

## **SPRING 1918: ARMENIAN TERRORISM AND THE TURKO - MOSLEM GENOCIDE IN AZERBAIJAN**

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An urgent meeting of the leaders of the Baku Soviet was held on March 30 in the evening. They decided to start fighting, and the Armenian National Council and the Dashnak leaders were asked to start the movement of their military forces. The headquarters of the military-training staff was established in the Hotel Casino. A.Mikoyan and N.Anonchenko were instructed to deal with all the relevant organizational matters. Meanwhile, they attacked the Moslem military forces, but it was defeated. Then they started to fire on the Moslem districts of Baku from the vessels of the Caspian fleet and from aircraft, and this created a horrible situation in the city.

Special Bolshevik agitators had been sent to the military vessels. Since the crews of these vessels were neither pro-Moslem nor pro-Bolshevik, the agitators told that the Moslems had been committing genocide against the Russian population of the city. But after several hours of bombardment the Russian marines understood that they had been deceived and the Moslems of the city were being massacred in the name of the struggle against "Musavatists." Therefore, they stopped bombing the city. Having been deceived by the same provocateurs, many Russo-Molocan regiments also were brought to the city from Mughan region of Azerbaijan. When they realized the actual situation in the city and refused to fight, the Soviet and Armenian military forces disarmed them. The arms taken from Molocans were distributed to the Armenian "volunteers", who were impatiently waiting for them.

Under these conditions the Musavatist leaders accepted the ultimatum of the Revolutionary Defense Committee (RDC) in order to save the population directed by ward bosses (*qochular*), who were

acting under their emotions. Later on M.E.Rasulzadeh wrote on this issue: 'The major reason for our failure in the March events... was that our people had not been led by the heads of political fractions and the well-known leaders of the society, but followed irresponsible men whose actions were emotional rather than rational'.

The Moslem delegation came to the Executive Committee of the Soviet on March 31 in order to start negotiations. Despite the fact that the ultimatum of the RDC was accepted by the Moslems, the negotiations held with Gaparidze gave no important results, and three of the Moslem delegates were shot while coming back from the negotiations.

The murder of the Moslem delegates in spite of Gaparidze's special instruction on providing security for the delegation intensified the conflict even more. In the morning of March 31 the leaders of the "triumphant" Armenian military forces as well as the armed Armenian intellectuals gathered in the headquarters of the RDC. Having been briefly instructed, they were sent back to the Moslem districts of the city. From the districts entirely inhabited by Moslems, such as "Mahammadali" and "P... Dere", few people could escape the massacre. It is shown in the archive documents that "well-armed and trained Armenian soldiers... were breaking into houses, killing people, cutting various parts of their bodies and throwing the Moslem children into the burning houses. Babies of 2-3 days were bayoneted savagely."

The Moslem women were subjected to more horrible forms of slaughter. According to the documents of the Azerbaijan Republic State Archive of the History of Political Parties and Social Movements (AHPPSM), 37 dead bodies with cut noses, ears and sexual organs were found just in one district of the city. Many young Azeri women were nailed to the wall alive.

In order to shoot those trying to escape, special machine gunners had been placed beforehand at suitable positions. The Bolshevik Regiment led by N.Anonchenko were deployed in Marinskiy, Bazarny and Nicolaevskiy streets as well as in Hotel Metropol and the building of the newspaper *Kaspi*. These regiments were aimed at slaughtering the people escaping from Icherisheher toward the harbour.<sup>19</sup>

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After the complete destruction of the other Moslem districts of city, Operation Icherisheher started on March 31 at night. In capture of the Icherisheher fortress many Red Guards, such as Sur Shaumyan, Ovchiyan, Kaltzyan, Sarkis, Gaber-Kori, Arte Manucharov, Akopov and the others led by N.Anonchenko took active part.

Many official documents and protocols on testimonies witnesses confirm that the Armenian intellectuals directly participate in this acts of massacre and inspired the soldiers, who had already lost their moral qualities as human beings, to murder Moslems by more savage methods. There are plenty of documents about the acts of burning the Moslem corpses and degrading them in other abominable forms by the Armenian clergy and intellectuals. In the report submitted to the Ministry of Justice by the chairman of the Extraordinary Investigation Commission the following were recorded: 'The Armenian soldiers who were on the offensive along with the Nicolaevskiy Street were headed mainly by the Armenian intellectuals. Another group of Armenians broke into the house of Bala Ahmad Mukhtarov in the Fars Street, brought nine Moslem intellectuals out of the house and shot them in the church square, and then threw two of the corpses into the burning Hotel Daghestan.'<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, the Armenian intellectuals called for the destruction of Turko-Islamic cultural centers and historical heritage. As it was recorded in the journal *Yeni Qafqaziya*: 'This conflict exerted upon not only the survival, but also the morality of the Turks. Within three days 15,000 Moslems were killed and the unique cultural heritage of Turks—the Islamiyyeh building—and the publishing houses of the journals *Achiq Söz* and *Kaspi* were fired on. The biggest mosque of Baku [that is, the Islamiyyeh - J.H] was riddled by gunfire.'

Burning down of Islamiyyeh (popularly known as "the home of Turks") was one of the gravest crimes committed by Armenians against the Azerbaijani Turks. In his book "Historical, Cultural and Political Information About Azerbaijan" published in 1919, Adilkhan Ziyadkhanly wrote: "The names of those who burnt down Islamiyyeh—the cradle of Turkic culture—must be remarked in the

history as the name of Herostrates had been remarked for his burning down the Greek temple in Efesus [ the temple of Artemida - J.H.]. The legend says, Herostrates was not punished by court, because he was not mentally fit. But those who burnt down the Islamiyyeh were intellectuals and did it deliberately. Therefore, the Azerbaijani Turks will damn them every time they see the destroyed Islamiyyeh".<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the Extraordinary Investigation Commission reported that from March 30 to April 1, over twelve thousand "counter-revolutionaries" were killed by the combined Armenian and Bolshevik military forces. Of course, the term "counter-revolutionary" here refers to the Turko -Moslem population of Baku.

The newspaper of Merisheviks, *Nash Golos*, described the situation in the city after the massacre as follows: "There were corpses everywhere. Small "mountains" made up of the tormented and unrecognizable corpses of men, women and children appeared in many parts of the city. The sight around Tezepir mosque was horrible. The mosque was burnt down... We will have to do many things in order to eliminate this hostility and avoid this sense of hate turning into a sense of revenge."<sup>22</sup>

The RDC, having broken the negotiations of Marsh 31 under various pretexts and seen that the existing situation was in its favour, demarched with another ultimatum on April 1. It was stated in the ultimatum that if demands of the RDC were not met by 3: 00 p.m., it would continue the war. At 4: 00 p.m. a delegation of the political parties and associations of Azerbaijan, which included A.Ashurov, E.M.Topchubashov, Molia Haji Mir Muhsin, Haji Husseyn Taghiyev and Ebdul Kazimzadeh, went to the Hotel Astora for negotiating With the RDC. In the "peace conference" opened by Gaparidze an hour later, Fioletov, Dudin, Sukhartsev and the delegates of the Armenian National Council —Atabeyov and Ter-Mikosyan, as well as the Consul of Iran in Baku Hebibullah Khan also took part.

The ultimatum declared by Gaparidze in this meeting was directed completely against the Musavat Party. They blamed the Musavatists for all these events. But E.Kazimzadeh protested to their accusations about Musavat and stated that the Soviet and Dashnak military forces

were responsible for this tragedy. After long debates on the issue, the ultimatum of the RDC was accepted at 9: 00 p.m. The following were set down in the articles of the ultimatum: 1. The authority of the Soviet of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors of Baku is to be recognized. 2. The counter-revolutionary "Savage Division" [as they called the Moslem division - J.H] is to be immediately withdrawn from Baku and its districts, and the remaining Moslem and Armenian military forces are either to withdraw from Baku or be completely subordinated to the Soviet of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors of Baku and the issue of the armament of the population as a whole is to be supervised by the Baku Soviet. 3. Immediate measures are to be taken to open the railroads from Baku to Tiflis and Petrovsk.<sup>23</sup>

Although a cease-fire agreement was concluded in this meeting, the attacks of the Armenian and Soviet military bands on the Moslem districts continued until the evening of April 2. For example, the people who came together to extinguish the burning Ismailiyeh mosque were shot down again.

After all this, the Turko - Moslem people of the city who managed to survive began to leave Baku in droves. On April 2 Gaparidze wrote to S.Shaumyan that assistance to them was coming from Tashkent and the North, and it was time to give the Moslems autonomy in order to pacify them for a while. In order to represent this tragedy to the Moslem population as a "revolutionary movement", not a massacre of Moslems, M. Ezizbeyov was appointed as the Commissar of the Moslem districts, from where the Moslems had already fled...<sup>24</sup>

Making a report in the Baku Soviet about the agreement that was signed after the defeat of Azeri people, I. Sukhartsev joyfully announced that the Musavat party had been annihilated and the "Baku front of Turkey" had been defeated.<sup>25</sup> Thus, from the March Genocide to September 1918, Baku was in the hands of Armenians in coalition with various political groups, and those who could not leave the city due to the material difficulties and poverty, as well as the population of the nearby villages had been subjected to the Armenian terror.

S.Shaumyan was the leading figure among those who initiated the falsification of this massacre by reporting the number of murdered

Azeris as much less than it was and representing these events under the cover of "civil war."<sup>11</sup> In the report that he sent to Moscow— to the Soviet of Public Commissars —on April 13 he wrote: "During three days — from March 30 to April 1 — there were intense skirmishes in the city of Baku. On one front the Soviet Red Army that we established, the Red Fleet and the Armenian national regiments, on the other front the Moslem "Savage Division" and armed Moslem bands led by the Musavat Party were fighting... Airplanes of the Aviation School also assisted us. We have achieved good results in the battles. The enemy has been completely destroyed... The casualties from both sides are about three thousand. If they had won the battles in Baku, they would have declared the city the capital of Azerbaijan, and all the non-Moslems would have been disarmed and massacred."<sup>26</sup>

A year later the Armenians started to represent the March events as a struggle for power between Bolsheviks and the Moslems. In the document submitted by the bishop of the Armenians of Baku to General Harbord, the head of the US mission, which had been to Baku in the fall of 1919, it was stated that the Armenians had not participated in the March genocide. Just like S. Shaumyan, he, too, falsified the number of people murdered. He argued that during these events, 1000 people had been killed, of which 300 were Armenians and Russians and 700 were Moslems.<sup>27</sup>

Since the March genocide had resulted in very heavy casualties, the Armenian press was frequently publishing articles in which the participation of Armenians in this event was denied and the event as a whole was misrepresented. The Dashnak newspaper *Ashratavor* had published so many false articles that even the newspaper *Gruziya* (Georgia) expressed its objections: "They [*Ashratavor's* writers- J.H] are very well aware of how the Armenians fought the Moslems and what crimes they committed during the rule of Bolsheviks in Baku. Haven't they seen the photos of Armenian soldiers killing pregnant Moslem women and cutting the heads of their babies".<sup>28</sup>

The Turko-Moslem genocide was committed not only in Baku, but also in the nearby provinces such as Shamakhy, Quba-Khachmaz, Lenkaran, Hajiqabul and Salyan, beginning from early April. "The

punishment regiments" which were being sent to the provinces of Azerbaijan under the cover of "Soviet forces" were led by Armenian "commanders" such as T.Emiyan, S.Lalayan, Hamazasp and many others. Among these provinces Shamakhy was subjected to the heaviest punishments by Dashnaks. In the first half of April, the Moslem population of the city of Shamakhy and the nearby villages suffered severe from the casualties, and those who managed to survive left the province. It was noted in the documents of the Extraordinary Investigation Commission that 15 carriages full of arms had been delivered from Baku to Medrese in January. In mid-March, two thousand Armenian soldiers and 60 more carriages of arms had been sent to Shamakhy by the Baku Soviet. After the negotiations with the Armenian inhabitants of the province, the tensions between them and the Moslems decreased, but this did not last very long. In the morning of March 30 [When the genocide in Baku started - J.H] the Armenian-Bolshevik forces started to fire on Shamakhy from Medrese.

The Armenians, having achieved military superiority in Shamakhy, began to "cleanse" this province of Azeris. The military operations of Armenian national forces were led by Shaumyan<sup>N</sup>'s deputies and S. Lalayan, who received instructions directly from him. Lalayan, having come to Shamakhy as the commander of the Armenian forces, ordered his soldiers to besiege the mosques and other buildings where the elderly, women and children gathered, to shoot everyone in the streets and to burn mosques. According to a document of AHPPSM, Akhund Molla Jafarqulu, a Moslem priest who hid many women and children in order to save them from the massacre was killed by the Armenian soldiers... They broke into the mosque, found him, took out his eyes, cut his nose, ears and tongue, stripped off the skin of his head and face and finally shot him. They shot all the women in the mosque". In a few years the Moslem populated parts of Shamakhy were completely destroyed. The Moslem villages of the province were subjected to the Armenian terror. 51 villages of Shamakhy were destroyed by the Armenian military force of the Baku Soviet in one month. About 8,000 people were killed o

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which over 2600 were women and children. The material loss of the Moslems of Shamakhy amounted to more than one billion rubles.<sup>29</sup>

Shamakhy could not recover from the damages of this bloody destruction for years. The population of the city decreased sharply. In 1918 the population was 15,000, of which Turks constituted 80 percent, whereas in 1921 it was a village with 1700 inhabitants.<sup>30</sup>

"The punishment regiments" headed by the Armenian-Bolsheviks committed similar savage acts in Quba, Geoychay, Kurdemir, Salyan and Lenkaran, as well. An Armenian regiment of two thousand soldiers in Lenkaran was so insolent that even the Georgians of the province fought against them.

The main aim of the Armenians after their victory in Baku was to attack Ganja so that all of Azerbaijan would be occupied, and hand in hand with the Armenians of Karabagh made making preparations for this. S.Shaumyan expressed this intention when he was making a report to the Soviet of Public Commissars in May. In his opinion, after the Soviet army captured the Yevlakh Bridge and deployed forces along the Kur River, they would attack Yelizavetpol (Ganja) in order to provoke Armenian riots in that province. However, the I establishment of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan in May 1918, the restoration of national statehood and the beginning of the struggle for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan kept the Armenian-Bolshevik aggressors from implementing their plan to occupy all of Azerbaijan.

The documents compiled by the Extraordinary Investigation Commission, established by the Azerbaijani government in August 1918, confirm that thousands of native Turko-Moslem people had been massacred in Baku and other provinces of Azerbaijan by the armed forces of Dashnaks and the other Armenian parties, and the Soviet organs, in which the Armenians had been in a dominant position.

According to the Resolution of the UN General Assembly dated December 11, 1946, and the International Convention of December 9, 1949, such acts of massive punishments are considered genocide. The forms and magnitude of the tragedy of 1918 [50,000 Azeris savagely killed by Armenians] as well as many international legal acts and



documents constitute a strong basis for this massacre of Azerbaijani Turks to be considered genocide. Of course, the UN and many other international organizations should be informed about this.

Unfortunately, the Armenian terrorists' hatred for and enmity towards the Azeris have continued up to the present. The massacres committed by the Armenian terrorists in the territory of Azerbaijan in the last 10 years are of the same nature as those committed in 1918. Those who sometimes compare the Armenian terrorists with fascists miss one point, that during fascist occupations the indigenous people had not been forced to, leave their motherland. However, in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan there is no Azeri.

The roots of this should be sought in the history of Armenian terrorism and their psychology of hate, just one example of which I briefly analyzed in this article. It's worth to keep in mind Lord Curzon<sup>4</sup>'s opinion that the Armenians were not as clean and innocent as an 8-year-girl. By their extremely savage acts they had proved to what extent they are

### **NOTES**

19. The Republic of Azerbaijan Archive of the History of Political Parties and Social Movements (AHPPSM), fund 276, page 2, case 22, points 75-77.
20. *Azerbaijan*, October 17, 1992.
21. A. Ziyadkhanov, *Azerbaijan*, Baku, 1993, p. 81.
22. *Nash Golos*, Marsh 24, 1918.
23. *Byulleten KRO g. Baku i y ego rayonov*, April 4, 1918.
24. *Byulleten KRO g. Baku i y ego rayonov*, April 7, 1918.
25. *Yeni Qafqaziya*, March 31, 1924.
26. M.G. Shaumyan, *Selected Articles*, vol. III, Baku, 1978, pp. 259-260.
27. AHPPSM, fund 276, page 2, case 22, point 25.
28. *Gruziya*, November 26, 1918.
29. The Central State Archive of the History of Manuscripts, Baku, fund 1061, page 1, case 108, point 7.
30. *Noviy Vostok*, 3, 1922, p. 184.
31. TAN, March 12, 1920.

*Xülas***1918-Cİ İLİN YAZI: AZERBAJCANDA ERMƏNİ  
TERRORİZMİ V TÜRKMÜSLƏMLƏRİN SOYQIRIMI***C mil H S NLI**(Bah Dövlət Universiteti, Azərbaycan)*

1918-ci ilin yazında Bakıda baş vermiş hadisələr o zamankı Rusiyanın hər bir gəşsi ilə müqayisə etmək mümkün deyil. Bolşeviklərlə birləşən erməni milli, dini siyasi təşkilatları Qafqazda türk-müsləman halisinə qarşı etnik təmizləmə planlarını həyata keçirmək üçün faciəli hadisələr törətdilər. 1918-ci ilin may ayında yaradılmış Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin ilk addımlarından biri türk-müsləman halisinə qarşı törədilmiş kütləvi qətl və qarşılıqlı araşdıran Fövqəladə İstintaq Komissiyasının yaradılması oldu. Bu komissiyanın topladığı materiallar Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Arxivinin 1061-ci fondunda və Siyasi Partiyalar, İctimai Hərəkətlər Dövlət Arxivinin 277-ci fondunda toplanmışdır. Qeyd edilən fondlarda toplanan materialların araşdırması 1918-ci ilin mart ayında Bakıda, az sonra isə Azərbaycan qəzalığında türk-müsləman əhalisinə qarşı genosid hadisəsi törədildiyini təsdiq edir.

Azərbaycan Milli Hərəkətinin genişlənməsi, "Musavat" partiyasının ümummilli partiyaya çevrilməsi "Böyük Ermənistan" xülyası ilə yaşayan erməni siyasi təşkilatlarını narahat etməyə başlamışdı. Mart hadisələrini törətməkdə yaxın məqsəd Bakıda "Musavat"ın sosial bazasını məhv etmək idi. Bu planı gerçəkləşdirmək üçün ermənilər Bakıda müxtəlif adlar altında 18 min nəfərlik silahlı qüvvə toplamışdılar. Bakıda qanlı hadisələr mart ayının 30-da başladı və üç gün davam etdi. Fövqəladə İstintaq Komissiyasının ümumiləşdirdiyi hesabatla görə üç gün ərzində Bakıda milli və dini əlamətə görə 12 min türk müsləman qətlə yetirilib. Azərbaycan mədəniyyət mərkəzləri, "İsmailiyyə", "Qoşa Qala qapısı", "Teze Pir" məscidi və s., "Kaspi" və "Açıq söz" qəzetlərinin redaksiyaları, habelə onlarca məmarlıq incileri düşmənin tərəfindən dağıdılmışdır. Qətl və qəretlərdə erməni kilsəsi və ziyahlan fəal iştirak etmişdir. İnsanlar yaşa, cinsə baxmadan son dərəcə qəddarlıqla qətlə yetirilmişdir. Sənədlər və şahidlərin dindirmə protokolu təsdiq edir ki, hamilə qadınların qarninin yırtılması, adamların diri-diri divara mışmarlanması, sudəmə uşaqların doğranması, insanların bədən üzvlərinin kəsilməsi, müsləman meyitlərinin yanacaq odun içinə atılması kimi vəhşiliklərdə erməni ziyalı və din xadimləri bilavasitə iştirak etmişlər.

Bakıda mart hadisini törətməklə ermənilər bolşevizm adı altında hakimiyyəti ələ alması prosesini başa çatdırdılar. Aprel ayında S.G.Şaumyan başda olmaqla Bakı XKS yaradıldı. Bakıda baş verən faciəli hadisələr aprel ayında eyni ilə ona yaxın olan qəzalarda da təkrar edildi. Şamaxı qəzasında qısa müddətdə 8 minə qədər adam öldürüldü ki, bunun da 1653 nəfəri qadın, 965 nəfəri uşaq idi.

1918-ci ilin aprel ayında Quba qəzasına göndərilən cəza dəstələri qəzanın 122 müsəlmanını öldürdülər, yüzlərlə türk və ləzgi əhalisini terror etdilər. Gəyqay, Kiirdemir, Salyan, Lenkoran və digər yerlər 1918-ci ilin yazında erməni cəzadəstələrindən ciddi ziyan çəkdi. Bakı, Şamaxı, Kiirdemir, Salyan, Quba və Lenkoran tutulduqdan sonra silahlı yadellilərin hədəfi Gəncə idi. Lakin 1918-ci ilin mayında Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin yaranması yadelli düşmənlərin planlarını pozdu. Beləliklə, 1918-ci ilin mayında Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyətinin yaratdığı Fövqəladə İstintaq Komissiyasının topladığı sənədlər 1918-ci ilin yazında erməni silahlı birləşmələri tərəfindən Azərbaycan əhalisinə qarşı genosid hadisəsi törətdiyini təsdiq edir.