

International Relations in the Conditions of Historical, Political and Religious Transformations in the Qajar State

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Makale Bilgisi

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ABSTRACT

The presented article examines the religious factor in the domestic policy of Catherine II and the Babid uprising in the socio-political life of the Qajar State. The influence of Russian foreign policy on the South Caucasus is explored; relations between Russia and the Azerbaijani khanates; foreign policy and diplomacy of Agha Mohammed Qajar and the Qajar princes. The historical, political and religious processes in the Qajar State from the late 18th to the mid-19th centuries are analyzed, echoing the modern situation in Iran, both in domestic and foreign policy. An objective study of these problems by an Azerbaijani scientist is a kind of contribution to the scientific thought of the Middle East. The history of the Qajar State in the context of the political interests of the state, interpreted with a religious factor, lifts the veil from the former theological experience of suppression of secular power by religious, which the Qajars had to reckon with in the late Middle Ages. The paradox is that this factor is present in modern Iran, which is why internal unrest occurs, which affects foreign policy relations with secular Azerbaijan, professing Shiism and other cultural countries. More recently, a series of events in the issue of the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict and Iran's support for Armenia sowed the seeds of hostility between Azerbaijan and Iran. But conceptual logic dictated an orientation towards peace and cooperation, the key factors of which were the strengthening of vector logical and economic ties under the North-South project along the western coast of the Caspian Sea and the launch of the Rasht-Astara railway line.



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Key words: Qajar State, North Azerbaijan, South Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Khanate, Karabakh Khanate, Shusha, Shiism.

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Kaçarlar Devleti'nde Tarihi, Siyasi ve Dini Dönüşüm Koşullarında Uluslararası İlişkiler

ÖZET

Sunulan makale II. Katerina'nın iç politikasının dini faktörünü ve Kaçarlar devletinin sosyo-politik yaşamındaki Babid (Babiler) isyanını incelemektedir. Rus dış politikasının Güney Kafkasya'ya etkisi; Rusya ile Azerbaycan hanlıkları arasındaki ilişkiler; Ağa Mohammed Kaçar ve Kaçar Şehzadelerinin dış politikası ve diplomasisi araştırılıyor. Kaçar İran'ında 18. yüzyılın sonlarından 19. yüzyılın ortalarına kadar tarihi, siyasi ve dini süreçler analiz edilmekte ve bu durum Kaçarlar devletinin hem iç hem de dış politikasındaki mevcut duruma yansımaktadır. Azerbaycanlı bilim adamlarının bu sorunları objektif bir şekilde incelemesi Ortadoğu'nun bilimsel düşüncesine eşsiz bir katkıdır. Dini faktör göz önünde bulundurularak yorumlandığında, devletin siyasi çıkarları bağlamında Kaçarlar devletinin tarihi, Orta Çağ'ın sonlarında Kaçarların hesaba katmak zorunda kaldığı seküler gücün din tarafından bastırılmasına ilişkin geçmiş teolojik deneyimi ortaya koymaktadır. Son dönemde Azerbaycan-Ermenistan çatışması ve İran'ın Ermenistan'a verdiği destekle ilgili bir dizi olay, Azerbaycan ile İran arasında düşmanlığın tohumlarını ekti. Ancak kavramsal mantık, barış ve işbirliğine yönelimi gerektiriyordu; bunun temel faktörleri, Hazar Denizi'nin batı kıyısı boyunca Kuzey-Güney projesi kapsamında vektör mantıksal ve ekonomik bağların güçlendirilmesi ve Reşt-Astara demiryolu hattının hizmete açılmasıydı.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kaçarlar Devleti, Kuzey Azerbaycan, Güney Azerbaycan, Azerbaycan Hanlığı, Karabağ Hanlığı, Şuşa, Şilik.

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the religious factor in the domestic policy of Catherine II and the Babid uprising in the socio-political life of Qajar Iran. The influence of Russian foreign policy on the South Caucasus, relations between Russia and the Azerbaijani khanates, foreign policy and diplomacy of Agha Mohammed Qajar and the Qajar princes is studied. The historical, political and religious processes in Qajar Iran from the end of the 18th to the mid of the 19th centuries are analyzed.

The aim of the article is an objective scientific substantiation of the political and religious processes in the Qajar state from the end of the 18th to the mid of the 19th century as well as the reasons for the emergence of religious sects in the Qajar state. Scientific methods were used for the study: historical and chronological. The scientific novelty of the study. For the first time an attempt was made to analyze the history of the Qajar state in the context of the influence of religion on the political life of the state until the end of the reign of Nasreddin Shah in 1896 and to present the relations between Russia and the Qajars through the prism of the religious factor. Historiography of the problem the history of the Qajar state has been analyzed by scholars in the scientific works of Azerbaijani historians, e.g. G. Rahimli "Azerbaijani Khanates in the Diplomatic Relations of Turkey, Russia and Iran", the complex of political and diplomatic relations of the Azerbaijani khanates with the major powers of the region was studied, in particular, Sultan Turkey, Tsarist Russia and the Shah's Iran at the stage of their desire to create their own statehood; The role of the khanates in the system of international relations was shown. The complex of political and diplomatic relations between the Azerbaijani and Iranian khanates is analyzed.

Thus, J. Mustafayev, in his work "The Northern Khanates of Azerbaijan and Russia", examined in detail the period of existence of the Azerbaijani khanates and their struggle with Qajar Iran, as well as the role of Russia in this confrontation. Professor T. Mustafazadeh, in his work "Russia and the Azerbaijani Khanates in the second half of the 18th-early 19th centuries", referring to archival materials, examined the relations between the Azerbaijani khanates and Russia. In the introduction of the book, the author analyzed the policies of Agha Mohammed Qajar, his campaigns in Azerbaijan and political goals.

However, the scientific value of the workings out of Azerbaijani scientists is overshadowed by the lack of an integrated approach to the issue of the religious policy of the Qajar State, as well as the lack of study of the religious factor influencing the political decisions of the Qajar Shahs and the Russian Tsar.

The works of Russian scientists were devoted to historical events during the reign of the Qajars: M.S. Ivanov "Babid uprisings in Iran (1848-1852)", V.N. Leviatov "Essays on the history of Azerbaijan in the 18th century", N.A.Kuznetsova "Iran in the first half of the 19th century," O.V. Kuznetsov "Treaty of Gulistan: 200 years later (experience of historical understanding of the events of the Russian-Persian war of 1804-1913)" and others. They examined: the causes and results of the Babid movement in the Qajar State, the establishment of Qajar power, the rivalry of European powers in the struggle for influence in the country, the foreign and domestic policies of Iran, the activities of religious sects (secret organizations or movements) influencing the socio-political life in the Qajar State, etc. But all developments were carried out from the point of view of the interests of the Russian side, respectively, as European, Turkish and Iranian scientists, including: Law, Henry D.G., Ricks, Thomas M., Vaisman, Demian; Wasserman, Aryeh, Homa Katouzian, Bernard Lewis, Abbas Amanat, Cyrus Ghani, William Bayne Fisher.

1. Characteristic features and relationships of the Azerbaijani khanates, the Iranian Imamate and the Russian tsardom during the Middle Ages.

The struggle for the creation of a single state on the territory of Azerbaijan did not produce positive results in the 40-80s of the 18th century. At that time, Iran was already a centralized state, and Azerbaijan was in a state of feudal fragmentation. After the death of Nadir Shah Afshar, the struggle of the peoples that were part of his empire, including the Azerbaijanis, ended with the overthrow of the Shah's power on the ground. 20 semi-independent small states-khanates arose on the territory of Azerbaijan. Among the influential khanates were: Karabakh, Sheki and Derbent-Kuba.

After the death of advocate of Kerim Khan Zend, the throne of the Shah was ascended by the Azerbaijani Turk Agha- Mohammed Khan from the Qajar clan. The Qajars were one of the Turkic tribes (Oghuz) who came to West Asia during the Mongol conquests in the 13th century. At the beginning of the 15th century, Emir Timur resettled the Qajars from Northern Syria to the South Caucasus, in particular to Iravan and Ganja. In the 16th century. In the 16th century, the Qajars were one of the seven Qizilbash tribes that represented the military support of the first Safavids. The Qajars lived in the vicinity of Ganja on the left bank of the Shamkhor-chay. V.N. Leviatov writes about them in his book ("Essays on the history of Azerbaijan in the 18th century") [Leviatov, 1948: 161]. They professed Islam (Imami Shiism) *, It was not just a religion, but the dominant ideology of the state. The Imamites were the largest and therefore most influential branch of Shiism. We can say that if the absolute majority of the world Muslims were Sunnis, then the absolute majority of the world's Shiites were Imamites. Historically, this current has several names, but, due to the

special commitment to imams - spiritual rulers from the Ali clan, they are mainly known as Imamites [Martynenko A. 2018, p. 2].

After leaving Isfahan, Agha Mohammed Khan arrived in Astrabad (Russian name for the city of Gorgan). Having first strengthened himself in Astrabad, as a result of a long and cruel struggle full of vicissitudes, he managed to subjugate Isfahan, Yazd, Kerman, and then Shiraz. Over time, he became the most powerful Iranian khan. He was close to subjugating all of Iran. Agha Mohammed Khan waged a stubborn struggle for possession of the entire southern coast of the Caspian Sea [Leviatov, 1948: 161]. Other khans understood perfectly well that the strengthened Agha Mohammed Khan Qajar would threaten not only the southern, but also the northern khanates of Azerbaijan.

One of the main goals of Qajar was the unification of Northern and Southern Azerbaijan, as well as the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom. Before starting to implement his plan, Qajar sent ferman (order) to the Azerbaijani khanates so that they would submit to him. But he was refused. Then Qajar decided to use force. Some khanates began to ally against Qajar. Among them: Mustafa Khan of Shamakhy, ruler of the Talysh Khanate Mir Mustafa Khan, Baku khan Hussein Gulu Khan and Nakhchivan ruler Kalbali Khan Kengerli. However, in fact, the above khanates did not want unification; they turned to the government of Catherine II for help [History of Azerbaijan, vol. 3, p. 427].

In one of his articles the Russian author O.V. Kuznetsov explores the issue of Catherine II's religious policy as a factor in the formation of a multi-religious society. The author proves that the Russian Empire created favorable conditions for different faiths. On July 22, 1763, the Empress Catherine II signed the manifesto "On the permission of all foreigners entering Russia to settle in the provinces in which they wish and on the rights granted to them" [Manifest der Zarin Katharina].

In 1788, the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly was created in Ufa, endowed with the right to test candidates for spiritual positions and control the activities of akhunds, imams and muezzins.

There were friendly relations between the Karabakh Khanate and the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom [Hamidova, 2014, 16]. The khanates were ready for any help from outside, just not to submit to the Shah. Agha Mohammed Shah, having learned that the Azerbaijani khanates and the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom turned to the Russian government for help, decided to send 100 thousand troops to Northern Azerbaijan [Hamidova, 2014, 427]. This fact speaks of friendly relations between the Karabakh Khanate and the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom, despite different religious affiliations.

Having strengthened his position in Iran, Agha Mohammed Shah Qajar began to subjugate the southern lands of Azerbaijan. Except for Sadig Khan Shagaghgi of Sarab, everyone accepted citizenship from Agha Mohammed Shah. Therefore, Qajar defeated the city of Sarab, after which Karadag, Khoy, Urmia and other southern khanates submitted to him. Like the Safavids, the Qajars continued to conquer lands, expanding their political presence. The struggle for the lands of Azerbaijan in northern part of Araz River was begun. Internecine wars continued between the Azerbaijani khanates. The strongest khanate was the Karabakh Khanate, but in order to capture the Ganja Khanate, Ibrahim Khalil Khan continued to strengthen it. Realizing the danger from Agha Mohammed Shah Qajar, Ibrahim Khalil Khan tried to establish friendly relations with the Ottoman Empire and intensify ties with Russia. Agha Mohammed Khan received approval from the

Ottoman Sultan to seize the South Caucasus and Northern Georgia. In response to the seizure of these territories, the Sultan promised to recognize him as Shah [Mustafazadeh T.T. 2009, p.964]. It should be noted that Qajar's main rival was Ibrahim Khalil Khan, who was not going to give up (Mustafazadeh, 2009). Despite the fact that the Shusha fortress came under siege in 1795, the troops of Ibrahim Khalil Khan managed to fight back. This was the most famous victory in the history of the Karabakh Khanate.

In 1794, Agha Mohammed Khan took the title of Shah and, according to Iranian tradition, became the supreme ruler of all Azerbaijan and Georgia. In official documents, Agha Mohammed Khan is mentioned as the ruler of Iran. In Russian historiography, the coronation of the Shah is mentioned in this way: "Agha Mohammed Qajar refused to wear the crown of Nadir with four feathers, which symbolized dominance over Iran, Afghanistan, India and Central Asia. Qajar was crowned with a small diadem and girded with the Shah's sword, consecrated at the tomb of Sheikh Safi ad-Din in Ardabil, which was supposed to symbolize his succession to Safavid power and devotion to Shiism [Kuznetsova N.A. 1983, p.18].

In 1796, Catherine the Great sent troops to the Caucasus with the goal of conquering these lands. Chief General V. Zubov was appointed commander of the campaign. He had to solve the tasks set before him by the Russian leadership. Namely: to capture Derbent, while demonstrating to the local population the power of Russian weapons; to force the Azerbaijani and Dagestani elite to submit to Russian power, take the closest relatives of the Dagestan military into the amanates in order to ensure their loyalty, push Iranian troops beyond the Kura River and build on it on the left bank there are border fortifications [Gadzhimuradov M.T. 2014, p. 23].

To understand the religious policy of Catherine II towards the peoples of the South Caucasus and representatives of different faiths living in the territory of the former empire, one should pay attention to the primary sources, that is, to the decrees of the empress. She, like other monarchs of that time, used the resettlement policy factor to strengthen the economy and this had nothing to do with religious intolerance. The main task of the Russian monarchs was to ensure the security and economic development of the state, for which it was necessary to build new and safe trade routes from the resource-rich countries of the East through Russia to Europe.

In Russian historiography, the reason for Russia's war against the Qajars was the campaign of Agha Mohammed Shah against the East Georgian kingdom, which at that time was an ally of Russia according to the Treaty of Georgievsk. The main foreign policy task of Russia in the East was the struggle for influence in the Caucasus and the confrontation with the Qajar State. In addition to everything, the closeness of Georgia and Russia also had a religious basis. The first changed hands many times; the Georgians, hoping for help, themselves contributed to the change of master. The initiative for Georgian-Russian relations belonged to the Georgian kings and princes, who sent their ambassadors to the Russian Empire in order to attract the attention of the Russian kings, who at that time were not particularly interested in Transcaucasia. At the same time, the Georgian kings and princes used the religious factor and often reminded the Russian kings that the Georgians were Orthodox (which is an objective reality).

However, it can be said that there was no connection between the resettlement policy of the Russian Empire and the religious motives of Georgia. But, if we talk about the "Greek Project", then these plans include the empress's religious ambitions. Even before the events of 1768-1774. The Greek Project was developed. The annexation of Crimea was the first step in the process of its implementation, and the conclusion of an agreement with Georgia was the second. The project

was based on the restoration of the Byzantine or Greek Empire and the elevation to the kingdom of the second grandson of Catherine II, Konstantin Pavlovich.

Many historians believe that for Catherine II the religious factor in her policy was an important component, but this is not so. Pursuing a policy of pragmatism, Catherine II gave priority to security and economic development. She did not want to repeat the mistakes of Europe, which was mired in religious and ethnic wars, and opposed turning Russia into a colony of the West. Accordingly, Russia's religious policy with the Qajar State was moderate Kuznetsova N.S. The evolution of the state apparatus of Qajar Iran (from the late 18th to the 60s of the 19th century) [Report, 1987, p. 18].

In turn, the relationship of the Agha Mohammed Shah with the Shiite clergy is of interest. The matter is that for the Qajars, it was important for them to be recognized as shahs by the Shiite clergy. Agha Mohammed Khan made a lot of efforts to ensure that the General provisions on the state, supreme power, the rights and responsibilities of central and local authorities and other guidelines recorded in the Koran and Sharia were not disputed in Iran; they were constantly referred to, although they were not always strictly adhered to. and its structure were not disputed, but were referred to, so that spiritual power would prevail over secular power. The Shia ulema had a theological justification for the priority of spiritual power over secular power, which the Qajars had to reckon with [Kuznetsova N.S. 1987; Report, 18].

In November 1796, the death of Catherine II changed the political situation. Her son Paul I ordered the withdrawal of troops from Azerbaijan. This created new opportunities for Agha Mohammed Shah, who decided to continue his aggressive policy.

In 1797, Agha Mohammed Shah once again attacked Shusha. Hunger, disease and the inability to resist became the main reason why Ibrahim Khalil Khan decided to leave the city. Agha Mohammed Shah at that time was already near the Talysh mountains, his military detachments were devastating Talysh, he was taking revenge on Mir Mustafa Khan for his refusal to submit. Having learned that Ibrahim Khalil Khan had left the city, Agha Mohammed Shah sent a letter to the defenders of the fortress asking them to surrender. The parties agreed that the gates to the city would be open provided that the city was not destroyed and the residents were left alive. Agha Mohammed Shah took an oath, placing his hand on the Koran (the holy book of Muslims), but the Shah broke his word and promise (T.T.Mustafazade, s.968). The city was taken without a single shot being fired.

Agha Mohammed Shah wanted to restore the borders of the former Safavid state. Analyzing the personality of Agha Mohammed Shah, we note that historians have different opinions on this issue. Some consider him a strong, purposeful [Hasanzade T.D., 2014, p.96] others a cruel and evil ruler. Despite all the disagreements, the truth remains that Agha Mohammed Shah was the founder of the Qajar monarchy.

2. Foreign policy of the Qajar state: priorities and factors.

Those khans who opposed the power of Agha Mohammed Shah pursued an active foreign policy and tried to find allies. In such conditions, relations with the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Georgia were important for them. Karabakh Khan Ibrahim Khalil Khan, Iravan Mohammed Hussein Khan maintained diplomatic ties with the Ottoman Empire. Ibrahim Khan made a written request for

help to Sultan Selim III (1789-1807). However, the Ottoman Empire was unable to help him [Azerbaycan Tarihi, 1999, p. 545].

Georgia and Russia were opponents of the Qajars' policies. In turn, Agha Mohammed Shah tried to attract help from France and England. These countries feared Russian influence in the region at the end of the 18th century. In 1795, French representatives Oliver and Brugger arrived in Iran. They signed a trade agreement between France and Iran, and resolved issues of military and diplomatic support [Azerbaycan tarihi, 1999, p. 545]. The khans' attitude towards Russia and its military strength was entirely determined by political and economic interests. In the second half of the 18th century, Caspian trade was the most profitable for Russia. The main centers of trade were cities such as Baku, Shamakhy, Derbend, Salyan and Lankaran.

With the coming of Agha Mohammed Khan to power, the scope of Russian trade with eastern countries intensified. An ardent supporter of this was V. Zubov, who outlined his idea in the article "General Review of Trade with Asia." Comparing Baku with other ports of the Caspian Sea, he points out that "for Russian trade, Baku is the only convenient and profitable place" (Mustafayev, 1989: 48). Another important trade center of Azerbaijan, which had close ties with Russia, was Salyan. At the end of the 60s of the XVIII century, Salyan became the seat of Russian consuls [Mustafayev C., 1989, p. 49]. Azerbaijan was necessary to provide Russian industry with imported raw materials, as well as a capacious market where Russian products were widely sold.

V.A. Zubov, who had detailed and accurate information about Baku, wrote: "The city of Baku is the best port. The environs of Baku abound in oil springs and the best rock salt..." [Leviatov V., 1948, p. 187].

The capture and burning of Tiflis by the Qajar gave the Russians the opportunity to implement their long-standing plan to occupy the South Caucasus. In the decree of November 16, 1795, General I.V. Gudovich was ordered to "defend" not only Georgia, but also Shirvan and Baku. One of the main goals of the Russian army was to strengthen the Christian factor in the South Caucasus. Ganja and Iravan were supposed to be annexed to Kartli-Kakheti. The Russian government also left on the agenda the creation of an Armenian state at the expense of Azerbaijani lands. Archbishop of Armenians in Russia I. Argutinsky was appointed advisor to V.A. Zubova [Mustafazadeh T., 2018, p. 16-17].

The government of Catherine II tried to subjugate the Azerbaijani khanates. At this time, Turkey was not able to actively intervene in the affairs of eastern Transcaucasia due to the long war with Russia. The Ottoman Empire, which experienced a period of deep crisis, tried to find a way out of it by subjugating Azerbaijan and other regions of Transcaucasia. These attempts especially intensified during the years of the second Russian-Turkish war (1787-1791). Having received no practical help from its Western instigators, the Turkish government, through its emissaries, tried to induce the Azerbaijani and Dagestan rulers to take armed action against Russia [Mustafazadeh T., 2018, p. 69]. In 1796, the Russian government intended to annex Northern and Southern Azerbaijan to Russia.

Russian historians call the foreign policy of the state of the Agha Mohammed Shah "anti-Russian," arguing that French emissaries not only encouraged the Shah "to continue the war against Russia," but also offered to conclude a military alliance with the Ottoman Empire, promising at the same time assistance in the fight against Russia, as well as France itself, and Sweden, and Denmark. Iran was thus supposed to be one of the links in the anti-Russian coalition" [Magomedov N.A., 2019, p.156].

In the early 90s, Russia showed “subtle caution” in its policy towards the Transcaucasia. At first, Agha Mohammed Shah did not openly show his hostility towards Russia. The strengthening of the influence of Agha Mohammed Shah was a more real threat to the independence of the Azerbaijani khanates, which were constantly at odds with each other. The “Qajar danger” forced the Azerbaijani khans to think more directly about their security.

Agha Mohammed Shah decided to start a new campaign in Georgia. But it was not possible to carry out the plans; he was killed in Shusha. The organizer of the murder was the nephew of Ibrahim Khalil Khan Mohammed Bey. Instead of gratitude, Karabakh Ibrahim Khalil Khan began to distrust Mohammed Bey, believing that he killed Mollah Panah Vagif. Being under suspicion, Mohammed Bey left Shusha. However, he was detained in Sheki. As a result, Mustafa Khan of Shamakhy killed him [History of Azerbaijan, 1999, p.438; Mustafazadeh, 2009].

The Azerbaijani khanates did not organize into one single state; they chose the path of rapprochement with Russia, which led to its dominance in the Caucasus.

The next ruler from the Qajar clan was the nephew of Agha Mohammed Shah Fathali Shah (Baba Khan) (Mustafazadeh, 2009: 969). Once in power, Fathali Shah was one of the first to decide to improve relations with Russia. In 1797, he sent his representative Agha Mir Seyyid to Paul I. Fathali Shah sought to conquer the South Caucasus, but Paul I was strongly against this.

Thus, at the end of the 18th – beginning of the 19th centuries, there were all the conditions for the start of the Russian-Iranian war for the South Caucasus. Russia has become interested in events in Iran and the South Caucasus. (Mehmet Saray, 2010: 171). The new ruler of Iran in the first years of his reign was mainly busy pacifying the feudal lords who were rebellious to him and did not show much activity in the conquest of Transcaucasia, including Azerbaijan (Mustafayev, 1989: 101). He carried out reforms to develop cities and villages, built mosques, and allocated funds for the social needs of the population [Kuznetsova N.S., 1987, p. 20].

The Qajars – Fathali Shah and his son Abbas Mirza – for 10 years successively defended the geopolitical interests of Russia’s main European competitors – Britain and France – in the Caucasus. Beginning in June 1804, military operations against Russia, both Persian rulers counted on the continuation of British military-technical assistance, which was supposed to come from Great Britain's colonial possessions in India in accordance with the terms of the political and trade agreement between the two countries of January 4, 1801 [Kuznetsov O., 2013, p.173].

Iranian sources ignore the role of the popular masses and the class struggle in Iran and Transcaucasia, but praise the Qajar dynasty and, in particular, the heir to the throne Abbas Mirza, and falsify the history of the Russian-Iranian wars of the period under study. But they almost bypass the issues of English intervention in Russian-Iranian relations and the significant role of the East India Company in the outbreak of the first and second Russian-Iranian wars [Haji Murad Ibrahimbayli, 1969, p.16].

Still on the eve of the first Russian-Iranian war, the heir to the Qajar throne (valiahd), the ruler of Azerbaijan, Abbas Mirza, realized the need for large-scale military reform and began to make every effort to enlist the support of the strongest European states. Obtaining financial and material assistance in the matter of reorganizing the army was the main goal of the Qajar court in complex negotiations with France and Britain, conducted throughout the first quarter of the 19th century. Back in 1800, the head of the British mission in Iran, J. Malcolm, came to the conclusion that, no matter how brave and courageous the Qajar troops were, they would not be able to resist

Russia. Abbas Mirza Shah tried to carry out military reform, the legal reflection of which was the corresponding articles of treaties with France and Great Britain. This was the first attempt to modernize one of the most important state institutions with the help of European specialists and European technology [Gyozalova N.R., 2019, p.112].

At the end of the 18th century, the Russian government, seeing the British and French incitement of Persia to expand geopolitical power, decided to intensify its policy in the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan [Mustafayev C., 1989, p. 102]. A clear description of what was happening was presented by Professor T. Mustafazadeh: "In order to prevent the khans from going over to the side of the Qajars, Paul I flirted with the khans and attracted them into the orbit of his interests. He proposed to unite the northeastern Caucasian and northern Azerbaijani possessions within the Russian Federation" [Mustafazadeh, 2009]. In turn, after Persia's attempts to restore control over Eastern Transcaucasia, Heraclius's heir, King George XII, in an effort to retain power, turned to Paul I with a request to annex Georgia to Russia, subject to the preservation of the rights to the Georgian throne for his descendants. This indicates that the decision of the Georgian king fell under the factor of religion.

In the case of the khanates, the matter was more complicated. The treaty of patronage caused sharp protests from Iran and a declaration of the right to possession of Georgia, accompanied by a demand to send the heir, Prince David, to Iran as a hostage [Markova, 1966, p. 306]. Of course, Russian historians argue that Russia's main goal during the period under study was the liberation of the Caucasian peoples from the yoke of Iran and Turkey. However, in the interpretation of Azerbaijani researchers, Russia wanted to expand its territories and have access to the economic resources of Transcaucasia. Unlike the Azerbaijani khanates, the Armenians and Georgians called on Russia to take up arms in Transcaucasia; the religious factor is also obvious here.

In turn, Russian researchers note: "The Shah's government incited religious fanaticism among Muslims of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia. Turkey helped him in this: the Turkish Sultan constantly sent his agents to the Caucasus with calls to attack Georgia and expel the "infidels" (Russians) from the Caucasus. Gifts were sent to the khans, who were supposed to ensure their transition to the side of Iran". That is, they believe that the Ottoman Empire tried to use religious key factor as pressure on the Shah's government [Kuznetsova N.A., 1983, p. 33].

This approach of Russian historians is too subjective, because everyone understands what goals any empire faces, namely: to conquer other lands or spread its influence there. The Russian Empire had its own plans and calculations regarding the Azerbaijani khanates and the Qajar State. It is very true that after the struggle of Agha Mohammed Shah Qajar with the Azerbaijani khanates in the Caucasus, Russian influence continued to grow, and not only Orthodox Georgia and Armenians, but also some Muslim khanates, began to gravitate towards Russia. The Qajar rulers were faced with the struggle of the Muslim khanates for independence. In 1801, Alexander I, after a request from the Georgian side, signed a manifesto on Georgia's entry into Russia. This event began to worry both Turkey and Iran [Markova, 1966, p. 186; Kuznetsova N.A., 1983, p. 33].

Azerbaijani lands – Gazakh, Borchaly, Shamshaddil – became part of Russia. Although it should be noted that even before the death of Agha Mohammed Shah, Russia was interested in seizing Azerbaijani lands. For example, the actions of V.A. Zubov show that he, carrying out the decrees of St. Petersburg, tried to strengthen Russia's position in the newly annexed lands by attracting khans and beys loyal to the Russian government.

December 26, 1802. At a meeting in Georgievsk of the rulers of Guba, Lankaran, Tarka, Garagaytag and Tabasaran, an agreement was signed that obliged the khans and rulers to forget hostility and resolve disagreements peacefully, and in the event of an attack by the Shah's troops, act against them under the leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Russian troops. However, it soon became clear that the "George Agreement" actually pursued the goal of lulling the vigilance of the Azerbaijani rulers with the Qajars [Mustafazadeh, 2018, p. 23].

In 1805, a sworn agreement was concluded between Tsitsianov and Ibrahimkhalil Khan: the Garabakh Khan, accepting the patronage of Russia, pledged to pay 8 thousand tchervonets (a ten-ruble piece) annually, and to maintain a Russian garrison in the city of Shusha. The Qajars tried to prevent this, but they failed [Mustafazadeh, 2018, p. 25].

The political line of Paul I was aimed at strengthening his position in Azerbaijan. At the same time, using the tactics of rapprochement with the Azerbaijani khanates, he was able to win over to his side almost all the khans of northern Azerbaijan and a significant part of Dagestan.

However, the creation of a federal state did not take place for objective reasons; the obstacle was created by a long internecine struggle between the khanates.

By the end of 1806, Tsarist Russia had to, while continuing the war against Iran, simultaneously repel the onslaught of Sultan Turkey. The main forces of the Russian army were busy fighting Napoleon and could not be transferred to the Caucasus. Russia also feared a military clash with Turkey. The Russian government hoped not only to make peace with Iran, but also to use it to fight against Turkey. At the same time, it was supposed to tempt the Shah with the return of areas previously captured by Turkey from Iran [Azerbaycan tarihi, 1999, p. 14]. In 1806, Baku was taken without a fight. The Baku Khanate became a province of Russia. After this, in 1808, Russian troops led by Gudovich began a new campaign with the goal of capturing Iravan and Nakhchivan, and thereby completing the capture of the northern part of Azerbaijan.

Tsarism successfully continued to increase its military forces in Azerbaijan. The Qajars tried to prevent this. Thus, the clashes between the Shah's throne and Russia continued. The period (1804-1813) historians call the Russian-Iranian war, which began after Russia rejected Iran's ultimatum to withdraw Russian troops from Transcaucasia.

It should be noted that neither military assistance nor moral support from England could change the balance of forces on the Iranian-Russian front. Summer of 1813 General Kotlyarovsky, expecting an attack by Abbas Mirza Shah, decided to get ahead of him and twice attacked first and defeated his army. Kotlyarovsky captured all the artillery and seized Lankaran. For two and a half months, the Iranian army suffered huge losses [Kuznetsova N.A., 1983, p. 39].

At the beginning of the 19th century, the diplomatic relations of the Azerbaijani khans with Russia and the acts of accepting the citizenship of Emperor Paul I contributed to the rapprochement of the two countries and prepared the ground for the final accession of Azerbaijan to Russia. During the Iranian-Russian war, Russia's influence on the Azerbaijani khanates increased [Dalili, 1979, p. 19]. Azerbaijani historians believe that Russia tried to conquer the South Caucasus, and this became the cause of a long and fierce war between the Qajar state and Russia. Military operations led by Armenian and Georgian generals were carried out on the territory of Azerbaijan. Historian M. Suleymanov notes: "Russia would have easily occupied the entire territory of the Qajar state and gained the coveted access to the southern seas, and at the same time to India, which, as is known, was an integral part of the British Empire. It is no coincidence that on the eve of the signing

of the Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828) treaties, which formalized the results of the Russian-Iranian wars, Great Britain put intense pressure on its Qajar allies to speed up the signing of these documents.” [Suleymanov M., 2019, p. 17].

As T.D. Hasanzadeh notes: “Abbas Mirza did not want to sign this agreement, but he was simply forced to do it” [Hasanzade T.D., 2014, p.181; Ragimli, 2018, p. 181]. Most likely Abbas Mirza needed time to gather a strong army and weapons.

After the signing of the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) and then the Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828), the territory of Azerbaijan was divided between two great empires. Therefore, in the history of the political geography of Azerbaijan, two terms began to be used: Northern Azerbaijan (which was part of Russia) and Southern Azerbaijan (which remained part of Iran) [Mahmudov, 2005, p. 34].

We must agree with the opinion of G.R. Rahimli that the strengthening of Russia’s presence in the region, its growing influence forced local feudal lords and many statesmen of the South Caucasus to seek help and protection from the imperial court. This, first of all, was explained by the fact that most of the rulers of the South Caucasus were guided by the most powerful center, which at that time was the Russian Empire [Rahimli, 2018, p. 275].

3. Religious movements in the Qajar State.

Beginning of the 19th century on the territory of Azerbaijan is characterized by the formation of different ideologies. Russia tried to Christianize the population of Azerbaijan and was busy settling this territory with Christians in order to strengthen the religious factor. In turn, the Shah’s regime also pursued a similar policy within the state.

The Koran and Sharia were considered to be the basis for both civil and criminal proceedings. When deciding any court cases, they referred to the Koran or hadiths – legends about the activities of the Prophet Mohammed and his closest followers. The Koran, of course, did not give direct instructions that corresponded to the conditions of social life in Iran in the 9th-10th centuries, and its instructions were interpreted as it pleased the ruling class. The right to interpret the injunctions of the Koran, Sharia and Hadith was recognized by the highest clergy – imams, ulema, mujtehids.

It should be noted that in Iranian legal proceedings there were two directions: one - according to Sharia (spiritual); other - ordinary - urf (secular court).

Sharia court is based on the Koran and traditions. Only mujtehids could interpret the Koran and make decisions. The Sharia Court made decisions on issues related to religious matters, inheritance, marriage, divorce, trade and other transactions and, in general, all civil matters [Ivanov M.S., 1939, p. 40-41].

Thanks to the patriarchal nature of feudal relations in the khanates, the backwardness of the masses, and the strong influence of the clergy, the khans fully enjoyed quite significant influence on their subjects and led most of them. This, and mainly the beys and clergy, was the main strength of the khans [Leviatov, 1948, p. 184]. The clergy decided all legal issues and influenced the political decisions of the country. In practically all Azerbaijani khanates, Sharia law was in force. The influence of religion on political decision-making and on the fate of the Azerbaijani people was obvious. Power in the Qajar State depended on the decision of the ulema, that is, on the spiritual nobility. It was she who could use all the levers to influence the decisions of the Shah.

A similar phenomenon occurred in the Russian Empire, which used the Orthodox religion as an influence on the Orthodox peoples of other states. Under the pretext of religion and belief, lands were divided and crimes were committed against civilians. There was only one goal – to expand the spheres of its geopolitical influence. For example, Russia, using the factor of religion after the capture of Northern Azerbaijan, including Karabakh, began to resettle Armenians (its co-religionists) from neighboring states to this area. In 1836, Emperor Nicholas I signed a special “Regulation” on the Armenian Church. According to this document, the Albanian Catholicosate was abolished, and in its place two dioceses were formed (Shusha and Shamakhy) under the jurisdiction of the Gregorian Catholicosate. The course of the mass resettlement of Armenians from the Qajar State clearly showed that this process met the interests of the Armenian lobby of the Russian Empire.

In Russian historiography, the reason for the resettlement policy was the desire for economic development of the empire.

It should be noted that before the signing of the Turkmenchay and Gulistan treaties, there were no religious communities or secret sects in the Qajar State. After these agreements, the socio-political life of the country changed, popular unrest and various uprisings began. Religious sects in the Qajar State were, to one degree or another, an ideological reflection of the discontent of broad sections of the popular masses. For example, at the beginning of the 19th century, Sheikh Ahmed-Akhsai (Mirza Jani and some other authors call him Lakhsai), who came from Bahrain (born in 1752, died either at the end of 1826 or at the beginning of 1827), began to preach a sermon that differed in its dogmas from the dogmas of the official Muslim Shiite persuasion [Ivanov, 1937, p. 58]. During his last pilgrimage to Mecca, Sheikh Ahmed died, appointing as his successor Haji Seyyid Kazem of Rasht, a merchant by occupation. In the city of Yazd, Seyyid Kazem listened to the lectures of Sheikh Ahmed and became his follower, and then the head of the sheikh sect (as the followers of Sheikh Ahmed began to be called). They were subjected to severe persecution by the Shiite clergy. Mirza Jani, who was personally acquainted with Seyyid Kazem and sympathized with the Sheikhi teachings, wrote that during prayer, Kazem’s turban was torn off and spat in his face. One of the followers of Kazem - Abdul-Khalik in Mashhad was not allowed into mosques, to meet people, to go to the bathhouse, etc.

Despite all the persecution, Seyyid Kazem attracted quite a large number of followers. One of his students was the future founder of the Babid sect, Seyyid Ali- Mohammed, who later adopted the nickname Bab [Ivanov, 1937, p. 58-59]. Babism (from the Arabic word باب – “gate”) – it is a secret Shia sect. The sect was created by Seyyid Ali Mohammed in 1840.

After 1860, most Western scholars studying the teachings of the Báb saw it as a way to introduce Western and Christian ideals into the “closed and strict Muslim system” and to give authenticity and credibility to the Báb himself.

One of the researchers, Bernasovsky, notes that in these searches “Babism has borrowed and is borrowing a lot from Christian teaching to develop its moral aspects”. But no conclusions follow from this. All subsequent creeds borrowed something from existing ones, so we can only guess how Western scientists were going to use Babism. Moreover, most of the written sources of this doctrine were destroyed. During the period of the Babid movement, while there was no public condemnation from the ulema, neither the Shah, nor the Sadrazam (head of government), nor the local rulers took active measures to combat the Babids. The main reason for this movement was

the socio-economic and political crisis in Iran in the mid-19th century [Ivanov M.S., 1939, p.58; Kuznetsova N.A., 1983, p.206].

The Babids declared the Koran and Sharia obsolete in the new historical conditions, abolished prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to holy places, and the obligatory distribution of alms. The simplification of rituals in religion and asceticism brings the Babids closer to the Christian reformers – the founders of Lutheranism and Protestantism. The ideas of simplification were further developed in the teachings of the Bahais. But the teachings of the Bab cannot be considered only as an attempt at religious reformation; it also included the idea of organizing a fair society of the Babis [Kuznetsova N.A., 1983, p.206]. The Babids widely used Sufi-dervish terminology, and attached mystical meaning to individual words, letters and numerical combinations [Kuznetsova N.A., 1983, p. 211].

The death of Mohammed Shah in September 1848 caused the interregnum characteristic of Qajar rule, when numerous princes began to lay claim to the Shah's throne. The Babids took advantage of the political instability and openly opposed the Qajar government [Kuznetsova N.A., 1983, p.220].

The only indisputable fact is the uprisings in Mazandaran, Zanjan and Neyriz in 1848-1852, directed against the feudal system and the beginning of the enslavement of Iran by foreign capital. The driving forces of the Babid uprisings were peasants, artisans, the urban poor and small traders.

The second Nairiz uprising was the last uprising of peasants and artisans against the power of khans and ulemas, which took place under the banner of Babid ideas and was led by the disciples of the Bab. After the uprisings in Mazandaran, Zanjan, Yazd and Neyriz were suppressed, the peasants and artisans, who had lost their best forces during the uprisings, were no longer able to continue the armed struggle against their oppressors. Gradually they moved away from the movement, which began to lose its mass character. Attempts by the Babids to protest in Barfurush (Mazandaran) in the spring of 1852, in Zeyajan, in Azerbaijan and other parts of Iran were not supported by the broad masses of the people and were quickly crushed by the government. In 1852, the Babids gathered in Tehran and began preparing an attempt on Nasreddin Shah's life. As a result, the Shah was wounded [Ivanov M.S., p.128].

After the torture, one of the detainees said that the Babids were gathering in Azim's house in Zargyand. The boy serving in the house gave out the names of 223 Babids. All of them were arrested and executed, except Mirza Hussein-Ali Beh-Ullah. The Babids failed to revolt again, they were subjected to terror, after which they began to be executed in masse throughout the country. The Babids were drained of blood, intimidated by mass persecution and executions, and some stopped believing in the success of the fight against the Qajar rulers [Kuznetsova N.A., 1983, p. 224].

CONCLUSION

During the reign of the Qajar dynasty, the religious factor determined the internal and foreign policies of the Shahs. In the Qajar State, the Muslim clergy could influence the behavior and decisions of the shahs, relying on the Koran and Sharia Laws; the most revered figures were the ulema. The main goal of the shahs was to expand and maintain their political and geographical influence.

Islam influenced the way of life rather than the foreign policy of the Qajars. For example, the choice of an ally did not depend at all on religion, as evidenced by the reformist ideas of Nasreddin Shah. As for the first Qajar Shah Agha Mohammed, the first years of his reign prove that he sought to unite all Azerbaijani khanates and recognize his power. However, the Russian Empire prevented these plans. Internal contradictions and subsequent Russian-Persian wars weakened Qajar Iran and forced it to sign the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813 and the Treaty of Turkmanchay in 1828.

The main reasons for the weakening of the Shah's government were the underdevelopment of society and the lack of evolution of the socio-economic system. The Babid movements signaled growing popular discontent with the foundations of feudal society in Qajar Iran.

Besides, Iran was weakened not so much by subsequent wars as by internal contradictions or strife, and the natural outcome was the subsequent Russian-Persian wars, which ended with the conclusion of peace treaties.

Perhaps the Shah unwittingly used religion because it is a very convenient tool for taming the dissatisfied. Those dissatisfied with the internal policies of the Shah created a heretical teaching to unite the masses, because the masses could not rely on the dominant Shiite Islam in Iran, used by the political superstructure of the nomadic Qajar tribe. Therefore, something new appeared, different from the religion of the oppressors.

For objective reasons, the Qajars did not make any positive contribution to the development of society. It is quite natural that the discontent of artisans, peasants and merchants only increased. From this discontent arose the Babi faith, which attracted mainly artisans, peasants, and the petty trading bourgeoisie. A social explosion was inevitable.

If it were not for the teaching of Seyyid Ali Mohammed Shirazi, another, similar teaching would have arisen, for the essence is not in the teaching, but in the unifying idea - an idea that united the dissatisfied and allowed the settled population to resist the nomads.

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