

Yelizavetpol Province in the System of Territorial Administration of the Russian Empire in the South Caucasus (Nineteenth Century)

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Abstract

The article analyzes the place and role of Yelizavetpol province in the administrative-territorial changes carried out by the tsarist regime in the region after the Russian occupation of the South Caucasus.

Currently, very complex geopolitical processes are taking place in the South Caucasus region. The main reasons for the processes taking place in this region, which is one of the most conflict zones in the world, are directly related to the situation in the region in the XIX century, after the conquest of the South Caucasus by the Russian Empire. From this point of view, it is important to study the administrative and political changes carried out by the tsarism in the South Caucasus at that time. The historical roots of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which lasted for 30 years and eventually resulted in the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, go back to the colonial policy pursued by tsarism in the region at that time. The historical Karabakh region of Azerbaijan was administratively part of the Yelizavetpol (Ganja) province. In this regard, the changes that have taken place in the province have had a significant impact on the future of the region as a whole.

After the occupation of the South Caucasus in the early 19th century, tsarism carried out a series of changes in the territorial structure and administrative management of the region in order to take over the region and incorporate it into a single Russian administrative-territorial and economic system. In order to strengthen administrative-police control in the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan, the tsarist government implemented several reforms in the 60s and 70s of the 12th century, among which administrative-territorial reforms played an important role. The decree of December 9, 1867 "On changing the governance of the Caucasus and Transcaucasian region", approved by Alexander I, formed the legal basis for these reforms. By this decree, a new province was established in the administrative system of the South Caucasus – Yelizavetpol province.

Keywords: russian empire, South Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Yelizavetpol province, administrative reforms

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Єлизаветпольська губернія у системі територіального управління Російської імперії на Південному Кавказі (XIX століття)

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Анотація

У статті аналізуються місце та роль Єлизаветпольської губернії в адміністративно-територіальних перетвореннях, проведених царським режимом у регіоні після окупації Росією Південного Кавказу.

Нині у регіоні Південного Кавказу відбуваються дуже складні геополітичні процеси. Основні причини процесів, що відбуваються в цьому регіоні, що є однією з конфліктних зон світу, безпосередньо пов'язані з ситуацією в регіоні в XIX столітті, після завоювання Південного Кавказу Російською імперією. З цього погляду важливо вивчити адміністративні та політичні перетворення, проведені царизмом на Південному Кавказі у цей час. Історичне коріння нагірно-карабахського конфлікту, що тривав 30 років і в кінцевому підсумку призвело до відновлення територіальної цілісності Азербайджану, сягає колоніальної політики, що проводилася царизмом у регіоні в той час. Історична Карабахська область Азербайджану адміністративно входила до складу Єлизаветпольської (Гянджинської) губернії. У зв'язку з цим зміни, що відбулися в краї, істотно вплинули на майбутнє регіону в цілому.

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Після окупації Південного Кавказу на початку 19 століття царизм здійснив низку змін у територіальному устрої та адміністративному управлінні області з метою заволодіння нею та включення її в єдину російську адміністративно-територіальну та економічну систему. З метою посилення адміністративно-поліцейського контролю на Південному Кавказі, зокрема в Азербайджані, царський уряд у 60-70-х роках ХІХ століття провів ряд реформ, серед яких важливу роль відіграли адміністративно-територіальні реформи. Указ від 9 грудня 1867 р. «Про зміну управління Кавказом і Закавказзя», затверджений Олександром І, становив правову основу цих реформ. Цим указом в адміністративній системі Південного Кавказу було створено нову губернію – Єлизаветпольську губернію.

Ключові слова: російська імперія, Південний Кавказ, Азербайджан, Єлизаветпольська губернія, адміністративні реформи

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Introduction.

The South Caucasus, where the Republic of Azerbaijan is located, is currently one of the hottest regions in the world. The basis of interethnic conflicts in the region, territorial conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia, in fact, was laid in the XIX century, when the Russian Empire captured the South Caucasus. Therefore, in order to deeply understand the processes taking place in the region today, it is very important to analyze the essence of the colonial policy pursued by tsarism in the South Caucasus at that time. One of the steps taken by Tsarist Russia to strengthen the region was the administrative-territorial reforms that were part of its colonial course. The establishment of the former Yelizavetpol (Ganja) province, which now covers the western regions of Azerbaijan, including the historical Ganjabasar, Gazakh, Karabakh and Zangazur regions, the organization of various territorial units in the province, the governance system of the province as a whole were the result of these reforms.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the place and role of the Yelizavetpol province in the administrative-territorial changes carried out by the tsarist regime in the region after the Russian occupation of the South Caucasus. For this purpose, the conditions and stages of the annexation of these territories to the Russian Empire were determined, the formation of the administrative system of the South Caucasus, the place of Yelizavetpol province in this system, the impact of tsarist reforms in the South Caucasus on the status of the province. The methodological basis of the research is historical, chronological principles. Comparative-historical and logical methods were used to draw conclusions.

Discussion.

The South Caucasus region, where Azerbaijan is located, has always been in the interest of major powers due to its geopolitical and economic importance, and the capture of the region has played an important role in their military-strategic plans. After gaining access to the Baltic Sea, the Russian Empire, which had "opened a window to Europe" in the early 18th century, turned its south and intended to seize the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The long-running confrontation between Russia, Iran and the Ottoman Empire over the capture of the Caucasus region between the two seas eventually ended in Russia's favor.

At that time, the existence of feudal disintegration in the South Caucasus, backward socio-economic relations,

the complicated internal situation characterized by the transformation of its territory into a field of confrontation and opposition of major powers further facilitated the occupation of the region by Russia. On the eve of the Russian occupation, Azerbaijan was experiencing a period of political fragmentation. After the collapse of the Safavid Empire, the small state structures created in the territory of Azerbaijan – the khanates – had almost no opportunity to protect their existence in the face of external threats. Attempts by individual khans to unite the country under their leadership also failed. In 1867, the small states of Gazakh, Borchali, Shamshaddin, Ganja, Karabakh and Sheki khanates, as well as the Tsar-Balakan community became the first Azerbaijani lands under tsarist occupation.

In order to strengthen administrative-police control in the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan, the tsarist government implemented several reforms in the 60s and 70s of the 19th century, among which administrative-territorial reforms played an important role. The decree of December 9, 1867 "On changing the governance of the Caucasus and Transcaucasian region", approved by Alexander I, formed the legal basis for these reforms. By this decree, a new province was established in the administrative system of the South Caucasus – Yelizavetpol province (Polnoye sobraniye zakonov, 1830-1884, p. 452-60). Shusha and Nukha districts of Baku province, Yelizavetpol district of Tbilisi province, part of Ordubad district of Yerevan province (now Megri district, part of the Republic of Armenia) were transferred to the newly created province. In 1883, Gazakh and Zangazur districts were also organized within the province. The Caucasus administration explained the creation of a new administrative-territorial unit and the organization of additional accidents within it by the difficulty of managing them due to the size of the Muslim territories and the need for "special police control". (Nikolay, 1873, p. 49-51). The district administration believed that the abolition of plots and the concentration of local administrative-police power in the hands of district chiefs would also weaken police control. With this in mind, in 1873 it was decided to redistribute accidents and increase the number of police officers. By this decision, three more districts - Arash, Jabrayil and Javanshir – were created within Yelizavetpol province. Thus, the territory of Northern Azerbaijan was mainly united into three provinces - Yelizavetpol province, Baku province and

Yerevan province. Although this played an important role in the development of the national-ethnic unity of the Azerbaijani people, it did not lead to the formation of its territorial identity, the political and administrative unity of the Azerbaijani lands. The failure to take into account ethnic, national, historical and economic factors when creating new territorial units in the South Caucasus has played a role in future conflicts between the peoples of the region over territorial affiliation. This was especially evident in the existence of territorial conflicts between the independent states that existed in the South Caucasus in 1918-1920.

After the death of Alexander II (1881), the tendency to centralize governance in the South Caucasus, as in the entire empire, intensified. In 1881, the Caucasus Viceroyalty was abolished, and the position of Chief of the Civil Division in the Caucasus was established to govern the region. The chief was also the commander of the army in the district (Trepavlov, 1998, p. 151-153). The governance of the provinces was also partially changed. After the liquidation of the sites, all administrative-police power was concentrated in the hands of the chiefs of the districts. The establishment of a special city police in the city of Yelizavetpol coincides with this period. In some troubled parts of the province, including in areas where peasant protests have taken place (Arash, Samukh), special police stations have been set up to strengthen police control. The strengthening of the police apparatus also played a special role in tightening military-police rules in the province. In the 80s and 90s of the 19th century, the post of bailiff was established in most areas of Yelizavetpol province. Bailiffs with extensive administrative and police powers even collected taxes in the areas under their control and carried out preliminary investigations. At the same time, the government had to make some concessions in the management of the villages in order to calm down the dissatisfied villagers. One of the steps taken in this direction was the establishment of rural societies (rural communities) in a number of provinces of the South Caucasus in 1865-1866. However, the regulations on the establishment of rural societies came into force later in 1870 in Yelizavetpol province. 325 rural communities were established in the province (Azərbaycan tarixi, 2000, p. 199). However, the powers of the rural communities in the Caucasus were very limited compared to the central provinces of Russia, and their activities were closely monitored.

As it is known, among the reforms implemented in Russia in the 60s and 70s of the XIX century were zemstvo (self-government) and urban reforms, which were distinguished by a certain degree of progress. The essence of the reform was the transfer of local economy, education, health care and other issues to the zemstvo meetings and the powers of their elected departments. Despite its limited nature, the reform of urban self-government bodies (municipalities) was carried out only in the central provinces of the empire, and in the national outskirts, including before the collapse of the empire, municipal administration was not applied in Azerbaijan except Baku (only in 1878). In the national outlying

areas, their functions were again performed by provincial and district chiefs.

Urban reforms in the South Caucasus also applied only to Tbilisi. This factor was a clear example of the fact that the reform was based on national discrimination. Only in 1897 in the territory of the province in the city of Yelizavetpol the city self-government, and in the cities of Nukha and Shusha the simplified public administrations were applied.

The tsarist government refused to implement self-government reforms in the South Caucasus, especially in Azerbaijan. The reason for the refusal was "the local population is not ready enough and does not have the skills to manage themselves." and therefore insisted on the management of cities by the old, administrative-police methods. This was a bright manifestation of the tsarist policy of national elections, the step attitude to non-Russian peoples. National inequality was also evident in the organization and functioning of city self-government bodies. During the elections to the municipalities, a clear national and religious feeling was applied, which was a clear manifestation of the violation of the suffrage of the local Muslim population at the state level and the colonial attitude towards it. This created fertile ground for ethnic dissent in the ethnically diverse Caucasus. The same was true of village management. In the South Caucasus, rural administrations were completely dependent on the administrative and police authorities and served the more ruthless exploitation of the peasants. Substitute decisions on rural communities were even discriminatory. "Regulations on rural societies in Tbilisi and Kutaisi provinces" approved by the Caucasian viceroy on August 11, 1865 and "Regulations on rural societies, their public administration and state and public obligations in Baku province" approved on August 23, 1866 Yelizavetpol did not apply to the province. Only in 1870 did the last Statute come into force in the Yelizavetpol province, which was itself incomplete. In total, 335 rural societies were established in Yelizavetpol province (Nikolay, 1873, p. 139). The main bodies of rural society were village assemblies and village councils. The regulations gave them very limited powers (Polnoye sobraniye zakonov, 1830-1884, p. 43678). Although village administrations and officials were elected, they had to be approved by the local administration. The villagers were approved by the governor on the recommendation of the district chief. Rural communities were controlled by peacekeeping and police agencies. In the event of any "insecurity", rural communities were immediately disenfranchised. At the same time, the application of rural community management was in itself progressive, as it freed peasants from the tyranny of judges and police, and ensured that village officials were elected.

Judicial reform, which began in 1864 throughout the Russian Empire, was incomplete in the South Caucasus, as in all national territories. Under the pretext of "leaving the local population behind," the tsarist government imposed a number of restrictions on the application of the new court rules: before the fall of tsarism, no jury trials were held in the South Caucasus. Judicial reform in

the South Caucasus had many other limitations (Milman, 1966, p. 184-186).

On January 1, 1866, new court regulations came into force in the provinces of the South Caucasus, including the Elizavetpol province. A year later, on February 19, 1868, a new system of judicial bodies – Yelizavetpol District Court, Yelizavetpol, Gazakh, Nukha, Shusha and Zangazur conciliation departments (Russian: мировые отделы) began to operate in the province. The new judicial system also retained a clear colonial image. There were no Azerbaijanis in the judiciary, and the trial was conducted in a language that the people did not understand – Russian. Judicial reform did not apply to rural courts at all. In Yelizavetpol province, their activities were carried out in accordance with the above-mentioned Regulations on Rural Communities, adopted in 1870.

Another manifestation of the strengthening of the administrative-police apparatus in the provinces was the adoption of the Regulations on the Gendarmerie Corps of September 9, 1867, which provided for the establishment of gendarmerie offices in the provinces. Although the Baku gendarmerie was established in the same year, the Yelizavetpol provincial administration was established only 12 years later, in 1879. Two gendarmerie officers were involved in the accidents in the province. The "Regulations on Measures to Protect State Security and Public Order" signed by the Tsar on March 14, 1881, the "New Rules on Open Police Control" of March 12, 1882, and the empire that had been in force in the South Caucasus since 1886. The regulations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on secret police surveillance of March 1, 1882, further strengthened the administrative-police regime in the province and increased the arbitrariness of the people by the gendarmerie and bailiffs. Even the slightest protest against the illegal actions of the authorities was immediately suppressed by violence and ruthlessness.

After the establishment of Yelizavetpol province, a number of departments, finance and statistics committees were established in the province in order to improve governance. Characterizing the administrative-territorial system established in the South Caucasus in the post-reform period, it should be noted that tsarism tried to create a unified system of governance throughout the empire and dissolve the region within Russia by applying bourgeois reforms in the center of the empire to the Caucasus. However, these incomplete reforms within Russia were either limited or never implemented in the Caucasus (for example, local self-government and urban reforms). Although the authorities attributed this difference to the unwillingness of the local population to reform, it was clear that the changes were a manifestation of colonial policy. Another reason for future national conflicts in the South Caucasus was the resettlement policy pursued by the tsarist regime in the region. Tsarism accelerated the resettlement of Russians in Azerbaijan from the early 1830s in order to change the ethnic composition of the region, to create ethnic and religious support and to strengthen Russification, and began to create Russian settlements here. It is true

that Russian settlements were mostly created in the districts of Baku province (Shamakhi, Lankaran, Guba, Javad, Goychay), but in some districts of Yelizavetpol province Russians also settled. Rus Borisi, Slavyanka, three Golovino villages and Mikhailovka villages were built in Yelizavetpol district, Gazakh district, which is part of the province. Although Russian resettlement has declined since the 1950s, the process has not stopped. Thus, Mikhailovka and Novo-Saratovka villages in Yelizavetpol district, Balligaya and Zarisli villages in Shusha district were formed during these years. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 41 Russian villages in Azerbaijan, 15 of which were in the Elizavetpol province. There were 8 Russian villages in Yelizavetpol district, 3 in Javad district, and 1 in Jabrayil, Javanshir, Zangazur and Shusha districts. Russian IDPs living in the province had 44,795 desiatins of land at their disposal (Sbornik statisticheskikh dannikh, 1899, p. 115-203); (Azərbaycan tarixi, 2000, p. 272). The tsarist government settled the arrivals in the best, most productive, and often local lands, which strained relations between the Azerbaijanis and the displaced Russians, and created new hotbeds of conflict. However, the complaints of the local population were usually ignored by the authorities.

Immediately after the conclusion of the Tsarist Turkmenchay Treaty, tsarism organized the mass resettlement of Armenians from Iran and Turkey to various parts of Azerbaijan in order to create religious support and change the ethnic composition of the region. Armenians resettled to the region, along with Yerevan and Nakhchivan, were settled in the most fertile lands of Ganja-Karabakh. This is confirmed by Russian historian N. Shavrov. He wrote: "We started our colonial activity in the South Caucasus not by settling the Russian population, but by peoples alien to us. In the two years after the war, from 1828 to 1830, we relocated more than 40,000 Armenians from Iran and more than 84,000 from Turkey to the South Caucasus. We have placed them in the best lands in Yelizavetpol (Ganja) and Yerevan provinces, where the Armenian population is in the minority. These Armenians settled in the mountainous part of Yelizavetpol province and on the shores of Lake Goycha. The total number of migrants, including unofficial migrants, exceeded 200,000. As a result of this resettlement, at the beginning of the 20th century, more than one million of the 1.3 million Armenians living in the South Caucasus were not natives of the region and were settled by us." (Shavrov, 1911, p. 59-61). After the resettlement, the ethnic proportions of the population in a number of areas, including Upper Karabakh (Shusha district), gradually began to change in favor of the Armenians.

Result.

The tsarist government was forced to apply the bourgeois reforms carried out in the central territories of the empire to take over the South Caucasus, to involve the region more quickly in the unified all-Russian economic system, and to make more efficient use of its resources and potential. However, the reforms implemented in the region, including the Yelizavetpol (Ganja) province, were

incomplete and did not seek to radically change existing socio-political relations. In the nineteenth century, especially in the last decades of that century, like all the reforms carried out by tsarism in the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan, administrative and judicial reforms stemmed from the colonial nature of absolutism and violated the national rights of the Azerbaijani people.

The political-administrative and socio-economic development of the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th century required the abolition of the

separation of national outlying areas, the unification of the administrative management of outlying areas, and the creation of a unified system of governance. Despite its colonial nature, many reforms implemented by tsarism in the South Caucasus in the second half of the 19th century, including the Elizavetpol province, including administrative reforms, objectively facilitated Azerbaijan's involvement in a new, more progressive system of capitalist relations, development of economy, culture, education, formation of industries.

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