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ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN
THROUGH PEACE AND WAR

black garden

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Autumn of 1988 saw the Armenians turn against their Azerbaijani minority and expel them from Armenia. There is a misconception that the Azerbaijani population of Armenia did not suffer in the dispute. Many of them did leave peacefully, and there was little or no intercommunal violence in Yerevan, but Yerevan had only a tiny Azerbaijani population and it was not hard for the security forces there to keep order. In rural areas, there was widespread violence. Armenian gangs raided Azerbaijani villages; many of their residents were beaten, shot, had their homes burned, or were forced to flee on foot. By the end of the year, the Armenian countryside had dozens of deserted villages that had been depopulated of most of Armenia's more than 200,000 Azerbaijanis and Muslim Kurds.¹⁵

By 1989, all of the remaining Azerbaijanis of Armenia were being deported, although most of the worst violence had ended.