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### *Atıf Künyesi | Citation Info*

Bakhışova, R. (2025). Development of Secondary Education in Shusha (late 19th century - early 20th century). *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, 12 (4), 625-643.

## **Development of Secondary Education in Shusha (late 19th century - early 20th century)**

### **Abstract**

After the independence of Northern Azerbaijan, the objective study of Azerbaijani history and culture became a priority. Within this framework, new scholarly perspectives emerged on the role of schools as foundations of national identity and culture. This article examines the Shusha Realschule, analyzing its role not only as a secondary-practical institution but also as a social, political, and cultural center. Drawing on archival and statistical data, it investigates the necessity of its establishment, organizational structure, financial resources, student composition, subject facilities, and curriculum. A defining characteristic of the school was its focus on technical and applied knowledge, distinguishing it from classical gymnasiums. The study further addresses Tsarist Russia's discriminatory educational policies, socio-economic barriers faced by Azerbaijani students, and deliberate disruptions of the national-ethnic balance, while underscoring the school's socio-political function. At the same time, the applied curriculum reflected its alignment with imperial strategy, particularly in language policy. Despite such constraints, the Shusha Realschule significantly contributed to regional development in education, society, and culture.

**Keywords:** *Keywords: Tsarist Russia, Karabakh, Real School, Charter, Tsarist Policy, Subject Cabinets, Financial Resources*

## **Şuşa'da Ortaöğretimin Gelişimi (19. Yüzyıl Sonu – 20. Yüzyıl Başı)**

### **Öz**

Kuzey Azerbaycan'ın bağımsızlığından sonra, Azerbaycan tarihinin ve kültürünün nesnel biçimde incelenmesi bir öncelik hâline gelmiştir. Bu çerçevede, ulusal kimlik ve kültürün temellerini oluşturan



*okulların rolüne ilişkin yeni bilimsel yaklaşımlar ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu makale, Şuşa Real Okulu'nu incelemekte; onun yalnızca orta-düzey pratik bir eğitim kurumu olarak değil, aynı zamanda sosyal, siyasal ve kültürel bir merkez olarak rolünü analiz etmektedir. Arşiv ve istatistikî verilerden yararlanılarak, okulun kurulma gerekliliği, örgütsel yapısı, mali kaynakları, öğrenci bileşimi, derslik donanımları ve müfredatı ele alınmaktadır. Okulun ayırt edici özelliği, onu klasik liselerden farklı kılan teknik ve uygulamalı bilgiye odaklanan eğitim modelidir. Çalışma ayrıca, Çarlık Rusyası'nın ayrımcı eğitim politikalarını, Azerbaycanlı öğrencilerin karşılaştığı sosyo-ekonomik engelleri ve ulusal-etnik dengenin kasıtlı olarak bozulmasını irdeleyerek, okulun sosyo-politik işlevini vurgulamaktadır. Aynı zamanda, uygulamalı müfredat, özellikle dil politikası bağlamında, imparatorluk stratejisine uyumunu da göstermektedir. Tüm bu sınırlamalara rağmen, Şuşa Real Okulu bölgenin eğitimsel, toplumsal ve kültürel gelişimine önemli katkılar sağlamıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çarlık Rusyası, Karabağ, Realnı Mektep, Nizamname, Çarlık Politikası, Derslik Donanımı, Mali Kaynaklar

### **Introduction**

After Northern Azerbaijan achieved independence, the objective rewriting of history became an imperative task. To prevent any further distortion of the historical narrative, in January 1997, during a meeting with scholars from the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the national leader Heydar Aliyev emphasized that the objective study of Azerbaijan's 19th and 20th-century history should be regarded as one of the foremost responsibilities of the scientific community (Aliyev, 1998). From this perspective, the investigation of not only military-political events but also politicized cultural processes holds significant importance. Although information on the Shusha Real School appears in certain studies from both the Soviet and post-independence periods, these works were carried out within the broader context of the history of education in Azerbaijan and thus remained general, superficial, and incomplete. The present study is the first to conduct a comprehensive and detailed examination of the school's activities. Following the Russian Empire's annexation of the Karabakh Khanate in 1805, processes serving Tsarist strategic objectives deeply infiltrated cultural life, particularly education. Since the early 19th century, school charters regulating the educational system in the South Caucasus reflected the reactionary policies of the imperial administration, and local schools were governed by colonial laws. These charters, embodying the colonial interests of Tsarism, aimed to cultivate politically reliable officials and supporters among the local Muslim population.

According to the *Regulation on Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums* approved on November 19, 1864, gymnasiums consisted of seven grades and were divided into classical gymnasiums and

real schools based on the diversity of subjects taught (Kavkazskiy vestnik, 1901; Konstantinov, 1947; Polnoye sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii, 1867). On this basis, the *Regulation on Educational Institutions in the Caucasus and Transcaucasia* was approved on June 25, 1867. Amendments and supplements were introduced on June 19, 1871, stipulating that graduates of real schools should not be admitted to any university faculties; classical gymnasiums should not be converted into real schools; classical gymnasiums and progymnasiums should be simply called gymnasiums and progymnasiums; and real gymnasiums should retain their status until a new charter for real schools was adopted (Polnoye sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii, 1874). However, this situation was short-lived: on May 15, 1872, a new charter concerning real gymnasiums was approved. According to the *Charter on Real Schools* of July 30, 1871, starting from the 1872/73 academic year, the establishment of real schools based on real gymnasiums aimed to train young people with general education grounded in practical technical knowledge and to prepare them for admission to higher technical schools and faculties (Polnoye sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii, 1875). According to the *Law on the Application of General Regulations for Gymnasiums, Progymnasiums, and Real Schools in the Caucasus Educational District* adopted on November 22, 1873, real gymnasiums in the Caucasus were renamed real schools (Kavkazskiy vestnik, 1901; Polnoye sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii, 1876; Kavkazskiy uchebnyy okrug, 1874). On the same day, the *Law on the Organization of Teaching in Transcaucasia* was passed (Ağayev, 1983; Ahmedov, 2006), which abolished the special local school regulations in Transcaucasia. Consequently, the local education system was aligned with the all-Russian educational system, and schools began to be governed by imperial regulations.

### **1. The Establishment and Development of Shusha Real School**

On March 20, 1874, the Shusha city community submitted a petition to the Yelizavetpol Governor requesting the establishment of a progymnasium or real school in Shusha. Although the Caucasus Educational District rejected this request on various grounds, Shusha's status as a sufficiently large city with expanding trade and the growing demand for secondary education encouraged repeated efforts to establish an incomplete secondary or secondary school.

On December 23, 1880, the State Council, at the Department of State Economy, approved the Caucasus Viceroy's project to establish a six-grade Real School in Shusha, consisting of six main classes and one additional chemistry-technical class (Polnoye sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii, 1884). The staffing table for the school was also approved (see Table 1).

*Table 1. Staffing table of the six-grade Shusha Real School, December 23, 1880*  
(Polnoye sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii, 1884, pp. 508–509).

	numb er of people	numb er of lessons	Annual benefit (rubles)			
			salary	canteen	apartm ent	total
director	1		1080	720	State-owned housing	1800
inspector	1		780	520		1300
Teachers:						
Russian language, literature and logic	1	22	70	121	2160 (each one 240)	30
new foreign language	1	22				
another new language	1	18				
mathematics, mechanics and calligraphy	3	46				
natural history, physics and chemistry	1	16				
geography and history	1	16				
painting and calligraphy	1	22				
classroom teachers	4		160			640
teaching assistants	2		300		90	780
doctor	1		300			300
sharia, Islamic religion and native language lessons						1500
Music and physical education teachers						500
secretary	1		200	200	60	460

stationery expenses						100
teaching materials						800
Council secretary and librarian	2		120			240
preparatory class						110 0
household maintenance, maintenance of service employees and other living expenses						200 0
<b>Total:</b>						<b>258</b> <b>50</b>
<b>Chemical Engineering Department (additional provision)</b>						
principal			120	8 0		200
inspector			120	8 0		200
staff teacher	1	12	900		240	114 0
16 additional lessons		16	960			960
classroom teacher	1		160			160
laboratory assistant	1		300		90	390
teaching supplies						175
<b>Total:</b>						<b>322</b> <b>5</b>

The Shusha Real School, consisting of a preparatory class and three main grades, was opened on September 20, 1881, and operated in a private house funded by the city's budget. The school had two preparatory classes. In 1885, an additional chemistry-technical department was established. However, due to a shortage of students, this seventh additional chemistry-technical class was temporarily closed in 1887 and fully closed in 1888, replaced instead by a seventh grade within the general department. Significant diversity in the internal structure of real schools was observed, reflecting adaptations to the demands of the local population (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya, 1887; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya, 1889; Jurnal

Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1890; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1891; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1885).

## 2. Student Contingent: Ethnic Dynamics

On May 25, 1891, the Pedagogical Council of the school proposed opening a boarding house or dormitory for boys and girls at the expense of the city's population; however, due to the burden of various taxes, this proposal was not accepted by the city residents (Azerbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Tarix Arxivi, col. 311, doc. 1, file 37). At the time of its opening in 1881, the school admitted 159 students, of whom 58 were Azerbaijani (Ahmedov, 2001; Ahmedov, 2006; Kavkazskiy kalendar, 1875; Kavkazskiy učeбnyy okrug, 1881). By 1901, the number of students increased to 457 due to the establishment of parallel classes, resulting in the operation of 12 grades—9 main and 3 parallel (Azerbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Tarix Arxivi, col. 311, doc. 1, file 237). A sharp increase in student numbers was observed again in 1907, although the cause was not explicitly stated. It is believed that this was related to the Armenian-Muslim conflicts of 1905–1906. Since both Azerbaijani and Armenian students studied at the school, during the clashes, most parents did not permit their children to attend classes.

**Table 2. Classification of Students at Shusha Real School**

(Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1887, pp. 88–89, 135, 700–701; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1890, p. 348; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1891, p. 301; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1885, p. 334; Kavkazskiy učeбnyy okrug, 1886, p. 742; Kavkazskiy učeбnyy okrug, 1891, p. 329; Kavkazskiy učeбnyy okrug, 1898, p. 225; Kavkazskiy učeбnyy okrug, 1903, p. 135; Kavkazskiy učeбnyy okrug, 1905, p. 131; Kavkazskiy učeбnyy okrug, 1908, p. 75; Kavkazskiy učeбnyy okrug, 1913, p. 65).

il	The total number of students	By nationality					
		Russian	Georgian	Armenian	Azerbaijan	Jewish	Other
1881	159	10		91	58		
1884	260	6	5	160	89	-	-
1885	279	9	5	177	88	-	-
1886	279/268	10	5	178	75	-	-
1887	268/277	14	3	189	69	-	2
1889	277	14	-	216	46	-	1
1890	279	11	-	231	35	-	2

<b>1891</b>	279/275	12	-	223	38	-	2
<b>1892</b>	292	14	1	235	42	-	-
<b>1894</b>	291	12	1	233	44	-	1
<b>1895</b>	291/298	11	5	236	45	-	1
<b>1896</b>	298/314	15	2	245	49	-	3
<b>1897</b>	314	10	3	243	51	2	4
<b>1898</b>	334	13	3	262	50	-	6
<b>1899</b>	352	15	4	272	56	-	5
<b>1900</b>	406	18	5	316	63	-	4
<b>1902</b>	511	26	4	378	99	1	3
<b>1904</b>	472	15	3	361	86	2	5
<b>1907</b>	475	26		340	108	1	-
<b>1908</b>	447	24	-	315	104	2	2
<b>1909</b>	430	20	2	293	118	-	2
<b>1910</b>	403	22	2	251	123	-	5
<b>1911</b>	370	14	3	255	93	-	5
<b>1912</b>	451	20	3	302	122	-	4

Research demonstrates that although Russians and Armenians were approximately equally represented in real schools of other regions, Armenians were significantly more numerous in the Shusha Real School. Indeed, they constituted the largest student group in this institution (see Table 1). Several factors contributed to this predominance, including the technical orientation of education in the school, the relative ease of finding employment after graduation, and the personnel policy pursued by the imperial administration in the region. Another important factor was that the local Azerbaijani population, heavily burdened by numerous taxes imposed by Tsarist Russia, often engaged their children in household work to meet these obligations, whereas Armenians were frequently exempted from such fiscal burdens in order to align with the strategic interests of the Empire. In addition, personal recollections of individuals educated in the Karabakh region emphasize the presence of interethnic tensions and instances of discrimination between Azerbaijani and Armenian students enrolled in secular educational institutions.

According to the 1872 regulations, real schools were initially intended to provide a general education; however, this scope was later reduced. Despite this limitation, the curriculum of real schools remained more practical compared to classical gymnasiums, offering students technical

training alongside a general education adapted to social needs. Nevertheless, graduates of real schools were not admitted to faculties of the humanities but were restricted to higher technical schools and agricultural institutes (Ahmedov, 2001).

### **3. Education System and Cultural-Social Activities**

During the reactionary period, subject reductions also affected real schools. Mathematics, physics, natural sciences, two new foreign languages, drawing and penmanship, Russian language and literature, history, and geography were taught as core subjects (Ahmedov, 2001). Meanwhile, subjects such as German, Georgian, Azerbaijani, and Armenian languages, gymnastics, music, singing, arts, and gardening were considered non-compulsory. Local languages were taught in the preparatory and first four grades. German, taught in all Caucasus real schools except Stavropol (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1887; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1889), became a non-compulsory subject from the third grade in 1887.

According to the 1888 law, German instruction was compulsory for first-grade students, and both German and French were compulsory for second-grade students. In higher grades, only French was mandatory. Only the Tiflis and Shusha Real Schools retained German as a compulsory subject in the third grade (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1890). In 1889, reforms altered some non-compulsory subjects in real schools: the new curriculum made German compulsory in lower grades but non-compulsory from the fourth grade upwards. However, in Tiflis and Shusha, German remained compulsory in the fourth grade as well (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1891). From the second half of 1890, German was compulsory in lower grades and non-compulsory in higher grades, except in Tiflis and Shusha, where it was compulsory up to the fifth grade, and from the 1892–1893 academic year, also in the sixth and seventh grades. This did not apply to students repeating the same grade or those who had not previously studied German (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1892; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1894). Student orchestras operated in both Shusha and Yeysk Real Schools. Meteorological stations were active in Shusha, Kuban, Temir-Khan-Shura, and Yeysk Real Schools, where students were trained in meteorological observations (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1890; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1891; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1892; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1894; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1896).

#### 4. Financial Provision and Administration

By decree of the Minister of Public Education, in February 1899, three identical scholarships of 1,500 rubles each, named after Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolayevich and awarded for academic performance and conduct, were established at the Shusha Real School through donations collected from the city's residents (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1899a; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1899b; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1899c). On June 15, 1889, the Pedagogical Council decided to organize moral and literary discussions at the school (Azerbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Tarix Arxivi, col. 311, doc. 1, file 240). The establishment of the Shusha Real School was funded with 21,575 rubles from local revenues and 7,500 rubles from the Shusha city community. Those capable of supporting the school in Shusha had to be divided annually into two groups: one part would return the amount allocated from the province's revenues back to the treasury, while the other part would cover the school's needs (Polnoye sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii, 1876; Polnoye sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii, 1884) (Table 3). The primary sources of funding for the Shusha Real School were the state treasury, the city community, and tuition fees. From 1881 to 1890, the Shusha city community allocated 7,500 rubles annually to support the school (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1889; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1890). Tuition fees amounted to 3,786 rubles in 1884, increasing more than fivefold to 19,336 rubles by 1904 (Table 3). In Shusha Real School, the tuition fees during 1884–1886 were 10 rubles for the lower grades and 20 rubles for the upper grades (Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1887; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1889; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1890). By the end of the century, the fee was set at 20 rubles for both lower and upper grades. Although the tuition fee increased to 23 rubles in 1902, it doubled by 1904. Following the Armenian-Muslim massacres, there was a noticeable decrease in the tuition fee, but this decline was short-lived, as by 1912 the fee again reached 46 rubles.

*Table 3. Sources of Funding for the Shusha Real School*

(Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1887 (251), pp. 703; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1885, pp. 306–307; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1886, pp. 308–309; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1891, p. 308; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1898, p. 204; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1887 (251), p. 114; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1887 (254), p. 114; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1903, p. 114; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1905, p. 110; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga,

1908, p. 97; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1912, p. 89; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1913, pp. 702–703).

ii	From the state treasury		from the municipal community	from tuition	from honorary popechitel	from donations	from interest on endowment capital	other income	total	with the balance from the previous year	along with the residue
	For the provision of the educational institution	For supplementary salary									
1884	21863	1339	7500	3786	1395		267		36150	10606	46756
1885	21510	3035	7500	4205			57		36307	12739	49046
1890	21635	4151	7500	5100			107	70	38563	11341	49904
1897	19600	1779	6902	5680	720		1403		36084	18271	54355
1898	19451	1465	6902	5800	720	390	4		34732	16439	51171
1899	19451	1127	6902	6260	720		4	150	34614	16041	50655
1902	19451	941	6902	10260	720		916	2133	41323	27259	68582
1904	19451	804	6902	19336	1440		4	2683	50620	22765	73385
1907	19239	859	6902	11197	720			1962	40879	24580	65459
1911	18726	742	6902	16742			314	2137	45563	17124	62687
1912	29563	909	6902	17261			308		54943	16594	71537

One noteworthy aspect is that nearly half of the funds allocated for the school's provision remained unspent (see Table 3).

*Table 4. Expenditures of the Shusha Real School*

(Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvěsheniya, 1887 (No. 251), p. 91(703), p. 114; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvěsheniya, 1887 (No. 254), p. 114; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1885, pp. 70–71(306–307); Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1886, pp. 72–73(308–309); Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1891, p. 72(308); Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1898, p. 204; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1903, p. 114; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1905, p. 110; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1908, p. 97; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1912, p. 89; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1913, pp. 90–91(702–703).

In our assessment, the government allocated substantial funds largely to create the appearance of support, while simultaneously establishing “facilitating conditions” that hindered the actual disbursement of these resources. It is also plausible that the amount officially recorded as allocated differed from the amount ultimately transferred to the school. In practice, the balance reported as carried forward to the subsequent year was likely never delivered to the institution. At the Shusha Real School, the largest share of financial resources was directed toward operational expenses and staff remuneration (see Table 4).

Year	educational institution renovation	utility expenses	teaching materials	personal staff provision	additional salary	parallel classes provision	financial assistance to service employees	financial assistance to teachers	Specifically allocated amount		other income	total
									To the Ministry of Public Education	To the Caucasus Educational District		
1884	0	2168	6755	20571	1339		1264	72	390	76	1379	34014
1885	0	5616	5961	22866	2668		2310	222	294	84	218	40239
1890	0	2615	1416	25688	3850		995	327	357	285	43	35576
1897	267	966	534	24376	1264		2275	22	398	228	7586	37916
1898	244	3619	859	24567	951		2500	144	406	261	1579	35130
1899	263	3674	133	23537	1090		1875	191	438	278	1102	32581
1902	457	4131	654	27268	676	4853	2301	274	702	432	2672	44420
1904	651	6008	315	24128	544	9131	2200	760	1401	819	2333	48290
1907	217	10630	1142	26312	480		3315	1938	335	480	10229	55078
1911	489	8033	621	26448	742	6597	545	337	1006	575	700	46093
1912	1220	10015	1207	30819	831	7736	940		1120	640	218	54746

## 5. Subject Laboratories and Educational Equipment

The Shusha Real School operated dedicated cabinets for physics, chemistry, and natural history (see Table 5).

*Table 5. Condition of Cabinets at Shusha Real School*

(Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvēsheniya (1887, No. 251, p. 91(703); 1887, No. 254, p. 114); Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga (1885, pp. 70–71(306–307); 1886, pp. 72–73(308–309); 1891, p. 72(308); 1898, p. 204; 1903, p. 114; 1905, p. 110; 1908, p. 97; 1912, p. 89; 1913, pp. 90–91(702–703)).

Year	Physics				Chemistry				Natural-Historical				Total					
	Number of items		Financial value		Number of items		Financial value		Number of items		Financial value		Number of items		Financial value		Acquired during reporting year	
																	Number of items	Financial value
1884	403	7715		2704	901	2540		2394	360	1503		205	1664	11758	0	5303		
1885	479	9060		1395	1227	3117		577	379	1787		293	2085	13964	0	2265		
1886	479	9060		0		2882												
1888		9225		165						2214								
1890	541	9797	17	342	1179	3043	3	10	805	2220	4	6	2525	15060	24	358		
1897	667	10132	96	175	934	2613			900	2722			2501	15467	96	175		
1898	667	10132			874	2574			900	2722			2441	15428	-	-		
1899	646	10205	23	90	872	2565			898	2720			2446	15490	23	90		
1902	727	11089	31	194	880	2571			897	2721			2504	16381	31	194		
1904	766	11424	2	14	880	2571			919	2976	19	225	2565	16971	21	239		
1907	677	10873	2	37	795	1306			919	2976			2391	15155	2	37		
1911	646	10415	16	52	211	1294			766	2283	11	150	1623	13992	27	202		
1912	698	9680	129	349	383	1418	10	87	349	2136			1430	13234	139			

Including the year 1885, a total of 52,507 rubles were allocated to the physics cabinets of real schools, with more than 9,000 rubles spent specifically on the physics cabinet of Shusha Real

School. This made it the wealthiest institution in terms of funding for the physics cabinet among Caucasus schools. In 1885 alone, 1,395 rubles were allocated to this school (*Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya*, 1887, No. 251, p. 702) (see Table 5). In 1886, the physics cabinets of seven real schools held equipment valued at 53,820 rubles, comprising 3,378 items. According to 1886 data, the physics cabinet of Shusha Real School received the largest allocation, amounting to 9,060 rubles. Although 1,467 rubles were allocated for the maintenance of physics cabinets that year, this sum was not applied to Shusha Real School. During 1887–1888, Shusha Real School remained the wealthiest in both physics (9,225 rubles) and natural history (2,214 rubles) cabinets (*Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya*, 1889, p. 274; *Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya*, 1890, p. 336) (see Table 5). In 1885, Shusha Real School ranked second after Baku in terms of chemical cabinet equipment. The chemistry cabinet housed items valued at 3,117 rubles, consisting of 1,227 objects (*Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya*, 1887, No. 251, p. 702). In 1886, chemistry cabinets across the real schools contained 4,969 pieces of equipment valued at 16,158 rubles. Compared to 1885, the list of reagents and containers was reduced, resulting in a decrease in equipment and funding in the chemistry cabinets of Temir-Khan-Shura and Shusha Real Schools. However, the chemistry cabinet of Shusha Real School, which operated a chemistry-technical class, remained second only to Baku Real School in terms of total funding (2,882 rubles vs. 5,693 rubles). For the reporting year, 1,639 rubles were allocated for purchasing new supplies for the chemistry laboratories of Shusha and Baku Real Schools (*Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya*, 1889, pp. 274–275). In 1890, due to low rates of equipment deterioration, no additional funds were allocated to chemistry cabinets, except for three pieces of equipment worth 10 rubles purchased for Shusha's chemistry cabinet (*Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya*, 1892, p. 303) (see Table 5). In 1885, the natural history cabinet at Shusha Real School contained 379 items valued at 1,787 rubles—the highest amount recorded for that year (*Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya*, 1887, No. 251, p. 702). In 1886, natural history cabinets across the real schools contained 6,179 items valued at 8,746 rubles. The wealthiest natural history cabinets were at Shusha and Kuban Real Schools. During the same year, an additional 366 rubles were allocated solely to the natural history cabinets of Baku, Shusha, and Kuban Real Schools (*Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvešeniya*, 1889, p. 275) (see Table 5). Although financial resources for cabinets increased steadily until 1904, a noticeable decline occurred in that year. An even sharper decrease is reflected in the 1912 statistics, with approximately a twofold reduction in

funding for the chemistry cabinet and about a threefold decrease for the natural history cabinet (see Table 5). Special institutions operated at six real schools to provide students with necessary equipment. Approximately half of the funding for these provisions came from the proceeds of concerts, theater performances, and dance evenings (*Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya*, 1898, p. 686) (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Other Educational Supplies at Shusha Real School**

(Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1885, pp. 68–69 (304–305); Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1886, p. 7 (307); Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1891, p. 70 (306); Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1898, p. 202; Jurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveşeniya, 1887, No. 251, p. 112; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1900, p. 112; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1903, p. 112; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1905, p. 108; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1908, p. 95; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1912, p. 89; Otchet popechitelya Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1913, p. 90 (702)) (in Russian).

Year	Number of items	Financial value	Acquired during reporting year	
			Number of items	Financial value
1884	616	3171	-	445
1885	791	4793	-	1682
1890	1001	5673	101	301
1897	1282	6478	38	69
1898	1320	7291	58	831
1902	1736	8519	133	460
1904	1886	8748	-	-
1907	1934	9259	48	505
1911	2136	8241	16	5
1912	1797	6688	13	475

The data in Table 6 demonstrate that the Shusha Realschule experienced steady growth in its educational equipment and resources from the 1880s to the early 1900s. A consistent increase in both the number of items and their financial value is particularly evident between 1890 and 1907, reflecting significant investment in the school's material base. However, from 1911 onwards, a

noticeable decline in both quantity and value occurred, indicating fluctuations in the Tsarist administration's investment policies and the direct impact of broader socio-political conditions on the material and technical infrastructure of educational institutions in the region.

### Conclusion

Following the establishment of the Shusha city school, which primarily offered a humanitarian-oriented education, the Shusha Real School was founded to address the growing demand of the local population for technical education. With its more practical curriculum compared to other secondary schools, the institution played a vital role in preparing specialists for technical and agricultural fields. Although references to the school are found in certain earlier studies, the available data have remained largely superficial, fragmented, and incomplete. The present article undertakes, for the first time, a systematic examination of the school's development, including the dynamics of student enrollment, ethnic composition, financial indicators (sources of funding and expenditures), and the condition of specialized subject cabinets. The results of this study highlight that the Shusha Real School was not only an educational institution but also an important social and cultural space where broader imperial policies intersected with local realities. Its trajectory illustrates both the transformative potential of modern education in the Caucasus and the challenges posed by interethnic relations and imperial governance. In this regard, the findings may serve as a basis for further comparative studies on the role of real schools in the Russian Empire, while also contributing to a deeper understanding of Azerbaijan's educational and cultural modernization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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