

THE AZERBAIJAN GENOCIDE- 31ST MARCH

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Abstract: *March genocide – is a genocide committed by the Baku Soviet and Armenian armed Dashnak forces between March 30 and April 3 of 1918 in Baku and in different regions of Baku province, as well as in Shamakhy, Guba, Shaki, Lankaran, Hajigabul, Salyan, Zangezur, Garabagh, Nakhchivan and other areas against the Azerbaijanis. In March-April of 1918, in Baku, Shamakhy, Guba, Lankaran and other areas, the Armenian fascists were executed 50 thousand Azerbaijanis and withdrawn ten thousands of people from their lands. By Decree of Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev, dated March 26, 1998, March 31 is commemorated as the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis.*

Keywords: *genocide, Armenia, Azerbaijan, dashnaks, terror, Baku.*

INTRODUCTION

To establish “Big Armenia” imagination of Armenians should be realized in two directions. First is the politics of occupation of Turk territories which Armenians wanted, also Azerbaijan territories by war or peace way and to join it to Armenia. Second if not to gain this to realize genocide politics by the way of national slaughters against the Turkish nation and the Azerbaijanis. At the end of March and the beginning of April of 1918, as a result of horrible slaughter done in racist background under the will and active participation of Bolsheviks who were in Armenian side, thousands of people were killed, wounded and exposed to insults and tortures from the peaceful Azerbaijan population. This bloody event which entered to the history as “March tragedy” went out of Baku boundaries, and was resulted with rob and burn of Lenkeran, Shamakhi and Quba and slaughter of peaceful population wildly. During this, on purpose, robs and slaughters were practiced and there was no sorrow to old, youth, babies and to be Muslim Azerbaijani was enough to kill them cruelly. Armenian dashnak forces that began operation on 31st March of 1918 in Baku and destroyed the Azerbaijani part of city, killed people acted with Bolsheviks. But where did those events take place? As it is known, the 15th paragraph of Turkmençay agreement between Russia and Iran, which divided Azerbaijan into two parts, belonged to Armenians that lived in the territories of Qacars. It was said there that shakh will not punish people that took aside of Russia empire in the territory of Azerbaijan; and that shakh will not make obstacles for them to leave the lands they lived for a year and go to the territory of Russian empire and that shakah will give 5 years to them to sell their properties. (Mammedova 2006: 21).

HISTORY OF PROSES

So Armenian families began to be moved to the territories of Azerbaijan, to Irevan, Karabakh, Nakhcivan, Shekhi and Shamakhi khanates. The move of Armenians to Irevan, Nakhcivan and Karabakh territories of Azerbaijan has aim to isolate Azerbaijan from Georgia and Turkey and to make a province in Southern Caucasus where Armenians could live in compact. Russian historian in XIX century V. Potto wrote that, Russian governors did not give up from the thoughts “to establish Armenian Mountainous state under the Russian leading in Asia, Armenia should be a country that would have port in Caspian sea and boundaries with Armenia, Iran, Turkey and Russia”. (Musayev 2008: 99-100). Want to note that, in the beginning of XVIII century, in period of I Peter Russia began to make plans to own hot seas. Due to the Kurekcay agreement which was signed during Russia-Iran war on 14th May of 1805 by Karabakah khanate Ibrahim Khelil Khan Cavanshir and representative of Russian empire P. D. Sisianov Karabakh khanate went under the Russian empire. As a result of victory of Russia in the war besides Nakhcivan and Irevan khanates all Northern Azerbaijan khanates were occupied. The results of occupation were approved with Gulustan peace agreement signed in 12th October of 1813. (Mehdiyev 2008: 67). The planned movement of Armenians to Caucasus can be called as “blooded the whole Zakafkazia” in modern language. The palace adviser V. F. Maevski wrote: “in Dashnaksutyun and organizations like it are the trouble sources of Armenian nation in Turkey and in Caucasus”.

It's interesting that, one of the leaders and formers of Dashnaksutyun O. Kashaznuni wrote in 1923 year: “It is pity to complain from cruel fortune and look for the reason of our unhappiness aside- this is characteristic to our national psychology”. The move of Armenians to Azerbaijan territories continued in the beginning of XX century. They turned into important instrument of Western states' and Russian politics. At the time when many Armenians came to Southern Caucasus from military operation zone in Caucasus front, Caucasus proconsul thought about making land reports in Caucasus. The member of Russian State Council A. M. Eristov wrote in “Birjevie novosti” newspaper about the main aim of that reform: “It was impossible not to see that the talks were about establishment only Armenian territory”. During the military operations Armenians who came to Southern Caucasus were arranged in territories belong to Azerbaijanis. The honorable chairman of the Central Committee of aid to Armenian refuges, bishop Mesrop wrote to the head of Petrograd city that he hopes 100 thousand Armenians can be arranged in Caucasus. As the arrangement of Armenians sharpened the relationship in big cities by presentation of Baku colonel-governor it was forbidden to arrange them mass in Baku city. In January of 1915, the count of Armenians who moved to Caucasus from Iran was 20 thousand.

“Baku” newspaper wrote based on “Kavkazskoe slovo” newspaper that, at the beginning of 1915 Armenians that moved from occupied territories of Iran by Russia and count was about 100-120 thousand people mainly were arranged in Nakhcivan, Surmeli, Echmiadzin, Irevan, Aleksandropol and Yelizavetpol. In Echmiadzin church congress held in March of 1915 it was noted that the counts of Armenians moved from Turkey and Iran and were arranged in Southern Caucasus were 60 thousand people. Only in July of 1915 due to the order of Caucasus proconsul 24 thousand Armenians were arranged in Cavanshir and Shusha qezas. After this, the armed attacks of Armenians to Azerbaijan territories became in larger scale. Many people were harmed because of the events happened in those years. The events of 1905-1907 showed that Armenian nationalists

who occupied Azerbaijan territories until XX century in “peaceful” way, passed to the open armed violence by the help of official circles. But Azerbaijanis by the help of national bourgeoisie and under the leadership of national obstacles could prevent the Armenian violence. (Mehdiyev 2000: 149)

In 1912 the Minister of Internal Affairs of Russian Empire S. D. Sazonov opened the plan and aims about Armenians in his report in cabinet of Ministers while telling “the aim of Russia is to establish Armenia- the only border among us and Turks, Kurds and tatars”.

While looking through the documents and materials, we make result that there is relationship between the bloody events in 1918 done by hands of Dashnak executioners and with the absolute agreement of Shaumyan government in Baku in the east of Azerbaijan (Baki, Quba, Shamakhi, Lenkeran and so on) and in crimes done in the west (Nakhcivan, Irevan, Zengezur and Karabakh). It is open while archive documents are opened that those bloody crimes were realized because of the “Big Armenia” nonsense and was governed from one center Russia. Or there was another aim to help Armenian brothers “who are tortured under Turkish oppressions” with historical decree on 29th December 1917 about “Turkish Armenia”.

SOME FACTS

The March genocide plan in Baku was planned in 1917 by Armenian National Committee and Dashnaksutyun party. Want to note that, to realize events in Turkey also added to plans. On 25th December of 1917, the chairman of Soviet National Commissariat V. I. Lenin had such talks with the member of Armenian Commission Teryan in the meeting:

Lenin: “What do Armenians want? Do they want to be with Russia or to be separated from Russia?”

Teryan: “Russian Armenians do not want to separate, but Armenians in Turkey demand independence”.

Lenin: “How will it be? Will You be divided into two parts?”

Teryan: “I think I will be like this yet. But I am sure that both Armenia will join then under the Russian protection”

After the October revolution, Russian army began to give points got as a result of war to Armenians. But after Turkish army got back Erzincan (13.02.1918), Trabzon (24.02.1918), Erzurum (12.03.1918) Armenians whose plans were disordered decided to make genocide inside Azerbaijan. Then there was political force consist of 20 thousand which mostly were Armenians under the order of Baku Soviet lead by radical chauvinist Shaumyan and where bolshevik-dashnak forces joined. Due to the Manaf Suleymanov: “In that period many armed forces joined in Baku then:

- 1) Red army established by Bolsheviks and consist of 3500 people;
- 2) 4500 pedestrian in subordination of Dashnaksutyun party and Armenian national forces consist of rider soldiers;
- 3) The parts of international regiment consist of Russians and Slavs;
- 4) The armed bands of esers and Mensheviks consist of military flee sailors”.

Realizing those horrible slaughters, Shaumyan, Andronik, Mikoyan, Lalayan, Namazasp, Arakelyan, Emiryan dashnak group had one aim: to kill Azerbaijanis until the last one, or to make empty the territory of country until Turkish boundaries from Caspian sea from depriving them out in order Armenian armed forces could realize dirty intentions. So, on 30th March of 1918, the dirty band of Shaumyan began activity. His

wanting began into reality; the sparks of conflict came into reality. On 30th March of 1918 dashnak band joined near Armenian Church made first fire to Muslims. In early morning of 31st March bolshevik-dashnak bands attacked to “Kerpickhana”, “Memmedli” and other estates where Azerbaijanis lived. They began to bomb those estates from helicopters on air and from military ships from sea. Armenians made Russians to believe that as if Azerbaijanis were killed by Russians in Iceri sheher. After seamen knew that this was a lie and stopped fire, it was already late. In estates in fire there was no count of dead men. Armenian nationalist fascists did not feel sorrow to anybody; they killed all in front of them as they were Turks.

First, slaughters ended life of 12.000 people in Baku. So, the victory of Musavat party in elections held in Baku Soviet became reason that dashnak-bolshevik forces became radical. Now the strongest party in Azerbaijan was considered “Musavat”. The main aims of that party were territorial autonomy and political governance in Azerbaijan. The Bolshevik forces under the leading of S. Shaumyan, Armenian national soviet and Dashnaksutyun party leaders began was against Musavat. It changed into not struggle among parties, but to incident among nations and real genocide against local Azerbaijan population. In such time, Azerbaijan national forces were few and poor armed. Shaumyan knew well that in tsarizm period Azerbaijan population did not have military service. At the result people forget how to use arm. That is why his wish to ‘teach” local population came into reality.

On 29th March, the disarmament of staff of the “Eveline” ship considered from Muslims was result of national slaughter. The band of Muslim division consists of 48 people which brought the body of Mehemmed Tagiyev the son of H. Z. Tagiyev to Baku on 17th March of 1918 should return to Lenkeran after the funeral of Mehemmed with “Evelina” ship. A little time to the move of steamer from bridge Bolsheviks demanded from Muslim staff to put arms on the ground. After they refused Bolsheviks answered them with arms and machine guns. Arms in the ship were confiscated by Bolsheviks. Professor Anar Iskenderov who researched about March genocide writes: “the use of Armenian military parts by S. Shaumyan made that slaughter deeper. To make prefix as is defending Bolsheviks, Armenian military forces inflicted Turkish-muslim population. Want to note that, Baku Soviet and its army consisted of Armenians. Dashnaks in Soviet Sako Saakyan, Arakelyan and others tried to make obstacles to accept Muslim workers into Bolshevik bands. Dashnaks made obstacles to establish national army for Azerbaijan, using the name of Soviet realized nationalist-chauvinist politics with diligence, prepared slaughters against Turk-Muslim population in Baku, Shamaxi and other regions of Azerbaijan. In this case Armenian National Committee was especially active. Robbery against Muslims were in Shamaxi, Goycay, Gence, Nuxa, Qazakh, Lenkeran, Salyan, in one word in all regions of Azerbaijan”. As the fact that the army leaded by Shaumyan was organized mostly from Armenians more than Bolsheviks is also approved by Armenian scientist Q. Avetisyan. He notes that: “there were four brigades consisting of 25 regiment, 18 thousand fighters. 70 percent of Red Army fighters were Armenians”.

In that time, other foreign traveler who was in Baku noted that Armenians who attacked only to the estates where Azerbaijanis lived, torn them with daggers, cut with bayonets, burnt homes, threw babies to the burnt houses and burnt them alive. They put infant children on bayonets. They did not feel sorrow to any child, old men, and women and so on. Nerimanov described those days like this: “Even if the Muslim was Bolshevik, they did not feel sorry for them”. Dashnaks told: “we do not know any Bolshevik; it’s enough that they are Muslim”. A witness who saw Armenian wildness told that they

shuffled women in nude form in the streets which they did not kill tying hear, hit their bodied with nappies of machine-guns. They did not feel sorrow for anybody, from children to old men.

These thoughts written by Turkish witness named V. Nuhoglu shows how the events were horrible: "Azerbaijani baby sweet like angel was nailed in one of the walls of Baku. Nail was stroke just on the heart of baby, a mass of baby bodies, girls and boys... big shepherd dogs on them, one of them was gnawing the body of innocent infant... naked woman was on the ground, an infant was sucking the emaciated breath of that dead body". In one of the sources about the March slaughters of 1918 (H. Baykara, "The history of Azerbaijani independence struggle) is written: "the shops of Turks were robbed, homes were burnt. It is extremely hard for me to write about that. After they tied women from their hear and shuffled, there were rapes, killings and other crimes". It was written in "Azerbaijan" newspaper dated 21st October 1918 about the events: "We do not know what happened to Shamakhi anti revolutionists, but we know that red socialist bands by leading of Emirov and Lalayev cut all Muslim population of Shamakhi and destroyed villages. The wildness Lalayev did against Shamakhi Muslims put all wildness we saw until today under shadow".

They robbed homes, burnt people, and killed pregnant women with unbelievable tortures. Armenians burnt schools, libraries, cultural places belong to Azerbaijanis. Even those bands under the leading of A. Mikoyan who acted by the name of "Revolutionary defense" burnt one of the best architectural monuments of Baku "Ismailiyye" while attacking to Iceri sheher, destroyed the offices of "Aciq soz", "Kaspi", "Baku" newspapers, made holes on minarets of "Teze Pir" mosque with the fire of cannons. Only in Baku more than 12 thousand people were killed during March slaughters. In the report of interrogation commission established in the period of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and refuted that count is said that the count of killed people was more than 20 thousand because of those events. In numbers of "Azerbaijan" newspaper in that period is noted that more than 30 thousand Azerbaijanis were killed in Baku and in the villages around during March slaughters. One of the representatives of Armenians notes that, "we killed 25 thousand people in Baku. Only in Urmia about 30 thousand people were killed", adds historian scientist.

In March-April of 1918 Armenians killed 50 thousand Azerbaijanis in Baku, Shamakhi, Quba, Mugan and Lenkeran, deprived out of 10 thousand people from their native lands. Only in Baku about 30 thousand people were killed with special cruelty. In Shamakhi 58, in Quba 122, in Mountainous part of Karabakh 150, in Zengezur 115, in Irevan 211 villages were destroyed. In March-May months of 1918 while doing carvings in Quba for building were found two big wells with countless human bones. This again open examples and facts that approves Armenian vandalism. It is already approving that these belongs to the local people who were killed with special cruelty by Armenian armed forces while attack to Quba. Only in Quba the soldiers of Hamazasp gained four million cash money, much golden money, expensive jewelry, property for about five million manat, and products for twenty-five million mantas. Want to remind that, part of that gold and money was inside the 80 million gold in load case of S. Shaumyan when he was arrested (with his comrades). Only in Quba the band of Hamazasp burnt 105 home. In March-April of 1918 Armenian band in Baku 229, in Genje 272, in Zengezur 115, in Shamakhi 80, in Quba 122, in Karabakh 157 villages were burnt with all mosques, schools, old architectural monuments, people were killed and deprived out.

Emed Hulki Saral writes in his "Armenian issue":

- 1) On 29.04.1918 about 3000 women, old men, children and people were killed while were taken to Ahilkeleki from Gumru with 500 wagons.
- 2) Armenians armed with two machine guns and two cannons destroyed Islam villages in (Duzluca) Irevan region and killed women, children and men.
- 3) On 01.05.1918 about hundreds of Armenian riders killed sixty children, women and men around Shishtepe and Duzkend (in the territory of today's Amasia).
- 4) On 01.05.1918 Acaraca, Danqal, Mulanis, Murcahet, Padizka, havur and Gumris villages around Ahikelek were burnt, population were killed. In the villages on Arpacay, on the north-east of Irevan, population was killed by Armenians, villages were burnt.

The Armenian-Bolshevik forces of S. Shahumyan confiscated the property of 400 million pounds of the population and destroyed many sanctuaries of Muslims. The Dashnak-Bolshevik forces fired Taza Pir Mosque from cannon and made the "Ismailia" building, which is considered as one of the most magnificent monuments of Baku burnt down. In the massacres lasted from March 30 to April 2, 8027 Azerbaijanis were killed by Armenians in 53 Muslim villages of Shamakhi. 162 villages were destroyed; more than 16000 people were killed in the district of Guba. Thousands of people were killed in Lankaran, Mugan. Armenians destroyed 150 Azerbaijani villages in Nagorno-Karabakh and unprecedented massacres were committed in Shusha. S. Shaumyan wrote about the massacres committed by Armenians in Baku and surrounding districts on April 13, 1918 to the Council of People's Commissars of Russia: "We've been using as a pretext from the armed attack on the cavalry and attacked on all fronts. We possessed armed forces for more than 6 thousand people. There were 3-4 thousand armed national parts of Dashnaks that it was our disposal. Their participation gave the character of national slaughter to the civil war. However, it was impossible to prevent it. We deliberately did it. If Azerbaijanis came over us, then Baku could be declared as the capital of Azerbaijan".

After the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the Republic has paid special attention to the events of March 1918; the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution on the establishment of the Extraordinary Investigation Commission on 15 July 1918 for investigating this tragedy. This Commission investigated the March genocide, atrocities in Shamakhi and cruel crimes by Armenians in the territory of Yerevan province and created the special unit attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform the world community about it. In 1919 and 1920, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic has celebrated March 31 as a national day of mourning. It is the first attempt in the history as a political assessment given towards the process of policy of occupation of our lands for over a century and genocide against Azerbaijanis. However, the collapse of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in April 1920, left the work incomplete, and Azerbaijan has failed to deliver the scale of the terrible genocide by the Armenian-Russian forces to the world, international community. However, Armenians promoted the campaign of so-called "genocide" with the help of large Diaspora scattered through the world and propaganda machine of the Soviet government that replaced Dashnak government in Armenia.

The Dashnaki genocide of Azerbaijanis was not limited to Baku only. Shortly after, Shemakha, Guba, Irevan, Zangezur, Garabagh, Nakhichevan and Kars also witnessed bloody slaughtering of Azerbaijanis. In March-April 1918 up to 8 thousand of peaceful residents of Shemakha were murdered. Most cultural monuments, including the Juma (Friday) Mosque of Shemakha were burned and destroyed. 28 villages of the Javanshir region, and 17 villages of the Jabrayil region were completely burned down, and their residents annihilated.

On April 29, 1918, a 3 thousand strong Azerbaijani caravan, consisting mostly of women, children and old men, was ambushed and every single person was slaughtered near Gumru. The Armenian militants burned down a few villages in the region of Nakhichevan, destroyed 115 Azerbaijani villages in the Zangezur region, murdering 3257 men, 2276 women and 2196 children. Overall, the region's death or injury toll counted 10068 Azerbaijanis, while 50000 Azerbaijanis fled as refugees. 135 thousand Azerbaijani residents of 199 villages of the Irevan province were killed, and the villages were razed to the ground. Afterwards the Armenian militants marched to Garabagh, destroying 150 villages in the highlands of Garabagh, with their residents murdered.

CONCLUSION

31st March is one of the hardest pages in our history. This is the history of second slaughter done against Azerbaijan by Armenian dashnaks in XX century. Armenians realized four genocide and deportation politics against Azerbaijan. When any historical process happened, Armenians used it very well. Though during the Soviet governance that history was deleted from memories due to the historical documents in independence period many researches were done, books were published about the tragic events realized against Azerbaijan on 31st March of 1918. On 26th March of 1998 president Heyder Aliyev signed decree about "the genocide of Azerbaijanis". From that day 31st March is remembered as the day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis.

The National leader Heydar Aliyev who signed a decree on "Genocide against Azerbaijanis" dated March 26, 1998 enabled young people to get wider acquaintance with historical truths and develop them in the courageous spirit. The decree signed on the 80th anniversary of the March events of 1918 was the first complete and comprehensive legal and political assessment against the actions of Armenian nationalists. This decree is a document of program for the protection of national memory of the young generation. Every year, March 31 is celebrated as the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis based on historical document analyzed the genocide for centuries and deportation policy against Azerbaijanis. The decree stated that, "After the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the possibility to create an objective view of the past history of our nation has been achieved. The hidden and banned truths revealed, distorted events took their place. The genocide which didn't receive its deserved political and legal assessment and committed repeatedly against the Azerbaijani people is one of the secret pages of the history." The president Ilham Aliyev who led Azerbaijan with confidence since 2003 identified to expose fictitious "Armenian genocide" at the international level and delivery of realities to the world community as the major challenge in the face of Diaspora and office of foreign policy from the first day. One of the important factors that ensures the successes of balanced foreign policy and respond to the realities of new world order of Azerbaijan defending national interests and benefits adequately in such a complex geopolitical region is the diplomacy.

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