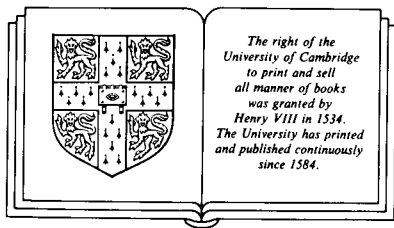


RUSSIAN AZERBAIJAN,
1905–1920

THE SHAPING
OF NATIONAL IDENTITY
IN A MUSLIM COMMUNITY

TADEUSZ SWIETOCHOWSKI



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE
LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE
MELBOURNE SYDNEY

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 1985

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1985

First paperback edition 2002

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Swietochowski, Tadeusz, 1934–
Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920.
(Soviet and East European studies)

Bibliography: p.

1. Azerbaijan S.S.R. – History.

I. Title. II. Series.

DK511.A975S94 1985 947'.91 84-12719

ISBN 0 521 26310 7 hardback

ISBN 0 521 52245 5 paperback

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Maps</i>	xi
1 A century of Russian rule	1
2 The 1905 Revolution and Azerbaijani political awakening	37
3 The era of war and revolutions: ideologies, programs, and political orientations	64
4 Transition to nationhood: in quest of autonomy	84
5 Transition to nationhood: Transcaucasian federalism	105
6 The Azerbaijani nation-state	129
7 The coming of Soviet power	165
Conclusion	191
<i>Abbreviations</i>	195
<i>Notes</i>	197
<i>Bibliography</i>	226
<i>Index</i>	247

1

A century of Russian rule

Azerbaijan is the name for the stretch of land contained by the southern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains on the north, the Caspian Sea on the east, and the Armenian highlands in the west: In the south its natural boundary is less distinct, and Azerbaijan merges here with the Iranian plateau.

From the time of ancient Media and Achaemenid Persia, Azerbaijan was drawn into the orbit of Iran. One theory for the etymology of its name gives a derivation from Atropatenes, a Persian satrap in the time of Alexander the Great. Another, more popular explanation traces its origin to the Persian word *azer*, "fire" – hence *Azerbaijan* "Land of Fire," because of its numerous Zoroastrian temples, their fires fed by the plentiful local sources of oil. Azerbaijan retained its Iranian character even after the conquest of the region by Arabs and conversion to Islam in the mid-seventh century; only some four centuries later, with the influx of the Oghuz Turks under the Seljuk dynasty, did the country acquire a large proportion of Turkic inhabitants. The original population became fused with the immigrant nomads, and the Persian language was gradually supplanted by a Turkic dialect that evolved into a distinct "Azeri" or Azerbaijani language.

After the thirteenth-century Mongol invasions, Azerbaijan became part of the empire of Hulagu and his successors, the Il-Khans, then passed under the rule of the Turkmens who founded the rival Qara Qoyunlu and Aq-Qoyunlu states. Concurrently, in the fifteenth century, there flourished a native Azerbaijani state of Shirvan shahs. In the early years of the next century Azerbaijan became the power base of another native family, the Safavids, who through a vigorous policy of centralization built a new Persian kingdom on the foundation of the Shi'a branch

of Islam. The Safavid dynasty lasted for more than two hundred years; its rule ended in 1722, having been undermined by internal strife and the Afghan invasion.¹

Azerbaijani khanates and the conquest by Russia

In 1747 Nadir Shah, the strong ruler who had established his hold over Persia eleven years earlier, was assassinated in a palace coup, and his empire fell into chaos and anarchy. These circumstances effectively terminated the suzerainty of Persia over Azerbaijan, where local centers of power emerged in the form of indigenous principalities, independent or virtually so, inasmuch as some maintained tenuous links to Persia's weak Zand dynasty.

Thus began a half-century-long period of Azerbaijani independence, albeit in a condition of deep political fragmentation and internal warfare. Most of the principalities were organized as khanates, small replicas of the Persian monarchy, including Karabagh, Sheki, Ganja, Baku, Derbent, Kuba, Nakhichevan Talysh, and Erivan in northern Azerbaijan and Tabriz, Urmi, Ardabil, Khoi, Maku, Maragin, and Karadagh in its southern part.² Many of the khanates were subdivided into *mahals* (regions), territorial units inhabited by members of the same tribe, reflecting the fact that the residue of tribalism was still strong.³ An outgrowth of the medieval institution of *iqta* (state land grant) was the state ownership of most of the land. Plots were distributed as nonhereditary grants to *bäys* and *aghas* for services rendered to the ruler, the khan.⁴

Besides the khanates there existed even smaller principalities, sultanates, which usually ended up as dependencies of the former. Some of the khanates expanded at the cost of their neighbors or reduced the latter to the status of clients. In the northern part of Azerbaijan the khanates of Sheki, Karabagh, and Kuba became the most powerful.

Azerbaijan lacked a tradition of unity within an autochthonous, independent statehood, and in the second half of the eighteenth century such statehood could have arisen only through

the vigorous expansion of one of the khanates. Soviet Azerbaijani historiography devotes special attention to the wars of the ambitious Fath ^ᶜAli Khan of Kuba, perceiving in them an attempt at the unification of the country. Fath ^ᶜAli indeed extended his control over large areas of Azerbaijan, but his aspirations were even higher: He was intent on repeating the feat of the Safavids, who had used Azerbaijan as a base for imposing their power over all Persia.⁵ In any case, Fath ^ᶜAli's schemes came to grief in 1784 when the Russian armies operating against Turkey from the Caucasus Mountains posed a threat to his rear guard. Russia had grown concerned that the expansion of Kuba would create an undesirably strong state in what it saw as its future sphere of influence. Fath ^ᶜAli found himself forced to relinquish most of his conquests.

The pattern of inconclusive wars continued, the khans making and breaking alliances among themselves as well as with the neighboring powers of Russia and Turkey. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, as the Ottoman state sunk deeper into decline, the shadow that Russia cast over Transcaucasia lengthened ominously.

Russian interest in the region was of long standing and had diverse motivation: the lure of the lucrative trade with Persia and Asiatic Turkey; the desire for local raw materials such as silk, cotton, and copper; the drive for the colonization of sparsely populated lands. But the overriding attraction was the strategic value of the Transcaucasian isthmus.⁶ Russia's military involvement here reached back to the time of Peter the Great, whose Persian Expedition of 1722 was aimed at extending the Russian presence in the direction of the Indian Ocean. The Russians had seized a strip of the Caspian coast down to Lenkoran, but their first venture into Azerbaijan ended in 1735 when Nadir Shah rolled back the frontier to the Terek River.⁷

Russia's southward advance resumed, on a more extensive scale, under Catherine II (1763–1796). After the seizure of the Crimea and the Kuban River territory in 1785, most of the Caucasus range fell under Russian administration. By that time Russia had already begun to plan an active role in the politics of the Transcaucasian states. Insecure on his throne, the Georgian king of Kakheti-Kartli, Irakli II, was the first to sign a treaty obtaining Russian protection in 1783.⁸ His example was followed by Sol-

omon I of Imeretia and Murtazali, the Daghestani ruler of Tarku. In due course hegemony turned into outright conquest, the latter stage beginning in 1801 when Tsar Alexander I (1800–1825) proclaimed the creation of the Georgian *guberniia* (province) consisting of the lands of the former Kakheti-Kartli kings. The new province also included the sultanates of Kazakh and Shamshadil, the first of the Azerbaijani territories to be incorporated by Russia.⁹

To secure a strategic hold over Georgia the Russian commander of the Caucasus, General P. Tsitsianov, deemed it necessary to extend his control over the Azerbaijani khanates in the direction of the Caspian coast in the east and the Araxes river in the south. Primarily military considerations drove him to carve out for Russia the northern part of Azerbaijan. Technically, Tsitsianov's goal was not incorporation, but rather the imposition of treaties whereby the khanates would accept submission to Russia, a form of vassalage. In some cases, namely Karabagh, Shirvan, and Sheki, this acceptance was affected peacefully. The terms of the resultant treaties guaranteed the khans unrestricted authority in the internal affairs of their states and the right of succession. In return, they agreed to admit Russian garrisons, to pay tribute – in cash or in kind, which included silk, – and, most importantly, to accede to the Pax Russica by surrendering their rights to wage war and conduct foreign policy.¹⁰ Toward those khans who were reluctant to follow suit Tsitsianov applied persuasion by force of arms. In 1804 his troops laid siege to Ganja, where in a memorable show of resistance the local khan, Jävad, was killed in battle. Jävad's realm was incorporated forthwith into Russia as an *uezd* (county) of Elizavetpol, the new Russian name given to Ganja in honor of the Tsar's wife.^{11*} Another act of defiance to Tsitsianov's tactics of intimidation was the prolonged fighting in the mountainous area of Jar-Belokan. Tsitsianov, murdered in 1806 upon his arrival in Baku to demand the submission of the khanate, has passed into history as the chief architect of the Russian conquest of Transcaucasia.¹²

An additional complication Russia faced in carrying out this

*The name *Elizavetpol* never found acceptance among the Azerbaijanis, who continued to call the town *Ganja*. We will generally use the name *Ganja* here except when context requires the use of the official Russian name.

conquest was the challenge of Persia. The new dynasty founded by the Qajar tribe, which had put an end to the long internal strife in the kingdom, was now poised to contest Russia for sovereignty of what had once been Persia's northern marches. In 1804 an army under Abbas Mirza, the son of the king, Fath ^cAli Shah, with reinforcements from the khans of Erivan and Nakhichevan, moved against the Russians.¹³ Defeated promptly at Etchmiadzin, the Persians withdrew, then reappeared in the spring of 1806, arousing an insurrectionary fever in Karabagh and Sheki, both of which had recently accepted Russian overlordship. The war continued for several years, although at a sluggish pace with the Russians suppressing intermittent uprisings as well as subjugating the khanates of Baku and Kuba (in 1806) and Talysh (in 1809). Only in 1812, after ending the concurrent war with Turkey, did they pursue vigorous fighting against Persia. The brief and successful Russian campaign of 1812 was concluded with the Treaty of Gulistan, signed the same year. The treaty's provisions concerning Azerbaijan ratified the status quo resulting from the Russian military presence, and Fath ^cAli Shah renounced his sovereignty over the khanates of Karabagh, Baku, Sheki, Shirvan, Kuba, and Derbent. The shah's claims to the northern Azerbaijani khanates were dismissed on the ground that they had been independent long before their occupation by Russia. This amounted to the first and only recognition of Azerbaijani independence, albeit in the past tense.¹⁴

The Gulistan settlement proved to be merely the end of the first round in the duel of the two powers for the prize of Transcaucasia. Thirteen years later, the conflict flared up anew when Fath ^cAli Shah sent his army across the Gulistan Treaty border. In May 1826 the Persians occupied Lenkoran, Shemakha, and Nukha and besieged the Russians in Shusha. Abbas Mirza, once again at the head of the troops, entered northern Azerbaijan expecting wide support from a population disgruntled from a quarter-century of Russian domination. In essence, the Qajars hoped to appear champions of the rights of Azerbaijani khans whom the Russians had driven into exile. They were also counting on the sympathies of those rulers who only nominally retained a tenuous power and felt humiliated as vassals of the tsar.

Indeed, the khan of Talysh immediately started a rebellion against the Russian garrison, and in Karabagh, Shirvan, and

Sheki the population enthusiastically welcomed the returning khans or their descendants.¹⁵ Nonetheless, in the Azerbaijan of that period it was not unusual to find natives fighting on the side of the Russians, driven by the desire for booty or following the mercenary tradition of a people who had for centuries supplied soldiers for the shah's elite forces. There also surfaced a growing current of pro-Russian orientation among some *bäys* and *aghas* who were faced with a choice between subjection to Russia and the ruthlessness of the Qajars.¹⁶

The Russians, chronically short of manpower in Transcaucasia, were thus able to draw upon local resources to fill the ranks of their militias and auxiliaries. Even though Georgians and Armenians were considered more reliable than Muslims, still in the first Persian war a voluntary "Tatar" cavalry detachment was formed for the defense of Kazakh.* The volunteers remained in the service of the tsar, and by 1810 additional Muslim units were raised. In the second war with Persia, the same Kazakh contingent assisted the Russians in their victory at Shamkochrai. Another "Tatar" squadron distinguished itself in the Battle of Ganja, which turned out to be decisive for the campaign.¹⁷

After the Persian defeat at Ganja, Tsar Nicholas I (1825–1855) replaced General A.P. Ermolov with the new commander in chief of the Caucasus, I. Paskevich, who brought the war to a victorious end when his forces pushed as far south as Tabriz. With the road to Tehran wide open, Fath 'Ali Shah sued for peace, and on February 10, 1828 the Treaty of Turkmanchai ended the war. As the Russians were facing the prospect of another conflict with Turkey, they tempered somewhat the harshness of their terms. With regard to Azerbaijan, the treaty was largely a re-statement of the Gulistan provisions, but the shah was forced additionally to cede to Russia the khanates of Erivan and Nakhichevan and the area of Ordubad.¹⁸

The Treaty of Turkmanchai, which also opened a greatly weakened Persia to Russian commercial and political influences, closed the period of Russo–Persian rivalry in Transcaucasia. Persia fully acknowledged Russian domination over the region, and

*The term *Tatar* was customarily used by Russians to refer to various Turkic-speaking peoples of Russia. As a misnomer with regard to the Azerbaijanis, it will be put hereafter in quotation marks.

the third, more distant party to the contest, Turkey, would soon make a similar concession. The war between Russia and Turkey, which had begun within a few months of the Turkmanchai settlement, quickly turned into a series of Ottoman defeats, both on the Balkan and the Caucasus fronts. This time the Russians enlisted the Azerbaijanis on the even larger scale, capitalizing on the antagonism of the Shiites toward the Sunni branch of Islam which the Ottoman State symbolized.¹⁹ At the Battle of Erzerum, it was the charge of the Karabagh Regiment that decided the day. The impressive military feats of the Azerbaijanis opened for them careers in the tsarist army, an advantage the Christians of Transcaucasia already enjoyed. In the words of the nineteenth-century traveler and historian Arminius Vambery, the Muslims "adopted the habit of attending the Russian military schools and the Alikhanovs, Taghirovs and Nazirovs became rivals of the Lazarovs, Melikovs and other Armenians."²⁰

The war with Turkey, which ended in the Treaty of Adrianople (September 1829), won for Russia the eastern coast of the Black Sea, including Akhaltsik. By pushing its frontier to the southwest, Russia firmly established its strategic control over Transcaucasia.

The treaties of 1828 and 1829 confirmed the fact of the Russian conquest and sanctioned the permanent division of Azerbaijani territory into two parts – the larger, approximately two-thirds, remaining with Persia and the smaller annexed by Russia. Some half-million Azerbaijani-speaking Muslims passed for the first time under the rule of a European power, and henceforth the path of their history would take a different course from that of their ethnic brothers in Persia.²¹

The population of the Russian-held part of Azerbaijan aside from the Azerbaijanis, included several ethnic minority groups: the Lezghians in the northernmost areas, the Persians along the Caspian coast and especially in Talysh, the Kurdish and Turkic-nomads in the south, and in Karabagh, Armenians, whose number rose dramatically after the Russian conquests as a result of their mass immigration from Persia and Turkey. Following the Turkmanchai peace, Nicholas I decreed the formation of an Armenian *oblast'* (district) comprising the territories of the khanates of Erivan and Nakhichevan, where the concentration of the immigrants was particularly heavy.²²

The Turkic-speaking Muslims of Russian Azerbaijan, commonly called Shirvanis, differed from those of the Persian part in one essential respect: There was a comparatively large proportion of Sunnis among them. The Russian estimates of the 1830s, although based on incomplete data, show that the ratio of the Shi'ites to Sunnis was almost even, with a slight edge in favor of the latter.²³ While the sectarian distribution did not correspond with the political divisions into khanates, the Sunnis formed a majority in the northern and western areas of the country, subject to religious influences from the mountainous citadel of Sunnism, Daghestan.

The same roughly 50:50 ratio still appears in the statistics of 1848, but figures for the 1860s indicate that the proportion of Sunnis had markedly declined. It stabilized subsequently at the level by which the Shi'ite Twelvers of the Jafarite rite held a clear majority of 2:1 among the population as a whole. The decrease in the proportionate strength of the Sunni element was the result of their emigration to Turkey, a trickle that turned into a torrent after the final suppression of Daghestan by Russia.²⁴

The Shi'ite–Sunnite split ran deep and it found its reflection in Azerbaijani attitudes toward the nineteenth-century Russian wars. The tsardom was able to make use of the Shi'ites against Turkey not only in 1828 but also in 1853–1855 as well as against the anti-Russian resistance spreading from Daghestan. By contrast, the Sunnis showed signs of restiveness at the time of Russo–Ottoman conflicts, tending to give support – sometimes armed support – to the Daghestanis; finally, many of them demonstrated their disposition by joining the outflow of Muslim emigrants from Russia.

In Daghestan a *ghazavat* (roughly, crusade) against Russia had been under way since the late eighteenth century, but an additional stimulus that reinvigorated the struggle of the mountaineers there was the emergence of the religious–social movement of Muridism, an outgrowth of the Sufi Naqshbandi order. From 1834 on, the *imam* (religious leader) of the Murids was Shamil, an outstanding warlord who waged the *ghazavat* on a hitherto unprecedented scale. In the first years after assuming leadership, he inflicted a series of humiliating defeats upon the Russians

and pushed their lines back to where they had been a half-century before.²⁵

The echoes of the Daghestani war resounded in a wave of insurgency that swept parts of Azerbaijan in the post-Turkmanchai decade, the last armed challenge to the Russian conquest. As reported by a colonel of the gendarmerie, Viktorov, "in some localities large groups numbering on occasions up to thousands of men could be gathered within two or three days on Shamil's orders."²⁶ The same report pointed out the effects of the Murids' successes on the attitudes of the population: "Truth and conscience compel me to inform your Excellency that the feelings of fear instilled in the inhabitants by our victorious armies are disappearing as the result of six or seven years of unsuccessful fighting."²⁷

Of the four local Azerbaijani uprisings in the 1830s, three broke out in areas with substantial Sunni populations and were directly or otherwise under the influence of the Murids. The descent of the Daghestani warriors into the Jar-Belokan *jamaats* (agricultural communities) sparked repeated popular revolts in the years 1830–1832.²⁸ In what became the largest of Azerbaijani insurrections, some twelve thousand inhabitants of Kuba took to arms in 1837 on the call of Shamil, who urged them to express their grievances by fighting the Infidel.²⁹ Their rebellion was put down with the assistance of the native militia from the predominantly Shi'ite Shirvan. The next year, in Sheki, the entry of the armed bands of the Daghestanis again stirred the population to an uprising, but this subsided as soon as the mountaineers withdrew.³⁰

Among the Shi'ites, a major insurrection broke out in the heavily Persian-populated Talysh, where in 1831 the former khan, Mir Hasan, succeeded in arousing many inhabitants to an attack on the Russian garrison. Others natives, however, took the side of the Russians, and in the end Mir Hasan had to retreat across the Persian border.³¹

Uncoordinated and local in scope, these violent outbreaks of disaffection lacked any clear-cut ethnic or social content that might have been a source of sustaining power. Still, they made their impact felt on the increasingly frantic experiments to which the tsardom resorted in its search for a policy to consolidate its hold over Transcaucasia.

The breakup of the khanates and administrative reforms

With the onset of Russian rule there appeared in Azerbaijan the unmistakable features of colonialism. Azerbaijani territory became a military outpost controlling the strategic corridor for the Russian penetration of Persia, a process that progressed apace after the Turkmanchai Treaty of 1828. Azerbaijan was viewed as a potential source of raw materials and as an area suitable for the resettlement of populations from other parts of the Russian Empire. Indeed, the very word *colony* with reference to Transcaucasia gained currency among tsarist officials who had studied the example of French rule in Algeria. The tsar's finance minister, T. E. Kankrin, defined the term and elaborated on its implications for the policy he recommended: "When Transcaucasia is described as a colony," he wrote in a memorandum to Nicholas I in 1827,

the assumption is made that the government would stop short of incorporating this region into the state outright. It is not expected that Transcaucasia would be made into a part of Russia or the Russian nation, insofar as its way of life is concerned; rather, these lands should be left in their position of Asiatic provinces, but hopefully governed more efficiently than in the past.³²

The aftermath of the conquest saw few and limited modifications in the way the Azerbaijanis had been ruled, and cases of the abolition of khanates, such as Ganja or Baku, were quite exceptional. At first, the tsardom preferred to adopt the indigenous governmental structures to its own needs. The khanates of Talysh, Sheki, Karabagh, Shirvan, and Nakhichevan, the Jar-Belokan *jamaats*, and the sultanate of Ilusiy were all left intact. In allowing a khan or sultan to retain much of his powers, the Russians' prime consideration was either his loyalty to Russia or his political usefulness to the Russian authorities through his influence over the population. Moreover, the preservation of a khanate's administrative machinery alleviated the strain on the scant supply of Russian officials available and held a promise of financial savings.³³ Only gradually and rather inconsistently did the military government take to disposing of the khans' regimes altogether. General A.P. Ermolov, who in 1816 became the com-

mander of the Caucasus, viewed the khanates with suspicion as a disruptive and potentially pro-Persian factor.³⁴ While paying lip service to the validity of the treaties, he awaited the opportunity to liquidate one khanate after another by resorting to pretexts and subterfuges. He barred the rights of the successor to the khan of Sheki, Ismail, and in 1818 proclaimed his domains a Russian *oblast'*. The next year the khanate of Shirvan was abolished, its ruler Mustafa Khan having been forced to flee to Persia to avoid arrest on conspiracy charges. Similar tactics that Ermolov used against the khan of Karabagh, Mahdi Qulu, produced the same result.³⁵ The khanate of Talysh, on the other hand, continued its nominal existence until 1844, although it had passed under the military government in 1826 when its ruler had defected to the invading Persians. Likewise, the khanate of Nakhichevan and the sultanate of Ilusiy survived until the same late date. The last of the Muslim principalities in the region, the Daghestani shamkhalate of Tarku, was abolished in 1860.

The removal of a khan did not necessarily amount to a departure from traditional forms of government. During the 1820s in Azerbaijan seven Russian provinces – Baku, Derbent, Sheki, Karabagh, Shirvan, and Talysh – were created, each governed by a *nachal'nik* (military commander). The new administrative units were in essence khanates without khans. Their boundaries, in most cases, corresponded to those of the former principalities, and their Russian commanders ruled in accordance with local laws and customs. This system of government, known officially as “military–popular” (*voenno–narodnyi*), did not affect the status of native officials at low and intermediate levels so long as they were not objectionable to the Russians. The territorial subdivision into *mahals* and the courts of Shari'a (divinely inspired law of Islam) remained intact, and Persian continued to be the official language of the judiciary and local administration.³⁶

Likewise, the prerogatives of the supreme authority in the province, the commander, closely resembled those of a khan, although he lacked the power of passing death sentences or ordering the cutting off of ears and noses. “The rights, honor and property of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants depend on a commander's whim,” wrote the Senators E. I. Mechnikov and P. I. Kutaisov after their inspection tour of Transcaucasia in 1834. Their report also commented on widespread abuses of

power, adding that the commanders “set an example of breaking the law rather than observing it.”³⁷

This rampant corruption was accompanied by a brutality for which the Russian military government personnel became notorious, and both loomed large among the causes of the unrest in the 1830s. Within the tsarist bureaucracy the unsettled condition of the Russian domains in the Caucasus and beyond fueled a controversy on the definition of a long-range administrative policy. Concerning the question of how to govern these domains, there emerged two schools of thought: One, more pragmatic, favored quasi-autonomous regionalism with implicit accommodation to indigenous traditions and interests; the other, more rigid, emphasized the need for centralization and eventual Russification. With regard to the Muslim parts of Transcaucasia, the first school counseled proceeding at a slow pace in abolishing features of the khanate past, while the second aimed at speedy integration of the region into the Russian state.³⁸ The echoes of this dispute would henceforth affect every shift in Russia’s Transcaucasian policy for decades to come.

In an apparent victory for the integrationists, the 1841 reform of Baron P. V. Hahn dismantled the military government, thereby obliterating all vestiges of the khanates. In its place a uniform civil administration was introduced, and the seven provinces were replaced with *uezds* (counties), their borders drawn without regard to the former khanates’ territories. The reform also did away with the residual tribalism of the *mahals*, superseding them with the smallest territorial subdivisions, the *uchasteks*. This act, which in one stroke put an end to the age-old fragmentation of Azerbaijan, at the same time resulted in a massive dismissal of native officials.³⁹ Furthermore, in the spirit of full integration, there followed an attempt at modifying the socioeconomic structure of the country. Additional ordinances provided for the confiscation of some *tül* holdings – the land grants awarded in the past to *bäys* and *aghas* – with the view of redistributing them to Russian settlers.⁴⁰

The main effect of Hahn’s reforms was not only bureaucratic confusion but also an upsurge in popular disaffection. New outbreaks of insurgency spread in the Caucasus Mountains, and Shamil stepped up his fighting in the years 1841–1842. The minister of war, A. I. Chernishevski, hurriedly dispatched to

Transcaucasia, advised a more conciliatory approach to the Muslim landholders and urged that the *tüls* be “left as they were.”⁴¹ A governmental commission went a step further in its recommendation that “it would be desirable to turn them [*bäys* and *aghas*] into a Muslim upper estate through which the government could exert influence on the inhabitants in accordance with its objectives.”⁴²

Within less than a year the Hahn reforms were scuttled, and with the pendulum swinging the opposite way yet another reorganization took place that resulted in the establishment of the viceroyalty of the Caucasus. In 1845 all military and civil responsibilities in the region were removed from the authority of the central government departments and vested in the viceroy, who reported directly to the tsar. Count (later Prince) Mikhail S. Vorontsov, a man of vast political and administrative experience, became the first viceroy of the Caucasus.⁴³

Vorontsov's main task was to achieve the pacification of the province. His preferred policy was the cooptation of the native elites rather than Russification and integration. Thus in Azerbaijan, where the impoverished *bäys* and *aghas* had seen their aristocratic status eroding, he advocated upgrading their position. On the viceroy's recommendation, Nicholas I issued the December Rescript of 1846, which formally bestowed the hereditary and inalienable rights of the Muslim landholders to the *tül* lands. A centuries-old Azerbaijani institution, legal state ownership of most of the land came to an end with the massive transfer of property titles into private hands. The rescript was intended to raise the *bäys* and *aghas* to the equivalent of the Russian *dvorianie* (gentry), and to provide safeguards for the corporate rights of the Muslim “privileged estate”: Their lands could be sold only to other members of the same estate. The benefits received by one social group were thus accompanied by a deterioration in the status of another: In what amounted to a form of serfdom, if a mild one, the tsar imposed on the peasantry specified obligations and dues owed the landlords.⁴⁴

In addition to the provisions of the rescript, the tsardom, acting through the viceroy, took measures to reinforce its newly formed alliance with the Muslim gentry, significantly by providing easy access to civil service careers to “all sons of *bäys* and *aghas* who can present proofs of noble birth.”⁴⁵ The adminis-

trative machinery, after one more reorganization in 1846, was able to absorb the subsequent influx of native officials. This time all Transcaucasia was divided into four *guberniias* – Tiflis, Kutais, Shemakha, and Derbent, – an arrangement that in one stroke created a large number of civil service vacancies.⁴⁶ For those of the “privileged estate” who desired to obtain qualifications for the civil service, the viceroyalty extended assistance under the Caucasian Educational Grants.⁴⁷ Thus, the 1840s witnessed the rise of an Azerbaijani class of professional bureaucrats possessed of a modicum of European education, a new element in the traditional society.

The retirement of Vorontsov in 1865 signaled the gradual reversal of his accommodative policies. The Russian period of Great Reforms of the 1860s and 1870s, notable elsewhere for disposition toward liberalism, in Transcaucasia represented a transition from quasi-colonial status to organic merger with Russia. Once again on the occasion of a new policy course, the fertile minds of tsarist officials conceived a series of changes in territorial administration: In 1859, after an earthquake destroyed the town of Shemakha, the capital of the *guberniia* was moved to Baku and the province renamed accordingly. The next year, upon the final suppression of Shamil, the Derbent *guberniia* was abolished, and then in 1867 the new Elizavetpol *guberniia* was constructed from parts relinquished by the *guberniias* of Baku, Erivan, and Tiflis. The formation of this province consolidated the bulk of Azerbaijani territory into two *guberniias*, Baku and Elizavetpol, which jointly came to be called Eastern Transcaucasia.⁴⁸

Still, the latest administrative reorganization did not create an ethnically homogeneous entity – nor was it intended to. Large numbers of the “Tatars” remained outside Eastern Transcaucasia, and its two provinces also included sizable groups of Armenians and other minorities. In the Elizavetpol *guberniia* the numbers of “Tatars” and Armenians, concentrated in the Mountainous Karabagh, were 878,000 and 292,000 respectively, according to 1871 figures. In the *uezds* of this province the proportions of Armenians varied from 21 to 40 percent, thus in some cases nearing half of the population. In the Baku *guberniia* there were 465,000 “Tatars”; first place among the minorities fell to the Russians (77,000), followed by the “Caucasian

Mountaineers" (63,000), Armenians (52,000), Jews (8,000), and others (137,000). Large numbers of Azerbaijanis found themselves included in provinces with Armenian or Georgian majorities; in the four of five *uezds* of the Erivan *guberniia* the "Tatars" accounted for 32 to 57 percent of the population. In four of the six *uezds* of the Tiflis *guberniia* their proportion was smaller, between 3 and 15 percent.⁴⁹

Typically, there reappeared the familiar correlation between the tsardom's centralization policy and Russification. The same act that established the Elizavetpol *guberniia* did away with the division of the *uezds* into *uchasteks*. The effect was a drastic reduction of native personnel at the lowest level of the bureaucracy, with most of the positions in the territorial administration ending up in the hands of the Russians. This aspect of the changes of the post-Vorontsov period reached its high point under Alexander III (1881–1894). Soon after his accession to the throne, Alexander terminated the special status of Transcaucasia by dispensing with the office of viceroy. When the Grand Duke Mikhail Nicholaevich retired from the vicerealty in 1882, his successor, Prince A. M. Dondukov, was appointed merely governor-general and commander in chief of the Caucasus. Simultaneously, the tsar restored the authority of central government departments over the local affairs of Transcaucasia.

An important piece of legislation of the Great Reforms era, the Municipal Law of 1870, granted urban communities self-government in the form of a town *duma* ("assembly"), an executive board, and a mayor. The town *duma* was an elective body chosen by taxpayers voting in three separate colleges on the basis of property qualifications. The new municipal authorities were in charge of the economic, education, sanitation, and health affairs of the community, although their fiscal powers remained restricted. The Municipal Law, although intended to give the rising middle classes a share in government at the local level, in Eastern Transcaucasia imposed a strict limit on the representation of the native element. The non-Christian membership of the *dumas* was set at one-half the total, and this proportion was further reduced to one-third in 1892.⁵⁰ Moreover, the governors of the *guberniias* delayed the implementation of the law on such grounds as the "immaturity of the inhabitants," the general backwardness of the country, or shortage of funds; as a result, the

first municipal self-government came into being only in 1878, in Baku. It took another nineteen years before municipal reform was instituted in Ganja, Kuba, Nukha, Lenkoran, and Shemakha. The representative organs of rural areas, *zemstvos*, were not introduced in Transcaucasia at all, just as they were omitted in other regions with predominantly non-Russian populations – Poland, Central Asia, and Siberia.

Russification, whose focus so far had been on civil service, assumed a new dimension in the 1880s when the growing Russian community became an even more substantial element in the ethnic composition of the Baku *guberniia*. At first immigrant Russians tended to take up residence solely in the province's capital, but with time the tsarist officials' old vision – of Russians settling in the countryside – began to materialize. By the next decade groups of peasants from Russia were arriving almost weekly, and by 1913, in the Mugan Steppe alone, they established forty-four settlements and held 20,000 *desiatins* of high-quality irrigated land (1 *desiatin* = c. 2.7 acres).⁵¹ This government-sponsored immigration aggravated the critical problem of land shortage, the more so since the newcomers received larger plots from the pool of land earmarked for distribution than the natives.

The latter viewed the unwelcome influx of Russian peasants as one of the most invidious consequences of the organic merger. In long run, this would be an inexhaustible source of anti-Russian sentiments at the grass roots level.

A reform that went directly against the grain of the native traditions was the introduction in the 1860s and 1870s of the uniform Russian court system and legal procedures in criminal cases. The popular reaction to this was continuous boycott, revealing the depth of the cultural chasm between rulers and ruled. "Not because the Russian judges are bad or unjust," read an Azerbaijani novel.

On the contrary, they are mild and just, but in the manner that our people dislike. A thief is put in jail. There he sits in his clean cell, is given tea, even with sugar in it. But nobody gets anything out of this, least of all the man he stole from. People shrug their shoulders and do justice in their own way. In the afternoon the plaintiffs come to the mosque where wise old men sit in a circle and pass sentence according to the laws of Shari^ca, the law of Allah: An eye for an eye, a tooth for tooth. Sometimes at night shrouded figures slip through the alleys. A