

RUSSIAN POLICY IN SOUTH AZERBAIJAN DURING FIRST WORLD WAR

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Russian policy in South Azerbaijan during World War I was not studied in Azerbaijani historiography as a separate investigation object. Studying of some Azerbaijani archive documents which were kept secretly in the Soviet period give an opportunity to clarify the essence, aim and objectives of Russian policy in South Azerbaijan. These documents are kept in the State Archive of Azerbaijan Republic (SAAR), in the funds of State Archive of Political Parties and Social Movements of Azerbaijan Republic (SAPPSM), in the documents of foreign policy and in periodical.

On the eve of and during the war Russia pursued its South Azerbaijan policy by means of consulates and military units existing there. On the eve of the war B. M. Pisarev was the Russian Vice-Consul in Ardebil, A. A. Orlov was the General Consul in Tabriz, S. P. Golubinov was the Vice-Consul in Urmiya, G. B. Chirikov was the Vice-Consul in Khoy, and P. I. Smelov was the Vice-Consul in Anzali.¹

In 1915, Russian Consul in Ardebil was Edward Blum, A. A. Orlov was the General Consul in Tabriz, P. P. Vedenski was the Vice-Consul in Urmiya, B. I. Dolgoplov was the Vice-Consul in Khoy, P. I. Smelov was the Vice-Consul in Anzali, A. I. Iyas was the Consul in Savujbulag².

Russian army units were stationed on the territory of South Azerbaijan in 1905 under the pretext of supporting Russia's economic interests³. Even after the division of Iranian territory according to the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907, Russian troops were not withdrawn from the territory of South Azerbaijan. On the eve of and during the war Russia had its own plans about South Azerbaijan. Russia was interested in strengthening its influence in this region because of South Azerbaijan's advantageous strategic position and rich natural resources, and because of the roads passing through the territory of South Azerbaijan and going to the Black Sea Channels, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. According to the Anglo-Russian treaty, the territories from South Azerbaijan till Qasri Shirin-Isfahan-Gezd-Hagg area were considered by Russia the territories of its interests. Russian military forces were stationed in Maragha, Resht, Astrabad and in other places. After the beginning of the war Russia sent new forces to South Azerbaijan⁴.

Russia was self-willed in South Azerbaijan and refused to withdraw its troops. It agreed to withdraw its military forces only on some conditions. These conditions and claims give us an opportunity to clarify the essence of Russian policy in South Azerbaijan.

First, Russia considered it necessary to hold elections to the governmental organs of South Azerbaijan in order to place its people in the governing body. In his answer to consul A. A. Orlov's question in Tabriz, an

advisor of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia B. O. Klemm considered it timely to hold elections in Azerbaijan⁵.

Second, Russian government demanded not to allow Turkish and Kurdish groups seize Urmiya. If Urmiya surrendered, it would weaken Russian influence in South Azerbaijan. So, General Voropanov was given extensive authorities for punitive measures. Punitive forces were formed under the leadership of colonel Andreyevski and Vice-Consul Vedenski⁶.

Third, Russia tried to appoint officials in South Azerbaijan in favor of its government⁷.

Fourth, not only local population and Tehran government, but also English diplomacy was discontented by Russian government organs' levying taxes. The English Ambassador to St. Petersburg George B. Bukenen in his letter dated 25 December 1914 objected to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs S. D. Sazonov and asked him to cease levying⁸.

Fifth, Russia used South Azerbaijan's territory against Turkey for its terrorist purposes and formed groups there. Klemm in his telegram dated 10/09/1914, No. 2851, to the Russian Ambassador to Istanbul wrote: "According to the agreement with the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor of the Caucasus it was accepted to raise timely rebellions of Armenians, Assyrs, and Kurds in the case of war with Turkey. Those groups will be formed under the supervision of our Consuls and our groups in Azerbaijan. Rifles have been prepared, but they will be given in time. Groups will start their actions only with our permission"⁹. On 11 August 1914, Governor of the Caucasus Vorontsov-Dashkov sent a telegram (No. 445) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs S. D. Sazonov. The telegram included offers of separate Kurdish leaders and Armenian figures. They had assumed obligations to raise Kurds and Assyrs against Turkey. Vorontsov-Dashkov recommended to consider these offers seriously, to find out and/or form groups from forces hostile to Turks and to use them in military operations. Therefore, he asked S. D. Sazonov to contact the Military Minister, and place at his disposal 25 thousand rifles and 12 million cartridges. These weapons were to be shared according to plan made beforehand¹⁰. In his telegram dated 7 September 1914, No. 760, Vorontsov-Dashkov stated that small groups must be formed in Khoy and Dilman under the supervision of General Voropanov and Russian Consul in Khoy. He wrote: "Everybody must obey only one instruction: they must start their active operation in accordance with our agreement. I suggest to make all preparations secretly with assistance of consuls and army heads; Persian civil and official administration shall not be admitted to present"¹¹ Emperor Nikolay II approved Vorontsov-Dashkov's proposals. In his telegram dated 10 September 1914, No. 180, General Ganushkevich brought to the attention of S. D. Sazonov: "Commander-in-Chief completely approves Vorontsov-Dashkov's draft measures and supports them"¹²

Sixth, using its army, border, customs and special service bodies, Russian authorities persecuted Turks and Muslims in South Azerbaijan.¹³

Seventh, in order to withdraw Turkish groups Russia sent new units to South Azerbaijan and invaded Tabriz. Turkish, German and Austria-Hungarian

consuls had to leave the city. Those who were connected with Turks were persecuted too.

But later Turkish groups liberated Tabriz from Russians. Russian, English and French consuls moved to Tiflis¹⁴.

Russia could not agree with the liberation of Tabriz, so additional forces were brought from the Caucasus and with their assistance the city was invaded again. But Turks had already left the city voluntarily. The US Consul in Tabriz was against delivering of the city to the Russians¹⁵.

The occupation of Tabriz by Russian army dissatisfied Iranian government. Iran blamed the Russians, but Russian diplomacy blamed Iranian side for all destruction¹⁶.

The last, Russian diplomacy tried to take hold of ruling South Azerbaijan, not to let the prince come to Tabriz, and if he came keep him under control. The Russian government even formed a special group in Zangezur to accompany the prince. In his secret letter dated 6 May 1915, No. 240, Russian border commissioner gave information about this group¹⁷. After the prince's arrival to Tabriz, the Russian diplomacy tried to use Tabriz as a center against Tehran government, and to place its people around it.

To strengthen Russian position in South Azerbaijan, on 30 October 1915 General Barratov's expedition corps, consisted of 3 battalions, 39 hundreds, 20 artilleries, were sent to the port of Anzali in the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea. In November there were already 4 thousand soldiers in Anzali.

Russian army units were only withdrawn after October Revolution in 1917, but in early 1920s they were still kept in the territory of South Azerbaijan.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. Caucasus Calendar, 1916, General Department, pp. 633-636; *Caucasus Telegraph*, 16 February 1915, No. 10.
3. *Caucasus Telegraph*, 12 November 1915, No. 103.
4. *Documents of the foreign policy of the USSR*. Vol. I (Moscow: Politizdat, 1959), p. 713.
5. *International Relations during the Imperialism period. Documents from the archives of Tsar and Temporary Government. 1878-1917*. (Moscow: Sochekizdat, 1935), Part I. Series III. 1914-1917. Vol. V-VI. Document No. 375, p. 384.
6. Ibid. Document No. 400, pp. 412-413.
7. Ibid. Document No. 396, p. 409.
8. Ibid. Document No. 311, pp. 304-306.
9. Ibid. Document No. 298, pp. 292-293.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. SAAR, fund 524, list 1, file 36, pp. 42-44.
14. *Kaspiy*, 6 January 1915, No. 4.

15. *Kaspiy*, 22 January 1915, No. 17.
16. *International relations during the Imperialism period. Documents from the archives of Tsar and Temporary Government. 1878-1917.* (Op. Cit.), Part I. Series. III. 1914-1917. Vol. VIII. Document No. 55, p. 77.
17. SAPPSPM, fund 574, list 1, file 39, p. 31.

Х ц л а с я

БИРИНЖИ ДЦНЙА МЦЩАРИБЯСИ ИЛЛЯРИНДЯ РУСИЯНЫН ЖЯНУБИ АЗЯРБАЙЖАН СИЙАСЯТИ

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Биринжи дцнйа мцщарибяси илляриндя Русийанын Жяну́би Азярбайжан сийасяти Азярбайжан тарихшцнаслыында хцсуси тядгигат обьекти олмамышдыр. Мягальядя узун илляр бойу мяхфи сахланылмыш Азярбайжан архив материаллары, дипломатик-сийаси сянядляр вя дюври мятбуат ясасында мцщарибя илляриндя Русийанын Жяну́би Азярбайжан сийасятинин мягсядляр, форма вя методлары, щяйата кечирилмяси арашдырылыр.

Рус ордусу мцщарибядян бир нечя ил яввял Русийанын марагларыны горумаг ады алтында Жяну́би Азярбайжана йеридилмишди. Мцщарибя башладыгдан сонра Русийа бу яразийя йени орду щиссяляри эюндярди.

Жяну́би Азярбайжанда Тцркийя, Алманийя, Австрия-Мажарыстан дипломатийасы вя кяшфийяты Русийа, Инэилтяря вя Франса нцфуз даирясиня гаршы мцбаризя апарырдылар. Русийа Жяну́би Азярбайжандакы орду, эюмрцк вя хцсуси хидмят органларынын кюмяйи иля мцстямлякячилик сийасятини йеридир, Тцркийяйя гаршы мцбаризядя ермянилярдян ибарят террор дястяляри йарадараг, динж тцрк ящалисиня гаршы гятлиамда истифадя едирди. Русийа щакимийят даиряляри Жяну́би Азярбайжандакы идарячилик органларыны сайа салмайараг юзбашыналыг едир, Иран щюкумятиня тязийгляр эюстярир вя бюляни юз нцйузу алтында сахламаьа чалышырды.