

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THE ISSUE OF SOUTH AZERBAIJAN IN THE HISTORY OF PUBLIC OPINION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKIYE (1923-2018)

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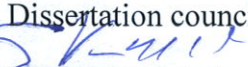
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I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF DISSERTATION

The relevance and the level of development of the research.

On February 10, 1828, the historical lands of Azerbaijan were divided into two parts with signing of the Treaty of Turkmenchay between Russia and Iran in the territory of South Azerbaijan. This division also laid the foundation for future tragedies in Azerbaijan. The division of the Azerbaijani people into two parts who have centuries-old statehood traditions led to the emergence of national problems in both Northern and Southern Azerbaijan. Despite the long years of Russian occupation in the north of Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani people managed to better preserve their national identity and mother tongue. In the south of Azerbaijan, however, the political situation at that time was somewhat different. The Turkic Qajar dynasty was in power in Iran at that time. Therefore, it would be incorrect to speak of any national issues during that period.

In 1925, the last heir of the Turkic Qajar dynasty in Iran, Ahmad Shah, was overthrown and Reza Khan Pahlavi, supported by the British, came to power. The rule of the Pahlavi dynasty began in Iran with Reza Khan's rise to power. During the reign of the Pahlavis, a policy of national oppression was implemented against all Iranian Turks, especially the population of South Azerbaijan. Our compatriots living in South Azerbaijan were deprived of the right to education in their mother tongue, attempts were made to falsify their historical past, and they faced discrimination in almost all areas of society. Despite this, the misguided policies of the Pahlavi dynasty failed and resulted in the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Although the people of South Azerbaijan played a decisive role in the Islamic Revolution, their constitutional rights were not secured. However, the people of South Azerbaijan never remained silent against national oppression and fought for the defense of their rights. Today, the main demands of our compatriots living in South Azerbaijan are the granting of self-determination, the teaching of the mother tongue in schools,

and the conduct of court proceedings in the mother tongue. All these are considered the main issues that have brought the South Azerbaijan question to the forefront in the history of public thought.

The issue of South Azerbaijan occupies an important place in both Azerbaijani historiography and the history of public thought in terms of studying national issues, and it still retains its relevance. The issue of South Azerbaijan has been thoroughly researched in Azerbaijani historiography and significant contributions have been made by researchers such as S.Tagiyeva, E.Rehimli (Bije), S.Bayramzadeh, M.Gasimli, N.Nasibzadeh, J.Hasanli, V.Mustafayev, E.Madatli, A.Tahirzadeh, H.Alibayli, H.Seferi, and others. The books “An Outline of the History of South Azerbaijan (1828-1917)”, “Issues of South Azerbaijan History” and “South Azerbaijan”, prepared collectively by the Department of South Azerbaijan of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS), as well as S. Bayramzadeh’s “Once Again About the Treaty of Turkmenchay”, “Michael Axworthy's Book Nader Shah from the Perspective of Azerbaijani Nationalism”, M.Gasimli’s “The Azerbaijani Issue in International Relations”, N.Nasibzadeh's “The Azerbaijani Issue in Iran (1960s-70s)”, “Divided Azerbaijan, Whole Azerbaijan (Collection of Articles)”, “Our Issues in the North and South”, J.Hasanli's “South Azerbaijan: Between Tehran, Baku, and Moscow (1939-1945)”, “The Place Where the Cold War Began: South Azerbaijan (1945-1946)”, “The Soviet-American-British Confrontation in South Azerbaijan (1941-1946)”, “Azerbaijan in Military, Political, and Diplomatic Relations during World War II (1939-1945)”, V.Mustafayev's “National Consciousness in South Azerbaijan”, E.Madatli's “Historical Issues of Azerbaijan in Iran”, A.Tahirzadeh's “Kasravism: Its Roots, Core, Followers, Revival”, H.Alibayli's “The Genocide of Turkic-Muslim Population in Urmia during the World War I”, H.Safari's “South Azerbaijan: The 1918 Genocide”, etc., are of great importance in the study of the issue of South Azerbaijan. The dissertation incorporates findings from previously conducted research studies.

But in the history of public opinion of Türkiye, in what direction has the issue of South Azerbaijan been involved in research? This is one of the most important issues of interest to the Azerbaijani public. The issues involved in the study of the history of public opinion can be analyzed in scientific, journalistic, political, social directions, etc. In the history of Turkish public opinion, the issue of South Azerbaijan has been more involved to researches in scientific and journalistic directions. However, recent events in the region indicate that the issue of South Azerbaijan has changed from the scientific level to the political level. Thus, the brilliant victory of Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War, the famous poem recited by R.T.Erdogan, the President of Türkiye at the Victory Parade held in Baku on December 10, 2020, as well as the issue of the Zangezur Corridor and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. I.Aliyev's speech at the IX Summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Samarkand on the protection of the rights, security and national identity of our compatriots living outside the member countries of the organization on November 11, 2022¹ seriously worries the Iranian state. Iran's statements on this issue, based on "deep historical relations", reaching an agreement on the hasty opening of the Consulate General of Gafan, Armenia, in October 2022, and the parallel opening of the Consulate General of Armenia in the city of Tabriz², Iran's soft power indicates in relations with Azerbaijan directly and indirectly with South Azerbaijan being connected etc. among other issues, he brings up the issue of South Azerbaijan again. In the chain of all these issues, the position of the Turkish president regarding South Azerbaijan can be considered an indicator that the issue of South Azerbaijan has moved to a different status in Turkish public opinion. Nevertheless, the scientific direction was taken as the basis in the presented dissertation work.

¹ Səmərqənddə Türk Dövlətləri Təşkilatının IX Zirvə Görüşündə İlham Əliyevin nitqi. 11 noyabr 2022. <https://president.az/az/articles/view/57856>

² İran Təbrizdə Ermənistan konsulluğunun açılmasına razılıq verdi. Gündəlik Bakı, 21 oktyabr 2022. <https://gundelik-baku.com/dunya/65972-ran-tebrizde-ermenistan-konsullugunun-achilmasina-raziliq-verdi.html>

The issue of South Azerbaijan came to the fore at the beginning of the 20th century in the history of Turkic public opinion. However, this issue has been studied in Turkic public opinion for many years within the framework of Iranian Turks, and the issue was approached somewhat slightly. Presentation of the Safavid Shah Ismail I as the Shah of Persia in the article titled "Shah Ismaili of the 21st Century and the Turkiye-Iran War" by editor-in-chief Ibrahim Karagül in the December 23, 2015 issue of "Yeni Şafak" newspaper of Türkiye, is one of the clearest examples of this factor. Actually, this issue was met with serious dissatisfaction in the Azerbaijani community, and one of our researchers, Samad Bayramzadeh, gave a real answer in the article titled "An answer to Ibrahim Karagül, editor-in-chief of "Yeni Şafak" newspaper" in the March 10, 2017 issue of "Respublika" newspaper.³

In the history of Turkish public opinion, Azerbaijani emigrants and numerous Turkish researchers have made significant contributions to the study of the issue of South Azerbaijan. In preparing this dissertation, works by these researchers such as M.E.Resultzadeh, M.B.Mammadzadeh, A.Agaoglu, Y.Akchura, Z.Gokalp, M.S.Aran, M.N.Tabrizli, A.Caferoglu, H.Baykara, M.M.Ören, M.Saray, A.Attar, A.Bademci, A.Kafkasyali, R.Albayrak and M.Erendor have been extensively utilized.⁴ The

³ Bayramzadə, S., Rüstəmov, R. Türkiyənin "Yeni Şafak" qəzetinin baş redaktoru İbrahim Qaragülə cavab. "Respublika" qəzeti, No. 53 (5796), 10 mart 2017, s.5

⁴ Resultzade, M.E. İran Türkləri. İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1993; Mehmetzade, M.B. Ermeniler ve İran. İstanbul: Necm-i İstikbal Matbaası, 1927; Ağaoğlu, A. İran ve İnkılabı. Ankara: Zerbamat Basımevi, 1941; Akçura, Y. Türkçülük, türkçülüğün tarihi gelişimi. İstanbul: İlgı Kültür Sanat, 2015; Gokalp, Z. Türkçülüğün Esasları. İstanbul: Kamer Yayınları, 2019; Azer, S. İran türkləri. İstanbul: Cümhuriyyet Matbaası, 1942; Tebrizli, M.N. Bugünkü Azərbaycan Davası esas ve sebepleri. İstanbul: Gün Basımevi, 1946; Caferoğlu, A. Türk Kavimleri. Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü yayınları, 1983; Baykara, H. İran İnkılabı ve Azatlık Hareketleri. İstanbul: Emek Matbaacılık Tesisleri, 1978; Ören, M.M. İran Türkləri Hürriyet Hareketleri. Girne: Mars Matbaası, 1980; Saray, M. Türk-İran İlişkileri. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2019; Attar, A. İnanın Etnik Yapısı. Ankara: Divan yayıncılık, 2006; Bademci, A. İranda Türklərin Bin Yılı. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2018; Kafkasyalı, A. İran Coğrafyasında Türklər. İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz, 2011; Albayrak, R. Türklərin İrani.

scientific research conducted by these scholars has addressed necessary issues such as the Iranian Turks, South Azerbaijan, its geographical location, the ethnic composition of its population, and other similar topics. All of these works serve as fundamental sources for studying the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion.

Scientific works of a number of researchers published in Soviet, Western and Iranian historiography were also involved in the research work. Z.D.Zavriyev, K.P.Matveyev, R.Furon, G.Lenczowski, D.N.Mackenzie, V.Minorsky, B.Shaffer, O.A.Westad, S.E.Wimbush, F.S.Fatemi, A.Mozaffari, F.Safizadeh, R.Raisnia, T.Malikzadeh are among these researchers. The scientific works produced by these mentioned authors play a supportive role in conducting comparative analysis from the perspective of studying the South Azerbaijan issue in the history of Turkish public opinion and have been utilized in the presented dissertation.

There are several significant events that have led to the emergence of a new perspective in the study of the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion, the foremost of which coincides with the proclamation of the Republic in Turkiye. It is known that in the 1920s, genuine national independence in the Turkic world was only evident in Turkiye. Although Turks, especially, Azerbaijani Turks in Iran had a large population, the national oppression policies of the Pahlavi regime suppressed their voices. Turks in the Caucasus, Crimea, the Volga region, Turkestan, and Siberia had formal independence under Bolshevik influence, but in reality, they were controlled by Moscow. This fact indicates that, after 1923, true national independence existed only in Turkiye within the Turkic world. Isolated under harsh conditions, Turkiye at that time focused solely on its own independence. Victorious in the War of Independence, Turkiye managed to preserve its sovereignty through the reforms initiated by Ataturk and established friendly

relations with neighboring countries, especially Iran, under the slogan “Peace at home, peace in the world”. Newly independent after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Turkiye was not in a position to openly support Turkic peoples whose national rights were violated. Nevertheless, the Atatürk government clearly understood the existence of a significant Turkish influence outside of Turkiye. Therefore, the study of Turkic-speaking peoples and their cultures outside of Turkiye was one of the important issues at the center of Turkish public opinion history.

Starting from the 20s of the 20th century, Soviet Russia succeeded in enslaving the Turkic peoples (Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Crimea and Turkestan) and keeping them under the control of a strict communist regime for a long time. During this time, Turkiye became a shelter for the intelligentsia of Turkic communities fleeing the oppressive regime established by Russia immediately after the occupation. The intellectual class that came to Istanbul from various parts of the Turkic world ensured that the ideas of Turkism and Turkic unity gained further strength in Turkiye.⁵ After the occupation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan by Soviet Russia on April 27, 1920, and the overthrow of the Qajar dynasty in Iran leading to the rise of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925, many of our nationalists with a sense of national consciousness sought refuge in brotherly Turkiye. In exile, they tried to bring the issue of North and South Azerbaijan to the forefront in the history of public opinion. The Turkish government's provision of a conducive environment for them actually demonstrated how seriously it regarded the Azerbaijan issue. Nevertheless, there has never been a unanimous view on the South Azerbaijan issue in Turkish public opinion. As mentioned earlier, Turkiye always pursued a cautious policy with neighboring Iran and maintained friendly relations. Therefore, the South Azerbaijan issue or the national movements occurring in South Azerbaijan were not supported at the state level in Turkiye.

In the early 20th century, the founders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic played a significant role in shaping the South

⁵ Saray, M. Türk-İran İlişkileri. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2019, s. 108-109

Azerbaijan issue in the history of Turkish public opinion. After the independent Azerbaijani state was occupied by Soviet Russia on April 27-28, 1920, these state founders, who lived in exile, sought refuge in brotherly Turkiye. Continuing their ideological struggle against the Russian occupation in exile, they also kept the issue of Azerbaijan on the agenda and tried to prove the existence of a large Turkic population in Iran. M.E.Resultzadeh, M.B.Mammadzadeh and A.Agaoglu did significant work in this matter. In the history of Turkish public opinion, even during the Ottoman era, M.E.Resultzadeh was the first to bring the concept of Iranian Turks to the forefront in 1911 with his work "Iranian Turks", examining the South Azerbaijan issue within the framework of Iranian Turks.⁶ Later, many Azerbaijani emigrants and Turkish researchers conducted studies in this field based on M.E.Resultzadeh's writings and brought the South Azerbaijan issue to the attention of the Turkish public.

One of the events that contributed to the emergence of a new perspective in the study of the South Azerbaijan issue in Turkish public opinion was the onset of World War II and the political developments unfolding worldwide. In the 1940s, a new wave of migration from Azerbaijan to Turkiye began, and Azerbaijani refugees reintroduced the issue of North-South Azerbaijan into Turkish public discourse. Among these prominent Azerbaijani refugees were Murtuza Nizameddin Tabrizli, Muhammad Sadiq Aran, Ahmed Jafaroglu, and Huseyn Baykara, who made significant contributions in this direction. It is particularly noteworthy to mention M.N.Tabrizli among them. In 1946, M.N.Tabrizli introduced the term "South Azerbaijani issue" into scientific literature with his work "The Current Azerbaijan Issue: Its Basis and Causes", published in Turkiye.⁷ As we know, in Iranian public opinion, the Treaty of Turkmenchay, which ended the Russo-Iran War, is viewed as the occupation of northern territories by Russia.

⁶ Resultzade, M.E. İran Türkleri. İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1993, s. 8

⁷ Tebrizli, M.N. Bugünkü Azerbaycan Davası esas ve sebepleri. İstanbul: Gün Basımevi, 1946, s. 8-9

However, M.N.Tabrizli opposed this view, interpreting the Treaty of Turkmenchay as the historical division of Azerbaijani territories into two parts. His ideas represented a novelty in the study of the issue of South Azerbaijan in Turkish public opinion. Later, Azerbaijani refugees such as A.Jafaroglu and H.Baykara also used the term “South Azerbaijan” in their research. These distinguished individuals never forgot Azerbaijan and consistently endeavored to keep important Azerbaijani issues at the forefront of Turkish public attention through their scholarly work.

In the late 20th century, global events created a new perspective in Turkish public opinion. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the restoration of national independence for many Turkic peoples opened a new chapter in the of Eastern policy of Turkiye. The re-establishment of state independence for Turkic states in Central Asia, including the Republic of Azerbaijan, marked a significant shift. Turkiye was the first country to officially recognize the independence of Azerbaijan, thus demonstrating its serious commitment to the aspirations of Turkic peoples.

After Azerbaijan declared its independence on October 18, 1991, the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict created a new geopolitical situation in the region, which also reverberated in public opinion in Turkiye regarding South Azerbaijan. Any events occurring in Iran and the issues faced by Turkish-speaking peoples there, especially Azerbaijanis, immediately began to receive attention in the Turkish media. President A.Gul's visit to Tabriz in February 2011, where he was warmly welcomed by Azerbaijanis, became one of the main topics of discussion in Turkiye.⁸ All these developments played a significant role in expanding perceptions in Turkish public opinion regarding the South Azerbaijan issue. The 44-day Patriotic War that began on September 27, 2020, concluded with Azerbaijan's historic victory, culminating in a Victory Parade in Baku on December 10, 2020. Turkish President R.T.Erdogan's historic speech during the parade, emphasizing the whole

⁸ Cumhurbaşkanlığı Güle Tebrizde büyük ilgi. 16 Şubat 2011.

<https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/cumhurbaskani-gule-tebrizde-buyuk- ilgi-17037625>

Azerbaijan issue, marked a first among Turkish state officials. This event also caused serious concern among dominant circles in Iran. Turkiye's increasing political and military influence, its policy of closer ties with the Republic of Azerbaijan, and their implications for South Azerbaijan have contributed to a new perspective in Turkish public opinion regarding the South Azerbaijan issue.

The object and subject of the research. The main object of the research is the issue of “South Azerbaijan”, which is relevant in public opinion today. The subject of the research is the study of the issue of South Azerbaijan on the basis of scientific works, scientific journals, mass media, translations, comments and articles published in the history of public opinion in Turkiye.

The goals and objectives of the research. The main purpose of the research work is “the study of scientific works and articles”, in other words, it is not a historiographical study, but the investigation of the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion on the basis of scientific works and articles. In Turkish public opinion, researchers have never had an unequivocal opinion about the issue of South Azerbaijan, and what happened in Iran, especially in South Azerbaijan, was interpreted differently. Taking into account all this, the following tasks are set before the research work:

- An overview of the history of statehood in Azerbaijan and a study of the general essence of the South Azerbaijan issue;
- Investigation of the historical reasons that brought the South Azerbaijan issue to the agenda in Turkish public opinion;
- Examination of the South Azerbaijan issue based on the scientific research of Azerbaijani emigrants and Turkish researchers who played an important role in formation of the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion;
- Investigation of identity politics in Iran, including Turkish identity and Iranian identity, and the issues of territory and population in South Azerbaijan in Turkish historiography.

The methods of the research. The research was conducted in various research centers in the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkiye

(Tabriz Research Institute, Sahipkiran Strategic Research Center, Anka Institute), as well as in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (DAB) and the General Staff Military History and Strategic Studies Department Archive (ATASE), and also based on personal research in scientific libraries. Considering the relevance and scientific significance of the topic, the following general scientific methods were used during the research:

- Collection and systematization of facts and materials;
- Systematic analysis and interpretation;
- Comparative analysis;
- Comprehensive approach to the problem, the principle of historicity;
- Generalizations to obtain scientific results.

The main provisions for the defence:

- The issue of South Azerbaijan is one of the most significant matters reflected in the history of Turkish public opinion. This issue was carefully monitored even in the last years of the Ottoman state. There are known historical reasons for this.
- In the history of Turkish public opinion, the initial contributions to the formation of the issue of South Azerbaijan belong to Azerbaijani emigrants and other Turkish researchers. Most Azerbaijani emigrants, including the founders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, and Turkish intellectuals with a nationalist mindset made great contributions to the study of the South Azerbaijan issue.
- During the Pahlavi era and after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, identity policies implemented in Iran, their impact on the population of South Azerbaijan, as well as Kasrivism, attempts to falsify the historical heritage and national identity of the Azerbaijani people, and the emergence of unfounded claims, are among the significant issues that have attracted research attention in the history of Turkish public opinion.
- The published articles related to South Azerbaijani territory and Turkic peoples living in Iran, including the population

of South Azerbaijan, and the approaches of Turkish intellectuals constitute one of the most important issues that attract attention for us.

- The restoration of state independence in Northern Azerbaijan strengthened national identity among South Azerbaijanis, and likewise, the 44-days Patriotic War launched by the victorious Azerbaijani army on September 27, 2020, to liberate Karabakh from Armenian occupation further strengthened national-cultural unity among North-South Azerbaijanis. The participation of the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in the Victory Parade held in Baku on December 10, 2020, and his historic speech referring to the integrity of Azerbaijan, underscored this issue in an amplified manner. The sharp increase in Türkiye's political and military power, the policy of approaching closer to the Republic of Azerbaijan towards the establishment of the Turkic Union, and the reflection of this process on South Azerbaijan are closely monitored by neighboring countries. However, political events unfolding in the Middle East increase the importance of the South Azerbaijan issue for Türkiye compared to other countries.

The scientific novelty of the research. A large number of books and articles related to the issue of South Azerbaijan have been published in the public opinion of Azerbaijan. However, it is not possible to see the unanimous opinion of the researchers regarding the issue involved in the research in the history of public opinion of Türkiye, and even in some cases it can be seen that there are biased opinions regarding the issue of South Azerbaijan. The following results reached during the research can be considered a novelty for Azerbaijani historiography:

- The issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion has not been researched in the current context, neither in Azerbaijani nor in Turkish historiography until now. Studying the issue of South Azerbaijan from this aspect is a scientific novelty;

- The historical reasons that brought the issue of South Azerbaijan to the forefront in Turkish public opinion have been investigated;
- The role of Azerbaijani immigrants and Turkish researchers in the emergence of the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion has been studied;
- In Turkish historiography, the issue of South Azerbaijan has been prioritized within the framework of studying Turks living outside Türkiye and their historical problems;
- Until recently, the issue of South Azerbaijan has not been reflected in the activity programs of Türkiye's official state institutions and political parties;
- After Azerbaijan's victory in the Second Karabakh War, Türkiye officially highlighted the issue of South Azerbaijan for the first time during the Victory Parade. This suggests that until recently, Türkiye had evaluated the issue of South Azerbaijan within the framework of its relations with Iran. Currently, there has been a qualitative shift in this approach, and evaluating the issue within the framework of relations with Azerbaijan is considered appropriate.

All these new developments confirm that we are justified in advancing the arguments we put forward in our research on the subject.

Theoretical and practical importance of the research. This dissertation may be used practically as a resource in sections discussing South Azerbaijan during the teaching of Azerbaijani history. Additionally, it is considered relevant for the preparation of lectures, textbooks, and teaching materials on the history of South Azerbaijan.

Approbation of the research. The main points covering the content of the dissertation have been reflected in the author's 11 published articles in scientific journals in Azerbaijan and Türkiye (including four in foreign countries), as well as in 5 presentations at international scientific conferences (3 full papers and 2 abstracts).

The name of the organization where the dissertation work was carried out. The research has been carried out at the

Department of South Azerbaijan of the Institute of Oriental Studies named after Z.M.Bunyadov of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

The total volume of the dissertation. The dissertation's total volume is 217898 characters (excluding the bibliography). This includes 21777 characters in the “Introduction” section, 55788 characters in Chapter I, 81527 characters in Chapter II, 46106 characters in Chapter III, and 10384 characters in the “Conclusion” section.

II. MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The relevance and the level of studying of the subject, the methodological basis of the dissertation, scientific novelty, the main provisions of the defense, and the theoretical and practical significance of the research are defined in the **introduction**.

Chapter I of the dissertation entitled “**The general essence of the issue of South Azerbaijan**”, consists of two paragraphs. In this chapter, as it is known from the name, the historical reasons that created the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of public opinion have been clarified.

In the first paragraph entitled “**Overview of the history of Azerbaijani statehood**”, the different versions of the historical etymology of the name Azerbaijan, the history of Azerbaijan's statehood were interpreted in a general way, and the attitude of Turkish public opinion to the issue was reflected.

The involvement of Arabic (Ibn Hovqal, Istakhri, Tabari) and Persian (H. Rumlu and Abu Bakr al-Qutbi al-Ahari) sources in Turkish historiography, where important information about the history of Azerbaijani statehood was recorded in the period after the Arab invasion, as well as translation of the prominent historian of Azerbaijan Z.Bunyadov's scientific works published in this field into the Turkish language played an important role in the formation of perceptions about this in Turkish public opinion.

The Safavid period of the centuries-long history of Azerbaijani statehood may be considered a little or poorly studied period in

Turkish historiography. There are well-known reasons for this. At the beginning of the 16th century, territorial claims led to prolonged wars between two neighboring Turkic dynasties, the Safavids and the Ottomans. These wars somewhat slowed down the Ottoman advance into Europe. At the same time, in order to fight against the Ottoman occupation, the Safavids involved both Persian nobles to the alliance and used the support of Europe. All this led to the emergence of negative thinking against the Safavids in the Ottoman society. Inspired by this, a number of modern Turkish historians still try to present the Safavid legacy as the legacy of the Iranian state. In the Turkish public opinion, the presentation of the Safavid state as an Iranian state, as well as Shah Ismail I as a Persian king, is one of the regrettable points, and it gives reason to say that this field is poorly studied.

The leading role played by M.F.Akhundzade in the cultural life of Azerbaijan and his ideological influence on the Turkic world, as well as on South Azerbaijan, the period of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, the falsification of the historical past of the Azerbaijani Turks, and the Peshevari movement are among the important issues that have been highlighted in Turkish public opinion. One of the Turkish researchers, Sonay Unal's research dedicated to the Peshevari movement called "Recent Iran History: National Government of Azerbaijan, 1945-1946" is particularly noteworthy.

The second paragraph is entitled "**Historical reasons that created the issue of South Azerbaijan**". In this paragraph, the general nature of the issue of South Azerbaijan in the public opinion, as well as the centuries-old rule of the Turks in Iran and the leading role played by the Azerbaijanis, were particularly emphasized, and at the same time, the struggle for the national rights of the people of South Azerbaijan after the Pahlavis came to power was widely explained.

The spiritual unity of the peoples of Azerbaijan and Iran, united under one flag during the reign of the Safavids, was broken when the Pahlavis came to power. At such a time, Reza Khan Pahlavi, an ordinary member of the Russian Cossack regiment, was able to use

the situation to his advantage. Supported by the imperialist forces, Reza Khan was declared the Shah of Iran in 1925.⁹ Thus, the millennial Turkic rule in Iran, which began with the Ghaznavids at the end of the 10th century, officially ended. Reza Khan wanted to make his rule long-lasting, and he saw the Turks as a big obstacle on this way. Thereby, he began to implement the policy of Pan-Iranism in the 1930s. All the Iranian Turks, especially the population of South Azerbaijan, suffered the greatest damage. However, during the period of Turkic rule in Iran, Azerbaijan sacrificed itself for the common interests of Iran. Instead, the Pahlavis did nothing but cause material and moral damage to the Turks of South Azerbaijan.

The Pahlavi dynasty created a deep moral gap between the Turks and the Persians and completely Persianized the Iranian identity with this policy of discrimination against the Turks. Under the influence of Shahnameh and at the instigation of Armenians, Reza Shah, who increased Turkic enmity, implemented this policy against the local population in South Azerbaijan at the same time in all spheres of society. The heritage of statehood that existed during the millennial rule of the Turks in Iran was appropriated and presented as a product of Persian culture, the historical past of the Azerbaijani Turks was falsified and unjustified theories were put forward. All these are the main historical reasons that created the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of public opinion.

Chapter II entitled “**Formation of the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion**” consists of three paragraphs. In this chapter, the formation of the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion, as well as the scientific researches of Azerbaijani emigrants and Turkish researchers who worked in this field have been highlighted.

The first paragraph is entitled “**Reasons that brought up the issue of South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public**

⁹ Baykara, H. İran İnkılabı ve Azatlık Hareketleri. İstanbul: Emek Matbaacılık Tesisleri, 1978, s. 205

opinion”. Here, the historical reasons that caused the issue of South Azerbaijan to come up in the Turkish public opinion are reflected.

The issue of South Azerbaijan was in the interest of the Ottoman state before the Republic of Turkiye was declared. The Ottoman dynasty, which had conquered a large part of Europe until the gates of Vienna, later lost some of its lands. These losses forced him to take security measures in neighboring countries. The Ottoman state lost large territories and manpower, especially in the wars it waged with Russia. This factor led to take more serious steps against Russia. Uniting the Azerbaijani Turks in the Caucasus and Iran against Russia in order to prevent Russia from advancing southward was an issue on the agenda from the point of view of the security of the Ottoman state. In this case, the services of the Teshkilati Mahsusa are appreciated. In 1911, due to the lack of sufficient number of soldiers in the Tripoli and Balkan wars, the Teshkilati Mahsusa, formed from volunteer units, acted as a military and political organization. The Teshkilati Mahsusa made important contributions to the strengthening of security measures in the Ottoman state, as well as the unification of Azerbaijani Turks against Tsarist Russia, and the formation of initial ideas about South Azerbaijan in pre-republican Turkish society.

In general, the reasons that brought up the issue of north-south Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion can be grouped as follows:

- The occupation of Azerbaijani lands on the border with Turkiye by Russia and the issue of security on the eastern borders of Turkiye;
- At the instigation of Russia, the Armenians in the Eastern Anatolia region of Turkiye will carry out a policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijani Turks, and the possibility of the same threat occurring in the eastern lands of Turkiye;
- Uniting Azerbaijani Turks in a united front against the threat of Russia in order to create support for Turkiye in the Caucasus and Iran.

On the eve of the start of the First World War, the political situation on the Caucasus front was quite confused. In this regard,

the main points related to Azerbaijan are related to the activities of the organization in Iran. The fact that the Ottomans were so interested in the Iranian front and that they paid attention to the issue of South Azerbaijan was of strategic importance for the Ottomans. Thus, the fact that the Ottoman military command sent a large number of its armies to Iran, was interested in Iran's internal security, even entered into conflict with its ally Germany, and the events on the Mosul front confirm this once again. In March 1917, Kaymakam Omar Fevzi Bey and Nizamussaltana who served the Ottomans came to Kirkuk with deputies and emigrants. Important assignments given by the Ottomans were discussed here, including activities aimed at Iranians taking advantage of the revolution that took place in Russia. At that time, Kirkuk was under the control of the Ottoman state. While visiting the Sultani school in Kirkuk, Nizammusultana came across an interesting scene. The student and teacher of the school who welcomed the guests surprised everyone with what they said. The student of the school looked at the map of Iran and said: *“There are so many Turks in Iran. The bravest Iranians are Turks. Therefore, the kingdom of Iran belongs to the Turks.”* Then the teacher added: *“Our goal is to climb a hill. This hill is Turan. The road passes through Iran. But Azerbaijan on our way is Turkic. One day will come when we will leave Istanbul and go to Turan through Azerbaijan.”*¹⁰ Governor Omar Fevzi Bey talks about the scene he encountered while visiting the mayor. The head of the municipality says that this is the work of the propaganda of Dr. Fuad, who came to Kirkuk earlier.¹¹ All this was the result of the propaganda carried out by the Ottomans and shows how the territory of South Azerbaijan was strategically important in the war against the allies on the Iranian front.

In the second paragraph entitled **“The issue of South Azerbaijan in the scientific research of Azerbaijani emigrants”**, the issue of South Azerbaijan in the Turkish public opinion is

¹⁰ Tetik, A. Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa (Umur-ı Şarkıyye Dairesi) Tarihi 1917. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Cilt II, 2018, s. 237

¹¹ Birinci, A. Dr. Fuat Sabit – Meçhul Bir Adamın Serencamı Türk Yurdu, sayı 139-141, Mart-Mayıs 1999, s. 45-58

included in the scientific activity of Azerbaijani emigrants M.A.Resultzadeh, M.B.Mammadzadeh, A.Agaoglu, M.S.Aran, M.N.Tabrizli, A.Jafaroglu and H.Baykaran. Immigrants who took refuge in Turkiye played an important role in the creation of initial ideas about South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion. However, an important part of Azerbaijani emigrants, especially the founders of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, studied the issue of South Azerbaijan within the framework of studying Iranian Turks. However, in the 40s of the last century, M.N.Tabrizli, one of the Azerbaijani emigrants, broke this tradition and indicated a new perspective in the study of the issue of South Azerbaijan. At the same time, Azerbaijani emigrants A.Jafaroglu and H.Baykara also had a great share in the formation of the issue of South Azerbaijan in Turkish public opinion.

In the history of Turkish public opinion, nationalists who were in the forefront of the Turkic movement played an important role in the formation of the South Azerbaijan issue in the context of Iranian Turks and Turkism. The third paragraph entitled **“The issue of South Azerbaijan in the scientific research of Turkish researchers”** is dedicated to this issue. In the history of Turkish public opinion, researchers who have a nationalist mindset have studied the issue of South Azerbaijan within the framework of Turkism and the Turkic Union. Among those researchers, we can mention Y.Akchura, Z.Göyalp and H.N.Atsız. The researchers, while talking about the Turkic peoples, brought to people's attention that there is a large Turkic presence outside of Turkiye and brought the issues related to the Turks of South Azerbaijan to the agenda in the history of public opinion.

Chapter III of the dissertation, which consists of three paragraphs, is entitled **“The issue of identity, territory and population in South Azerbaijan in the history of Turkish public opinion”**. In this chapter, the impact of the different identity policy implemented in Iran on the population of South Azerbaijan, as well as Turkic and Iranian identity, territory and population issues in South Azerbaijan are highlighted.

The first paragraph is entitled “**Impact of identity politics in Iran on the population of South Azerbaijan**”. This paragraph mainly deals with the historical multi-ethnic structure of Iran, as well as the identity politics implemented of the country and its impact on the population of South Azerbaijan.

Iran is a multi-ethnic society, representing different ethnic groups. Currently, representatives of three major cultures such as Turkic, Persian and Arab live in this geography, and each of them has its own way of life, language and cultural values. However, the geographical conditions and commercial relations of these people, representing all three cultures, pushed them to coexist historically. Therefore, it is not correct to talk only about the Persian identity in Iran. The political history of the country also indicates that the power of the Persians in Iran lasted less. The power of the Persians in Iran was limited to the Achaemenids before the Christian era and to the Sassanids after the Christian era. As we know from history, the Sassanid state, which was established in the 3rd century and turned into a great empire, was occupied by the Arab Caliphate in the 7th century. From the conquest of Iran by the Oghuz-Seljuk Turks in the 10th century until 1925, there was no Persian power in Iran. After the weakening of the caliphate, that is, starting from the end of the 10th century, Iran was ruled by different Turkic dynasties from Central Asia or Turkestan geography for a thousand years.¹² With the advent of Islam, a common Islamic culture was formed for all peoples living in this geography. During the hundreds of years that the Turkic dynasties ruled Iran, necessary measures were taken for the scientific and cultural development of all peoples in this geography, and their moral unity and equality was ensured. For this reason, there was no national enmity or discrimination between Turks and Persians in Iran in the Middle Ages.

The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were marked by the emergence of new theories in the East. The formation of the Iranian identity also coincided with such a time. It should be noted that the last hundred years of Iran's history

¹² Ağaoğlu, A. İran ve İnkılabı. Ankara: Zerbamat Basımevi, 1941, s. 11

is observed with two different political regimes that implemented different identity politics on the multi-ethnic population.¹³ The first of these was the Pan-Iranian policy based on the supremacy of the Aryan race, implemented by the Pahlavi dynasty of Aryan origin, which came to the throne of Iran in 1925 after the overthrow of the millennial Turkic rule in Iran. The second is the Islamic identity policy implemented by the Islamic regime with the overthrow of the Pahlavis and which continues today. The issue of Iranian identity is one of the important issues involved in the Turkish public opinion. Arif Keskin, one of the Turkish researchers, identified three main waves of Persian nationalism from the 19th century to the present, such as “modern Persian nationalism”, “traditional Persian nationalism” and “Iranianism” in the process of the formation of Iranian identity.¹⁴

In the second paragraph entitled “**The historical territory of South Azerbaijan and its administrative division**”, the historical territory of South Azerbaijan was discussed and the fact of its administrative division was revealed starting from the Pahlavi period.

The historical territory of Azerbaijan was intact until the signing of the Turkmenchay Peace Treaty between Russia and Iran on February 10, 1828. During the Qajar dynasty, Iran gradually weakened, and its defeat by Tsarist Russia led to the official division of Azerbaijan into two parts. The concepts of North and South Azerbaijan appeared at that time. With the division of Azerbaijan into two parts, the Araz River became the border, and “South Azerbaijan” encompassed a vast area stretching from the Araz River to the north, the Ottoman border to the west, the Caspian Sea to the east, and the cities of Hamadan and Qum in the south.

¹³ Mozaffari, A. Forming National Identity in Iran: The Idea of Homeland Derived from Ancient Persian and Islamic Imaginations of Place. London and New York: IB Tauris, 2014, p. 181

¹⁴ Keskin, A. İranda Fars Milletçiliğinin Üç Dalgası: İranlılığa Giden Yol. Ankara: Güney Azerbaycan Sosyal, Kültürel ve Siyasal Araştırmaları Dosyası, S 5, 2005. s. 21

Despite this division, both Azerbaijanis have the same language and culture. This remains unchanged today.

It should be noted with regret that the federal structure of the country was completely changed with the overthrow of the Qajars and the Pahlavis taking the throne of Iran in 1925. On the instructions of Reza Shah, the Iranian Milli Majlis adopted a law on the new administrative-territorial division of the country in 1937, and thus the territory of South Azerbaijan was significantly reduced. Zanjan, Qazvin, and Hamedan, which were historically located within the borders of Azerbaijan, were separated from Azerbaijan and became independent oostans, Astara was given to Gilan, and Sava was given to Tehran. All this was done on purpose as part of the anti-Turk policy implemented by the Pahlavis. This issue has also been reflected in the Turkish public opinion and researchers have contributed to the study of the issue.

The last paragraph of **Chapter III** is entitled “**The total number of Turkic peoples and Azerbaijanis living in Iran**” and based on the researches carried out in the Turkish public opinion, provisions related to the number of Turkic peoples living in Iran, including Azerbaijanis, are reflected here.

In the scientific literature, there is no unequivocal opinion about the exact number of Turkic peoples living in Iran. Iranian ruling circles, in most cases, try to understate the number of Turks. On the contrary, national activists in South Azerbaijan claim that this number is twice as much as they indicated. In the history of Turkish public opinion, the analysis of the published articles about the general demographic situation of the population living in Iran and the number of Turkic peoples is of great importance in the study of this controversial issue.

The numbers shown in the Turkish public opinion are different from each other. In some sources, this indicator is 3/4 of the total population of Iran, in some it is 40-45%, and in some it is higher. But in general, we can say that the number of Turkic peoples living in Iran is at worst 40%, and 3/4 of this percentage is made up of Azerbaijanis.

The “**Conclusion**” of the dissertation concludes the research work and summarizes the obtained scientific innovations:

- After the overthrow of the Turkic Qajar dynasty in Iran in 1925, with the coming to power of the anti-Turk Pahlavi dynasty, the history of the Azerbaijani people began to be deliberately falsified. This policy was ruthlessly implemented especially in the territory of South Azerbaijan, our compatriots living in the south were discriminated in all spheres of society and were deprived of the right to education in their native language. There were even attempts to present Azerbaijan as a part of Iran. All this resulted in the emergence of the South Azerbaijan issue in the history of public opinion.

- The articles published in different years in the history of Turkish public opinion regarding South Azerbaijan show once again that the approaches to the issue have not been unambiguous. Certainly, the writings of the founders of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkish nationalists and other Azerbaijani emigrants play the role of a source in the history of Turkish public opinion on the issue. However, over the years, the writings on the issue of South Azerbaijan have expanded, and in the scientific activities of Turkish researchers, South Azerbaijan, its territory, historical borders, population, culture and other such important issues have been involved in the research.

- As the restoration of the state independence of Northern Azerbaijan strengthened the national self-awareness among the Southern Azerbaijanis, the 44-day homeland war launched by the victorious Azerbaijani army against the Armenian occupation on September 27, 2020 to liberate Karabakh from occupation further strengthened the national-cultural unity between the northern and southern Azerbaijanis. The participation of the President of the Republic of Turkiye Mr. R.T. Erdogan in the victory parade held in Baku on December 10, 2020 and his speech pointing to the entire issue of Azerbaijan once again showed itself prominently in this matter. The sharp increase in the political and military power of the Republic of Turkiye, its policy of rapprochement with the Republic of Azerbaijan in the direction of the establishment of the Turkish

Union, and the reflection of this process on South Azerbaijan are also closely watched by the neighboring countries. However, the political events taking place in the Middle East increase the importance of the South Azerbaijan issue for Türkiye compared to other countries.

The main content of the dissertation is set out by the author in the following works:

1. Hüseyn Baykaranın araşdırmasında İran türkləri və Güney Azərbaycan məsələsi // “Bəxtiyar Vahabzadənin anadan olmasının 95 illik yubileyinə həsr olunmuş” VI Beynəlxalq elmi konfrans materialları. Kars, Türkiye, 25-26 Avust 2020, s. 151-154.
2. Türkiye Kamuoyu tarixində Güney Azərbaycan meselesinin oluşması // IV Beynəlxalq Mersin Simpoziumu materialları. Mersin, Türkiye, 22-24 Oktyabr 2020, s. 64-65.
3. Qacarların devrilməsindən sonra Güney Azərbaycanın inzibati cəhətdən parçalanması // Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası, Akad. Z.M.Bünyadov adına Şərqsünəşliq İnstitutu, “Şərq xalqlarının I qurultayı – Bakı, 1920. Şərq dünyası 100 il əvvəl və bu gün” mövzusunda Beynəlxalq elmi konfransı tezisləri. Bakı: 2020, s. 36-37.
4. Türkiyə millətçilərinin araşdırmalarında İran türkləri və Güney Azərbaycan məsələsi // “Geostrategiya” jurnalı. Bakı: 2020, № 5-6 (59/60), s. 54-58.
5. Türkiyə ictimai fikrində İranda türk kimliyi və iranlı kimliyi məsələsi // “Geostrategiya” jurnalı. Bakı: 2021, № 01 (61), s. 50-55.
6. Azərbaycan mühacirlərinin araşdırmalarında İran türkləri və Güney Azərbaycan məsələsi // Avrasiya Universiteti. “Sivilizasiya” jurnalı. Bakı: 2021, Cild 10, № 01 (46), s. 130-136.
7. The Issue of Turkic Population in Iran in the Turkish Public Opinion // Journal of “History and Future”. 7/1, Mart 2021, s. 499-509.

8. Azərbaycan əhalisinin soykökü məsələsinə ümumi baxış // IV Beynəlxalq Novruz Konfransı. Qarabağ, Azərbaycan, 18-21 Mart 2021, s. 152-157.
9. Historical Approaches to the Issue of Etymology, Statehood and Identity of Azerbaijan // “VAKANÜVİS – International Journal of Historical Researches”. 6/1, (2021), s. 240-259.
10. Güney Azərbaycanda türk-müsəlman əhaliyə qarşı erməni soyqırımını və Osmanlının yardımı // “Tarix və onun problemləri” jurnalı. Bakı: 2021, № 02, s. 54-57.
11. Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti qurucularının araşdırmalarında İran türkləri və Güney Azərbaycan məsələsi // “Gənc Tədqiqatçı” jurnalı. Bakı: 2021, VII Cild, № 01, s. 201-207.
12. Osmanlı Türkiyəsində Güney Azərbaycan məsələsi və Təşkilat-i Mahsusanın rolu // “Dövlət idarəçiliyi: nəzəriyyə və təcrübə” jurnalı. Bakı: 2021, VII Cild, № 1 (73), s. 307-316
13. Azərbaycan və Türkiyə Türkləri Arasındakı Dil Bağlılığının Tarixi Bakımdan İncelenməsi // “Bilge Tonyukuk” anısına IX Beynəlxalq Türk Dili Qurultayı. Ankara, Türkiyə, 26-30 Sentyabr 2021, s. 197.
14. Türkiyə Kamuoyu Tarixində Güney Azərbaycan Meselesinin Oluşması // “Bengi: Yörük-Türkmen Araşdırmaları Dergisi”. 1/1, (2021), s. 65-73.
15. Beyond the Millennial Turkic Power in Iran: A Historiographical Review of Azerbaijanis’ Self-defense // Journal of History, Culture and Art Research (Tarih, Kültür ve Sanat Araşdırmaları Dergisi), 11/2 (2022), s. 1-16
16. The Issue of Azerbaijan in Ottoman Society and the role of the Special Organization Teshkilat-i Mahsusa // “Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences” (Xəzər Humanitar və Sosial Elmlər Jurnalı). 25/4, (2022) s. 76-87.

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