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Atlas Géopolitique Informatique du Caucase, edited by Nicolas Beroutchachvili and Jean Radvanyi. Paris: Observatoire des états post-soviétiques, Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO) and Tbilissi: Laboratoire de cartographie de l'Université de Tbilissi, 1996. FF 455. ISBN 2-85831-076-9.

The product of a collaboration between the *Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales* of Paris and the University of Tbilissi, this atlas covers the three Transcaucasian republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, the seven North Caucasian autonomous republics of the Russian Federation, and the neighboring Russian provinces of Krasnodar and Stavropol. This work comprises some thirty-seven maps, divided into seven sections. It is just a traditional book with no connection to any computer or electronic system, despite the 'informatique' in the title, which can mislead the readers, and which is simply an unfortunate reference to the *Laboratoire de cartographie et géo-informatique* of the Department of Geography at the University of Tbilissi, one of the two centers responsible for the elaboration of the atlas.

The editors have chosen selected maps treating the most relevant issues of the post-Soviet Caucasus. Consequently, a full thirteen maps are devoted to the ethnic, linguistic, and religious distribution of the population, while seven maps are devoted to the economic and transport situation, three to armed conflicts and territorial claims, and two to election statistics. The information is analyzed at the degree of the *raion* (district), which, given the small size of these districts, results in a remarkable level of accuracy. Many of these maps have never been generated before, and the quality achieved is particularly high. This is no small achievement, given the complexity of the Caucasus.

Maps 11 and 12 are particularly significant. They show the distributions by district of the majority ethnic group and the first minority group respectively at the time of the 1989 Soviet census. Map 21 complements them with a picture of changes in ethnic distribution due to the various conflicts that have affected the area since 1988. Unfortunately, this map contains a small mistake, as it shows that the Shahumian district of Azerbaijan (located north of Mountainous Karabakh) was cleared of its Azerbaijani population, although actually the Armenians, and not the Azerbaijanis, were evicted from the district in June 1992. Map 22 displays the changes in the communication and transport network since 1988, including new customs posts and roads submitted to blockades. Map 23 introduces the current and projected pipelines, which will eventually transport the oil of the Caspian Basin. Finally, potential and actual conflicts are the focus of map 30, while the 'mythical' maps of the contending claims of nationalist groups to territories alternately

designated as 'Greater Armenia', 'Greater Azerbaijan' and 'Greater Georgia' are revealed in map 31.

The only map suffering from serious weaknesses is map 4, which represents the evolution of borders between 1897 and 1989. As an example, the present borders between Armenia and Georgia, and between Armenia and Azerbaijan, are shown as having remained identical with the boundaries which demarcated the Tsarist provinces of Elizavetpol (Ganja or Gandzak), Erevan, and Tiflis (Tbilisi), although this clearly is not the case. Similarly, the areas of Akhalkalak and Akhalsikh appear to belong to the Tsarist province of Kars, although they were part of the province of Tiflis. However, this map is an exception in an otherwise brilliant and successful work, which belongs in the library of every reader having an interest in the tormented but fascinating Caucasus.

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