

Evidence of Archive Sources of Azerbaijan on the Genocide of Armenians in Karabagh

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Events taking place in the region, especially the ones concerning the interrelations between Armenia and Azerbaijan are quite interesting. There are several feasible versions of their further development. In the course of widely used propagandistic struggle over the problems connected with Nagorno-Karabagh, Azerbaijani side frequently resorts to falsification and distortion of historical facts.

The sources of current events have a historical base which may be found in not far past, particularly in the incidents of 1918-1920s.

In 1919, by the end of World War I despite the defeat in the battlefield Turkish forces continued attacks on the West in order to attain pan-Turkish plans. In September 15, 1918 they occupied Baku and exterminated Armenians. More than 30 000 people fell victims.

In 1919 a revolutionary struggle broke. Nariman Narimanov was a famous bolshevik who tried to assure Musavatian authorities of Azerbaijan to quicken the process of becoming a Soviet republic. Thus Azerbaijan would appear in an expedient position.

From the viewpoint of recreation of objective picture of historical events and reinstatement of historical justice there are rather interesting documents which are taken exactly from Azerbaijani archives “Struggle for Soviet Rule’s win in Azerbaijani 1918-1920’s; Documents and Materials” published in a collection released by the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan in 1967. They are published together with the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, the Academy of Sciences and Archive administration of Council of ministers.

The report in the document N 347, p. 289 is about the events in September 29, 1919. This report was sent to Moscow by Nariman Narimanov. Particularly, there are pointed out the anti-armenian policy of Azerbaijan in Karabakh, the extermination of Armenians as well as the thing that ethnically Karabakh is an Armenian land.

The general state of affairs in Azerbaijan is represented in the document. There’s noted: “The wild ranging of gendarmerie and police (of previous nikolayian) prevails in the province. Carnages

towards Armenians take place in the districts (in Karabakh and Kazakh). Measures on liquidation are assumed. There are hamlets of Muslims, Armenians and Russians which reject Azerbaijani power and want to join Russia”.

Thus, there exists a definite evidence of the fact that the Azerbaijani powers committed genocide towards the Armenians in hamlets (in Karabakh and Kazakh).

The second significant evidence: inside the Armenian republic a struggle (armed) of Muslims against Armenian authority took place which was led by Turkish officers Khalil bey and others.

The above mentioned document is fully presented in source language. It is kept in the archive of former Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Azerbaijan (fund 609, list 1, p. 263) and is signed by Nariman Narimanov.

From the record of Nariman Narimanov’s oral message in Moscow about the state in Azerbaijan

September 29, 1919

AZERBAIJAN. The parliament entirely consists of Muslims. There are Armenians (about 8 people) who have joined recently. The leading party is “Musavat”. There are also bourgeois parties named “Ekhrar”, “Ittikhad” and a socialist fraction where the leading party is “Gummet”. The socialist fraction publishes a magazine named “Zarya” under the slogans “Proletarians of all countries, join!” and “You will find your right in the struggle”. In general the magazine is of soviet direction but not at all. The official organ of the government is the magazine “Azerbaijan”. Recently, the topic of the day has been denikinian danger. In the beginning of current year a line of demarcation was set up by English command which separated the authority of Denikin and Azerbaijan. It ran five versts south to Petrowska, thus Temir-Khan-Shura and Derbent were occupied by Azerbaijan. In fact the powers of Denikin reached up the river Samur. The boundary station of Azerbaijan was Yalema (the third station of Baku). Recently the English command has transferred the line of demarcation to the river Samur and gave no guarantee for the future.

After announcing about the first line of demarcation Azerbaijani government turned to Denikin and the English command with the note to exempt Derbent. No response followed and the matter was declined. Azerbaijan and Georgia formed a defensive union against Denikin which Armenia was offered to join. Under the influence of England and in sympathy with Denikin, Armenia refused the offer. The union caused the abatement of several customs barriers and sending of officers, instructors, a great deal of all kinds of weapons from Georgia to Azerbaijan. Oil is transmitted to Georgia by pipelines and railroads with no difficulty. There exists a postal and

railroad mail of Transcaucasia and “Dobrovolia”. Official magazines shake their cogs on the issues of denikinian danger. But the Government feels the end and prefers to turn over Denikin but not Soviet Russia. The communists advance the slogan “Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan”. The left wing of “Hummet” communist-bolsheviks (the real ones) agitate to declare war to Denikin.

Obviously, Denikin doesn't think to undertake hostility trying to occupy Transcaucasia by advocacy and in a diplomatic way. The centre of denikinian counter-revolution in Baku is “Russovet”, the head of which is Podshibiakin. Denikin tried to organize an “indigenous body” in Batumi, but the organizer, prince Notiev, was killed. The representative of Denikin prince Baratov has been in Baku and Tiflis. The minister-representative of Azerbaijan Ussubekov and the minister of Foreign affairs of Georgia Geghechkori E. P. went there. Baratov had a speech in the parliament of Azerbaijan and declared that the Voluntary army has no aggressive intention towards Transcaucasia, considering it to be the matter of Russian national assembly but it has to keep blockade over Soviet Russia. That's under the assumption that bolshevism will not have influence in Transcaucasia.

The results of the negotiations are not known. Ussubekov officially declared that the railroad and postal mail is debugged. By not official sources Georgia didn't come to a point with Denikin but did something. The inlet of the navy to Baku dock is expected allegedly to be reconstructed. The general Baratov is seriously wounded in Tiflis by last news he is died. Georgian military minister general Odishelidze, who was accompanying him, is wounded. The headquarter of Denikin representative under English command is exploded.

Russian officers are mobilized in Denikin by half-official activities of the authorities. At the same time the Government declares about struggle with Denikin. The socialist fraction of the parliament realized an inquiry upon denikinian danger. Ussubekov gave explanations which “Musavat” considered to be exhaustive. “Gummet” and the whole socialist fraction, the party “Ekhrar” expressed disaffection; as a result – the resignation of Ussubekov's office.

There are variants that Khan-Khoyskiy and Dr. Sultanov (the current governor of Karabakh) will be included into the cabinet.

Food business is good. There is a plenty of products. Bread may be bought by 30-40 rubles in any quantity. A pound of sugar is 3-6 rubles. Other products are less available but may be bought. Potato is expensive. There is a great deal of manufactory in the shop-windows, but it's just a myth. In case of reasonable price it will not be enough for all. Products are got from Persia. Speculations over all the products that an ingenious merchant may contrive are fantastically spread.

Entry and exit to and from Azerbaijan is free.

Cooperatives work. Mensheviks and esers lead there. Communists have a lack of legal forces (people) to be able to seize them. A cooperative journal is published.

Magazines of all kinds are published. A law by English model of free publishing exists here. There are many boulevard magazines. Denikinian and communist publications undergo repression. Denikinian agitation is realized by “Russovet” and its organ “Yedinaya Rossia”, “Golos Rossii” and “Rossia” (the same magazine with changed names). Here is an Eserian “Znamya truda” and Menshevist “Iskra”. Both of them write about united socialistic front after the successes of red army, about Soviet power with their participation. Mensheviks to the left of Georgian Transcaucasia state about the impossibility of the struggle with Bolsheviks. They think that the revolution goes to a normal course and in the end the members will be suggested to work both in denikinian municipal Dumas and in Councils (by G. Sahakian’s report). It has no success in working sphere. The circulation of “Znamya Truda” is 2000 copies; “Iskra” has a less one. The representatives of Denikin and “Russovet” enlist the volunteers in denikinian army and give them per 200 rubles for the way.

Working life. The workers are greatly inclined in revolution and bolshevism favor.

The workers are organized in professional unions and working conferences (the same Councils), working clubs.

There are collective agreements. The lowest salary is 600 rubles, the qualified workers get up to 1500 rubles.

Oil reservoirs are fulfilled and oil field facilities are stopped: almost 30 000 people became unemployed. There is an employment exchange which is under the City Council supervision. The Council of professional unions does its best to take it. Labor organizations are managed by communists. Communist party develops its activity underground but its members work open and boldly. A newspaper is published which is often suppressed but the following day it appears by another managing editor (front) and name. it has 4000 copies. The workers read it by groups; in other case the copies will not be much more. In case of more legal forces all the labor organizations would appear in RCP.

Repressions are realized towards significant communists who are often sent to Denikin. A usual way is the banishment from Azerbaijan.

The employees in enterprises are aligned with bolshevism, but they are afraid by force of habit. Governmental intellectuals are afraid of Denikinian regiment.

Intellectual work is well-paid. Workers-muslims follow the party “Gummet”. They are not so much inclined to revolution as Russians, Armenians and other workers. The reason is chauvinistic position of some Mensheviks, who have leached the party “Gummet”, as well as stagnation and illiteracy.

After the unsuccessful strikes in May 5 and August 14 the authority of workers fell a little. Muslims and “aristocrats” from “Electric forces”¹ better underwent the breakdown of provocation. Revolutionary movement is rising among Muslims. There are denikinian and eserian courses among locomotive drivers. A big loss for the muslims is the murder of tov Musevi, one of the leaders of “Gummet” and the communist Ashum Aliev. The murders are organized by Azerbaijani railwaymen. It caused a wave of indignation from all the workers and repressions from the Government. There are Muslim communists-hummetists and communists of other nationalities who know Turkish. They work as hard as they can. A labor magazine “Golos Truda” is published in Turkish. That is the organ of labor conference which is led by communists. In general, the proletariat of Baku is quite ready to establish Soviet power which will find an appropriate support in Baku. The mood of bourgeoisie and the authorities is not certain. I heard fellow minister of public education saying to his vice-director that the ministers and others, who have power, provide themselves with money in case of advent of bolshevism to the power. Swindle and bribery have overcome the possible rank though these “Misters” get 17 000 rubles a month, they have got apartments and have all the conveniences.

The wild ranging of gendarmerie and police (of previous nikolayian) prevails in the province. Carnages towards Armenians take place in the districts (in Karabakh and Kazakh). Measures on liquidation are assumed. There are hamlets of Muslims, Armenians and Russians which reject Azerbaijani power and want to join Russia. People are armed with rifles. In many places beks and governors-colonists (colonies of Anenfeld and Yelenendorf) are beaten by the peasants on agrarian base.

In Armenia clashes with muslims got the nature of war. Muslims are led by Turkish officers (Khalil bey and others).

In Armenia a High Commissioner from Peace conference colonel Haskel is appointed.

It is worth mentioning that all the republics of Transcaucasia and “Dobrovolia” filch railway consists from each other, paint over their emblems and put their owns.

Communist movement in Azerbaijan is weak, anyway it exists.

Army. The general of Russian military service Mekhmandarov and Shikhlinian bek who is considered to be an energetic organizer are the head of the soldiery. The chief posts are held by nikolayian officers-muslims. Staff positions are held by Russian officers. There are many Russian instructors. There are infantry, field, cavalry, and artillery schools. Infantry courses last 4 months. Only Muslims can study there and it already gave graduates. Newly-made officers are good for nothing. The organization of the army, regulations, etc. is the exact copy of the nikolayian one.

¹ Baku Branch of joint stock company “Electric power”.

Officers and petty officers attend the classes with whips. Studies are incoherent, there are many drills, the results are unsatisfactory.

There exists a discipline. The army consists only of muslims. No shoes and uniform. A soldier gets 100 rubles a month. He is quite hard-working and obedient. Fighting efficiency is low.

There are about 12 or more infantry regiments with the corresponding quantity of engineer, cavalry and artillery troops.

The Englishmen sold 1000 mules to Azerbaijan for 35 000000 rubles and several hundreds of perfect artillery horses. A part of the horses is given to cavalry where they are of no use. The sum was paid by cheques of Azerbaijani Government. The Englishmen raised the cost of the horses and purchased raw materials. The main forces are ranged in Mugani, Baku, Giandja (Yelizavetapol) and in Armenian boundary.

The soldiers are satisfied; they have 2 pounds of bread. The party of bolsheviks “Gummet” has its members among officers and soldiers. I am not well aware of the soldiers’ mood”.

The same with the original:

N. Narimanov

Party Archive of Azerbaijani Branch of IoML, f. 609, op. 1, un. of st. 263.