relocation of Christian Peoples to the Caucasus and the Policy of Christianization"** delves into the historical account of Russia's occupation of northern Azerbaijan during the Russo-Iranian war of 1826-1828. This pivotal conflict resulted in the division of Azerbaijan into two distinct regions, with the northern part falling under Russian control and the southern region remaining part of the Iranian state. This particular sub-chapter is dedicated to a comprehensive exploration of the events surrounding this partition and seeks to provide a nuanced interpretation of the primary objective behind

Tsarist Russia's policy of relocating Azerbaijanis from their ancestral lands while simultaneously resettling Christian migrants in these newly acquired territories. The Islamic religion emerged as the foremost and most significant platform of resistance against Russia's endeavors in this regard. The Russian Empire, having occupied the northern territories of Azerbaijan, made a deliberate choice to implement a resettlement policy as a key component of its colonial strategy in the South Caucasus. The core objective of the strategic plan for Northern Azerbaijan was the full integration of this region into the Russian Empire. Throughout the Russo-Iranian conflicts, particularly during the periods of 1804-1813 and 1826-1828, a significant influx of Armenians into the South Caucasus, particularly Karabakh, led to a steady rise in the Armenian population within these territories. Among the primary focal points for Armenian resettlement, the strategically vital Karabakh region stood out. In the early 19th century, following the capture of Ganja, General P. D. Sisianov, the commander-in-chief of Caucasian troops, underscored in his report No. 19 dated May 22, 1805, that due to its geographical significance, Karabakh held the key as the gateway to both Azerbaijan and Iran. As a result, he emphasized the imperative of maintaining control over Karabakh and fortifying the Russian position in this pivotal area.³³

In 1832, the Karabakh province recorded a population of 32.400 (64.8%) Azerbaijanis and 17.400 (38.8%) Armenians. However, by the late 1880s, there was a notable shift in demographics in the Shusha District, where the proportion of Azerbaijanis decreased to 41.5%, while Armenians comprised 58.2% of the population. According to All-Russian calculations in 1897, these figures stood at 53% for Azerbaijanis and 45% for Armenians, respectively.³⁴ One significant measure undertaken by Tsarist Russia to implement its resettlement policy was the establishment of a specialized "Armenian province" on March 20, 1828, just a day after the ratification of the Treaty of Turkmenchay. This "Armenian province" was carved out of historical

³³ Əhmədov, E.İ. Ermənistanın Azərbaycana təcavüzü: etnik təmizləmə, soyqırımı, terror, işğal: [2 cildə] / – Bakı: Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti yanında Elmin İnkişafı Fondu, – 2015, – c.2. – s. 9.

³⁴ Кавказский календарь на 1896 г., – V отд., – s. 3.

Azerbaijani lands and administratively divided into Iravan and Nakhchivan provinces, along with the Ordubad district. The governance of this province was entrusted to the Georgian prince and Major General A.G. Chavchavadze.³⁵ Alongside Armenians, Russians were also relocated to Azerbaijan during this period. The first Russian settlements in Azerbaijani territory were established between 1830 and 1850. From 1897 to 1913, the number of Russian migrants in Baku alone surged from 38,975 to 76,288 individuals. Russian workers were primarily settled in the Black and White City, an industrial district located in the northeastern suburbs of Baku³⁶.

During that era, more than a hundred Russian Orthodox villages were established throughout Azerbaijan. Among the Christian population relocated to Azerbaijan, there were also a notable number of Germans. Researchers suggest two main reasons for their migration to the South Caucasus:

- 1) Social and political conditions in Germany in the 19th century;
- 2) Reasons reflecting the political and economic situation of the Russian Empire, which implemented the colonial policy in the Caucasus.

The primary objective of Russian tsarism's migration policy was to establish political and economic dominance over the Caucasus region. According to the 1886 population census, the area was inhabited by 140,095 Russians, 5,843 Poles, 9,260 Germans, and 57,156 Greeks³⁷. As the 20th century began, the population of Slavic groups, including Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, as well as Poles, Czechs, and Bulgarians, notably increased in the Caucasus. However, despite numerous efforts by Russian tsarism, the conversion of Muslim populations in both North and South Caucasus to Christianity proved

³⁵ Mirzəzadə, A. XIX əsrin 20-30-cu illərində çar Rusiyası tərəfindən ermənilərin Cənubi Qafqaza kütləvi köçürülməsi və bölgədə “erməni amili”nin yaranması // – Bakı: Tarix və onun problemləri. – 2014. № 4, – s. 60.

³⁶ Баберовски, Й. Цивилизаторская миссия и национализм в Закавказье: 1828-1914 гг. // Новая имперская истории постсоветского пространства / Сборник статей. – Казань: Центр исследований национализма и империи. – 2004. – с.322.

³⁷ Кавказские войны // Энциклопедический словарь. Изд. Ф.А.Брокгауза и И.А.Ефрона. – СПб., – 1894, – с. 229.

to be a challenging task. Indigenous peoples generally resisted conversion to Christianity, with only a few individuals converting. This resistance stemmed from the perception that Christianity symbolized oppression and servitude under the Russian Empire. In contrast, Islam had organically spread in the Caucasus without coercion and had become an integral part of the cultural identity of the North Caucasus peoples.

Chapter III of the dissertation, titled "**Genocidal Policies against the Caucasian Peoples and Pan-Islamism as a Form of Protest**" comprises two sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter, entitled "**The Genocide and Forced Migration Imposed by Tsarist Russia on the Muslim Peoples of the Caucasus**" we delve into the commencement of genocidal policies following the Russian occupation of the Caucasus. These policies were particularly harsh on those peoples who vehemently resisted, including the oldest inhabitants of the North-West Caucasus, such as the Circassians, Adyghes, and Ubiks. This chapter also explores the resettlement of Slavic and other Christian populations in areas previously inhabited by those who were expelled or subjected to massacres.

The massive migration of Caucasians reached its zenith between 1862 and 1865 and subsequently surged during 1877-1878, 1890-1908, and 1920. It is estimated that the number of Circassians who migrated to Ottoman lands ranged between 1 million and 2 million individuals. Tragically, approximately 25% of the total migrant population perished during the migration.

Numerous Russian historians have made efforts to downplay the genocide committed by the Russian Empire against the Circassian-Adyghes people. Nevertheless, these attempts by scholars cannot conceal the undeniable historical truth. Notably, independent Western researchers have uncovered substantial evidence of the mass killings inflicted upon the Circassians and Adyghes. The topic of the Circassian genocide has been extensively examined by a multitude of foreign historians and experts, shedding light on this dark chapter of history. It is crucial to highlight the research findings of American independent scholar and expert Stefan D. Shanfield, who meticulously determined that the global Circassian population totals approximately 6,248,000. Of this number, only a mere 10 % reside in their historical

homeland. Shanfield unequivocally addresses the question of whether a genocide occurred, stating, *"When we scrutinize the facts presented by the authors, there is no alternative but to provide an affirmative response."*³⁸ Another American diplomat and expert, Paul B. Henz, in his monograph chronicling the Circassians' struggle against the Russian Empire, contends, *"What happened should at least be compared to genocide."*³⁹ Mikael Mann, an expert from Belfast University, characterizes the tragic fate of the Circassians as "ethnic cleansing."⁴⁰ Antero Laitsinger asserts that the genocide carried out by Tsarist Russia against the Circassian people in the 19th century stands as one of the largest genocides of that era, remarking, *"The genocide perpetrated by Tsarist Russia against the Circassian people was the most extensive genocide of the 19th century. Regrettably, it has since been overshadowed, while the world is well-acquainted with the Jewish and Armenian genocides (the latter being erroneously labeled as 'fake' by the author)."*⁴¹

The reduction of the indigenous population in the Caucasus was executed through a combination of methods, including physical annihilation, the occupation of villages, the scorched-earth tactic of burning crops, and the deliberate prevention of food supplies. In the records of Russian forces, it was explicitly stated: *"We advanced systematically, leaving no highlander alive as we cleared the land step by step."*⁴²

Historical sources also reveal that Count Mikhail Nikolayevich, the commander of the Caucasus Army, articulated the objective of physically eliminating a significant portion of the local population. In

³⁸ The Circassians: A Forgotten Genocide? By Stephen D. Shenfield 1999; article from «Studies on War and Genocide», – vol. 1, in the series «War and Genocide», – Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

³⁹ Paul, B. Henze. The North Caucasus Barrier. Circassian Resistance to Russia. 'The North Caucasus Barrier' / Edited by Marie Bennigsen Broxup, published by HURST & CO. – 2007, – s.111.

⁴⁰ The Darkside of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing, by Michael Mann / – CUP, – 2005. – p. 98-100.

⁴¹ Leitzinger, A. The Circassian Genocide // "Turkistan News" (The Eurasian Politician – Issue 2, – October 2000.

⁴² Венюков, М.И. К истории заселения Западного Кавказа. 1861-1863 гг. // Русская старина. – СПб. – 1878. – кн. VI (июнь), – с. 249.

November 1863, he corresponded with the Minister of Defense, underscoring the perceived necessity of such extreme measures.⁴³

In scholarly investigations, there is a notable emphasis on the period from 1763 to 1864 as being the most pivotal in the context of the Circassian genocide. However, it is essential to challenge this viewpoint. While it is true that this timeframe witnessed intense military operations, it does not accurately represent the conclusion of the Circassian genocide, which endured until the early 20th century, specifically until 1907. This extended timeline is significant, culminating with a document of great historical importance: the adoption of the Hague Convention IV, specifically "On the Law and Customs of the War on Land", on October 18, 1907.

One of the Turkic-Muslim peoples in the Caucasus and Crimea who fell victim to Russia's genocidal policies were the Nogais. In late 1782, a brutal suppression of the uprising in Crimea and the resistance of the Kuban Nogais was carried out by Russian forces. During this campaign, the Tsarist government inflicted extraordinary cruelty, resulting in the deaths of approximately 500,000 Nogais and the forced migration of over a million to Turkey.

This tragic exodus, spanning from 1859 to 1895, saw 100,000 Nogai leaving their ancestral homeland to settle in Turkey. Present-day researchers widely characterize the actions of the Tsarist government against the Nogais as genocide.⁴⁴

It is worth acknowledging that historical injustices often eventually receive a just response. Given the evolving dynamics of modern international politics, there may come a time when Russia, as a successor to these crimes, offers an apology to the Caucasian peoples. The responsibility of the scientific community lies in raising awareness within the global community about this genocide. It is

⁴³ Проблемы Кавказской войны и выселение черкесов в пределы Османской империи // Сборник архивных материалов. – Нальчик: Эльбрус, – 2001, – с. 228.

⁴⁴ Aliyeva, S. Nogay Kırımı: Rusya İmparatorluğunun Nogayları İmha Eylemi Ve Günümüzdeki Yankıları / Asker A. // Uluslararası Suçlar Ve Tarih Uluslararası hakemli dergi. – 2012. – sayı 13, – s. 54.

important to note that the true genocide encompasses not the so-called Armenian genocide, but the genocide of numerous Caucasian peoples.

In the second sub-chapter of Chapter III, titled **"Pan-Islamism and Its Emergence in the Caucasus at the Turn of the 19th Century to the 20th Century"** the focus was directed towards Jamaledin Afghani, a prominent figure in the Islamic world. This section delved into his pivotal role in shaping the landscape of political pan-Islamism, examining it as both a religious-cultural and political phenomenon. The cornerstone moment in the development of Pan-Islamism as a potent political force occurred during the inaugural Muslim congress held on August 15, 1905, in the city of Nizhny Novgorod. The resolutions adopted at this congress revealed the participants' aspirations to unify Russian Muslims on matters of both politics and culture. Their overarching goal was to secure equal political, religious, and property rights for Muslims alongside their Russian counterparts, fostering active Muslim engagement in parliamentary endeavors. In January 1906, the Second Muslim Congress convened in St. Petersburg and officially adopted the Charter of the newly-formed "Allied Muslim" political party. It was deemed appropriate to establish cooperation with the Democratic People's Freedom Party, based on a shared commitment to the principles of tolerance as outlined in the Constitution. Furthermore, the Congress outlined various other strategic directions for action.⁴⁵ The development of Pan-Islamism in the Caucasus was significantly shaped by the ongoing national conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The armed clashes that erupted in 1904-1905 served as a catalyst for fostering unity within the Muslim society of the Caucasus. Among the notable figures within the Pan-Islam movement in the North Caucasus, our compatriots like Ibrahim Bey Heydarov, Najmeddin Gotsinski, and Sayyid Hajimir Heydarzade stood out for their exceptional contributions and activities.

At the outset of the 20th century, a series of massacres were perpetrated by Armenians in Azerbaijan. In an effort to counteract these acts of violence, the prominent Turkic intellectual Ahmet Bey

⁴⁵ Усманова, Д.М. Мусульманская фракция и проблемы «свободы совести» в Государственной думе России (1906-1917) / Д.М.Усманова. – Казань: Мастер Лайн. – 1999. – с. 32–37.

Agaoglu established a clandestine organization called the "Fedai" in Baku in 1905. Over time, this society evolved into the "Difai" party. Several key individuals played pivotal roles in the activities of this organization, including the Khasmammadov brothers, Alakbar Bey and Alasgar Bey, Hasan Bey Aghayev, Alakbar Bey Rafibeyli, Sheikhulislam Akhund Molla Mahammad Pishnamazzade, Mirza Mahammad Akhundzade, and Mirza Javad.⁴⁶ Ahmed Bey Huseynzade, deeply influenced by Pan-Islamist ideas in Azerbaijan, advocated for the elevation of the Islamic-Turkish nation. He asserted that the formula for modernization lay in a combination of Turkification, Islamization, and Europeanization. During the period of 1917-1920, a single party stood as the representative of Pan-Islamism—the Caucasian Union Party. Its ideological foundation drew from prevalent theories of the era, such as Ittihad-Islam, Islamic modernism, and Islamic reformism. Members of this party were part of the National Council that declared Azerbaijan's independence on May 28, 1918.

These ideas played a significant role in safeguarding national consciousness and preserving cultural values. It can be argued that during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the principles of pan-Islamism exerted a substantial influence on the perspectives and stances of all factions within the Caucasus. Soviet historians often portrayed pan-Islamism as an ideology associated with the feudal clergy. However, it is essential to note that pan-Islamism had no inherent link to feudalism. Its origins were rooted in the new Muslim intellectuals who emerged during the latter half of the 19th century. Pan-Islamism aimed to address a multitude of challenges faced by Muslim nations, encompassing the pursuit of cultural advancement, the implementation of comprehensive educational reforms, the modernization of traditional ways of life, and the liberation from colonial oppression—these were among its central tenets.

Later, the ideals of local nationalism and regional autonomy gained considerable prominence, ultimately eclipsing the principles of pan-

⁴⁶ Şəlalə Göytürk. "Difai fədailəri"nin anlatdıqları və xatırlatdıqları // 525-ci qəzet. – 2018, 4 sentyabr. – s. 8.

Islamism. As a result, several states were founded on the foundations of these ideologies. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that elements of pan-Islamism persisted within the programs of nationalist movements in the Caucasus.

In the **“Conclusion”** section of the dissertation, we endeavor to organize and encapsulate the key findings gleaned from our research.

1. The intervention of Tsarist Russia in the Caucasus is etched in history as the "Caucasian War," recognized for its status as the longest-lasting military conflict spanning approximately a century. This protracted struggle encompassed an extensive geographic expanse and exacted a heavy toll on the various peoples involved. The enduring armed confrontation persisted until the close of the 19th century, ushering in a multitude of challenges as the 20th century dawned. Within historiography, three distinct perspectives emerge, each representing the stances of the principal political actors in the Caucasian War: The Russian Empire, Western powers, and proponents of the Muslim resistance. These scholarly theories serve to elucidate the political underpinnings of the conflict and shape the interpretations within the realm of historical inquiry.

2. The historical traditions of the Russian Empire were reflected in the works of various pre-revolutionary Russian and contemporary historians. These traditions can be traced back to the insightful lectures delivered by General D. I. Romanovsky in 1917. Among the proponents of this school of thought, we find authors like Nikolay Ryazanovsky, known for his book "History of Russia," as well as the contributors to the "Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History," which was published in English under the editorship of J.L. Vyshinsky. Rostislav Fadeyev's work can also be firmly situated within this same intellectual tradition. In these scholarly works, the process of subjugating the Caucasus region is often depicted as the pacification of what were sometimes referred to as Caucasian "savages." Notably, during the late 1930s and early 1940s, there was a prevailing perspective that Imam Shamil and his adherents were regarded as agents affiliated with foreign intelligence services. According to this particular narrative, Shamil's enduring resistance was sustained through support from countries such as Turkey and England. From the late 1950s through the first half of the 1980s, a

prevailing narrative emphasized that all tribal groups entered the Russian state voluntarily and without exception. This perspective was notably articulated in the book "Caucasian War," authored by Mark Bliyev and Vladimir Degoyev in 1994.⁴⁷

In Western historiography, Russia has often been portrayed as a territorial expansionist power with a penchant for expanding its boundaries. While there is certainly a significant degree of accuracy in this portrayal, it is worth noting that Western countries have historically employed similar expansionist strategies in regions like India and Africa.⁴⁸

3. In the early Soviet historiography of the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, associated with the Mikhail Pokrovsky school, the highlanders' resistance was interpreted as a national liberation movement.⁴⁹

Their incursions into neighboring territories were attributed to geographical factors. Russia suffered significant losses in this conflict, with an estimated half a million casualties. While it remains challenging to precisely quantify the highlanders' losses, some estimates suggest that the population of Chechnya alone may have declined by approximately one million during this period.

4. When Russia exerted its control over the Caucasus, it initiated a policy marked by genocide and discrimination against numerous local Muslim communities. Following the division of the historical homeland of Azerbaijani Turks into two parts, Russia, as a regional ally, began relocating Armenians into the area. Armenians, in turn, sought to leverage Russia's regional interests to their advantage. Russia pursued Christianization in the region through two main approaches: technical and ideological means. The first method involved the resettlement of Christian populations into the region. Armenians were relocated to the lands of historical Azerbaijan, while Kazaks and Slavs were also partially resettled here, with the majority

⁴⁷ Кавказ и Российская империя: проекты, идеи, иллюзии и реальность. Начало XIX - начало XX вв. – СПб., – 2005. – с.74.

⁴⁸ Блийев, М.М. Кавказская война / М.М.Блийев, В.В.Дегоев. – Москва: Росет, – 1994. – 592 с.

⁴⁹ Олейников, Д.И. Большая война // – Москва: Родина, – 2000. №1, – с.50-57.

being relocated to the territories inhabited by North Caucasian peoples. Throughout its implementation of Islamic policies in the Caucasus, Russia consistently took into account the influence of both Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Its objectives included reducing the Muslim population in both the North and South Caucasus, restricting the connections between the Caucasian clergy and Muslim countries, and curtailing the religious rights of the local population.

The ideological approach was closely intertwined with religious propaganda. Russian authorities were acutely aware that the region could be effectively governed not solely through military force, but by the promotion of Christianity. Consequently, in the late 18th century, the Ossetian Spiritual Commission was established in Tbilisi, with its primary mission being the dissemination of Christianity among the Muslim population of the Caucasus. Initially, non-Orthodox religious missionaries were involved in proselytizing efforts in the Caucasus. Notably, the Scottish Missionary Society, the Basel Bible Society from Switzerland, and the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of Non-Christians were particularly active in this regard. However, the Caucasian peoples did not readily embrace the Empire's Christianization policy. Their steadfast commitment to Islam posed a significant challenge to the Russian Empire's attempts to convert the Muslim population, despite its utilization of opportunities offered by Protestant Christians from the West and later its promotion of Orthodoxy. Consequently, none of the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus underwent mass conversion to Christianity.

5. The Russian Empire, in its pursuit of unmet objectives, resorted to occasional systematic genocides. This grim history witnessed the near-total extermination or forced exile of the majority of the Adyghe-Circassian population, with similar tragic fates befalling the Nogais. Moreover, a significant portion of the populace from South Caucasus, including Iravan and Nakhchivan, was compelled to leave their ancestral homelands and seek refuge in Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, the Azerbaijani territories of Ganja and Jar-Balakan bore witness to massacres of significant magnitude.

6. From the 18th century onwards, the influx of Russians into the Caucasus introduced a new dimension to the region's ethno-religious structure. By the early 20th century, the North and Central Caucasus

had a Russian population exceeding 3,760,000 individuals. Simultaneously, a methodical and consistent resettlement of Armenians contributed to their growing presence within the Caucasian populace. During this period, their numbers surpassed 140,000 people, with the majority concentrated in the historic territories of Azerbaijan, specifically Baku, Yelizavetpol, and Iravan provinces. It was only in 1864 that Russia managed to quell the collective resistance of the various Caucasian ethnic groups, resulting in the exile of approximately 470,000 Circassians who had been residing in the Kuban region. During the 19th century, a series of migration waves brought about a gradual increase in the presence of European peoples in the Caucasus region. This demographic shift was particularly pronounced in the early 20th century, with a significant influx of Slavic peoples, including Poles, Czechs, and Bulgarians. The decrease in the local population occurred through a variety of means, such as physical destruction, occupation, the deliberate burning of villages, the destruction of agricultural fields and crops, and the disruption of food supplies. Despite the undeniable negative aspects of this emigration movement, it had an unintended consequence of fostering a sense of unity among the Muslim populations of the region. In the face of these challenges, the Ottoman Empire managed to extend its support to the Muslim communities in the Caucasus. This was accomplished despite the Ottoman Empire's own internal conflicts, foreign interventions, and palace intrigues, demonstrating its commitment to aiding its fellow Muslims in the region.

7. The process of integrating new territories into the empire was far from straightforward, requiring a series of critical decisions. The initial legislative action concerning the administration of the Caucasian Muslims was Emperor Alexander I's decree on June 30, 1805, titled "On the Rules of Muhammadan Clergymen in the Yelizavetopol District." This decree drew inspiration from existing mufti models within Russia. As a result, the Transcaucasian Sunni Muhammadan Spiritual Council and the Transcaucasian Shia Muhammadan Spiritual Council were established. Upon Russia's occupation of the Caucasus, the empire pursued a somewhat biased policy towards the Muslim population, with a focus on Christianizing them. However, this policy failed to yield the anticipated results.

Instead, it had the unintended consequence of solidifying the people of the Caucasus in their commitment to their religion.

8. The Muridiism movement left a profound mark on the shaping of Russia's policies in the Caucasus region. Throughout history, this movement stands out as a notable instance of Caucasian peoples' resistance against Russian influence, firmly rooted in Islamic principles. Its impact extended far beyond the immediate political context, exerting a substantial and positive influence on the collective self-awareness of the Caucasian peoples.

9. The Pan-Islamism movement played a distinctive role in fostering organized activities among Russian Muslims. The ideas of Jamaledin Afghani had a far-reaching impact across the Eastern world and provided a significant impetus for the development of political Pan-Islamism. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Pan-Islamist ideas found resonance in both the North and South Caucasus, as well as in Azerbaijan, which is part of the region. These ideas played a pivotal role in safeguarding national self-awareness and preserving cultural values.

In summarizing the findings of this research, it becomes evident that although the Islamic policies pursued by Tsarist Russia in the Caucasus evolved in terms of methods, they fundamentally retained an imperialist and colonialist character.

The following scientific works of the author which reflect the main content of the dissertation were published:

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Address: Mahammad Nakchivani 29, AZ1065

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