Increasing their mobility and supplied with a large amount of weapons and munitions thanks to Britain’s support, the Armenians carried out a serious policy of ethnic cleansing in many regions of Azerbaijan. The massacres were carried out in Nakhchivan, Zangezur, Karabakh and other regions by Armenians forces led by Andranik Ozanyan, the commander of the Armenian armed detachments, who was later declared an Armenian national hero, and others known for their radical enmity against the Turks such as Njdeh, Dro, Dolukhanyan and others. These committees were at the forefront as the main culprits of bloody events in Anatolia and the Caucasus. British archive materials confirm that Andranik had received his weapons and military ammunition for these crimes from the British. Britain’s High Commissioner in the Caucasus Oliver Wardrop said in a report he sent to the British Foreign Office that Andranik had distributed all the weapons he had received from British Army Major Gibbon among Armenian detachments. (1)

The archive materials contain important information regarding the fact that Armenian committee members, especially Andranik Ozanyan’s armed detachments, organized armed attacks on more than 200 Muslim villages in the Irvan province and more than 50 Muslim villages in Nakhchivan, Sharur-Daralayaz and Ordubad districts and killed most of the village population. (2, vv. 103-105) In Turkish archive materials, there are even more...
General Shore's report to Department of Military Intelligence

from: - General Shore.
to: - D.M.I. London.

Handed in at 3.45 p.m. 10.12.17.
Received at 11.50 a.m. 11.12.17.

133. Decr 10th. Your 47492 of Decr 8th.

Andronik is on his way to see me now. My latest information is that Turkish Armenians are willing to form a Corps of 10,000 strong within a month for Salmas and Urumiyah districts, and will subscribe from five to ten million roubles which they wish controlled and disbursed by British. Will verify and inform you later.

On 24. 10. 17 Andronik told me that he could get 20,000 (?) Irregulars together for 100,000 roubles and feed 40,000 for 3 months on 300,000 roubles, but would require 40 British Officers, Pay, equipment, arms (?) supplies, machine guns, mountain guns, and pack transport from British or Russians. (worst of present movement of Russian Corps to North is that they take arms ammunition and transport with them) In connection with above mentioned districts, as Syrians who are now 2,700 strong are clamouring to be raised to 6,000 want British Officers, arms, clothing.

Marchimuns agent (?) en route for England is in here now and I will see him directly. Russians (?) "and " omitted) Armenians are will .X. serve together in same formation as former distrust latter. General Nazarbekov commanding the new Armenian Corps told me 4 days ago there should be no difficulty about ordering his men to serve on Persian frontier but that he expected to be sent to Van district which he knows well. General Baggratuni is believed to be in Bolshevick prison in Petrograd. (To be continued).
documents regarding the fact that the British ignored the killings committed by the Armenians in the region and even turned a blind eye to these crimes. (3, p. 150-154)

Andranik Ozanyan, who undertook to annex Nakhchivan, Karabakh and Zangezur to Armenia and began bloody activities, looted a great number of villages and settlements in Nakhchivan in June-July 1918 and committed terrible crimes. In early June 1918, Ozanyan attacked the village of Yaychi on the left bank of the Aras River and carried out a merciless massacre against unarmed civilians. The village of Yaychi, which had a population of about 4,000 people, was razed to the ground and more than half of the village population was killed. Most of the population who escaped Armenian bayonets – women, children and old people – drowned as they tried to cross the Aras River. So many people died and so few people survived that there was no one to bury the corpses. Residents of Nuvadi found the corpses of Yaychi residents killed by Andranik’s bandit detachment and dumped into the Aras River in the part of the river near their village and buried them. Since there were a lot of bodies, a big cemetery was created. Those graves, which remain under Armenian occupation at the moment, have been known since then as the Yaychi cemetery in the village of Nuvadi (4, p. 249; 5, p. 139; p. 58)

Andranik looted all the villages along the road from Yaychi to Ordubad and killed 2,000 people. Andranik’s terrible crimes continued in the villages of Shahbuz, Gejazur, Hanzar, Daylagli, Nursu, Kolani, Mahmudoba, Abragunus, Gazanchi, Paradash, Bash Anzir, Ayag Anzir, Khanaga, Bananiyar, Jamaldin, Arazin, Kirna and others. (4, p. 249-250)

Many historical documents note that 45 villages belonging to the Sharur region were attacked by Armenian committee members and the population was killed or thrown into the Aras River. Armenians captured by Muslims admitted that they had received an order from their commander to kill all Turks in Nakhchivan and regions belonging to it and throw them into the Aras River. The following expressions were used in the order dispatched to Armenian units: “Throwing the population of Sharur into the Aras River is the main duty of the regiment’s command.” (7, p. 45-46)

After the crimes committed in Nakhchivan and surrounding regions, Andranik’s armed detachments moved to Sisian in September 1918 and Gorus in November. The hard days of Zangezur and Karabakh began from this moment. The scale of their crimes was so large that Andranik thought he had taken over Nakhchivan with his actions. His goal was to carry out a policy of ethnic and national cleansing in every Turkic region he had taken over and to annex Karabakh, Zangezur and Nakhchivan to Armenia. According to information received from sources, 73,727 people were killed by Armenians in Nakhchivan from 1918 to 1921. (8, p. 29; 9, p. 147) The number of people killed by the Armenian army, organized and armed by the British and the Rus-
sians in Southern Azerbaijan, from 1915 to 1921 was more than 90,000. (10, p. 248)

Along with being a graphic example and sign of the Armenians’ psychology of hate for the Turks and the moral satisfaction the murder of a Turk gave them, this bitter truth shows that there were great powers behind these crimes and that the gold, pounds sterling, weapons and munitions allocated by Britain also had an impact. Although the crimes were not part of the British plans, the Armenians who were armed to fight the threat of pan-Turanism benefited from that help and resorted to massacres. It is no accident at all that these crimes committed by the Armenian armed detachments in the Caucasus caused concern in the British command and the Armenians were given a serious warning through Boghos Nubar Pasha (11). Because the killings of the civilian population by Armenians caused discontent with the British government among Azerbaijanis and formed an opinion that the British were pursuing a biased anti-Islamic policy (12). However, there was one reality, and it was the money and weapons that were supplied. As a result of this, the British political circles ignored the sufferings of the Muslim Turkic population and the genocidal crimes that were committed and tried to cover up these crimes.

As we noted above, the Turkic ideology of pan-Turanism and the likely appearance of a strong Turkic-Islamic union in the world’s political system based on the unity of Turkish, Azerbaijani, Iranian, Afghan and Central Asian Turks was the main and real threat to Britain. In order to eliminate the threat of pan-Turanism, Britain deployed Dunsterforce and the Malleson mission in northwestern Iran. Realizing that they will not be able to keep control of the Caspian Sea without Baku, the British were forced to consider all risks in order to protect the city. (13, p. 140-141) Otherwise, if the enemy (Turks – E. Sh.) seized the vast oil fields and used Caucasus railways, this would boost their military capability in Asia and Afghanistan. (13, p. 227) In the face of the Turkish offensive, the military force of the Baku Council comprised mostly of Armenians retreated. The situation in Baku, which the American historian of Azerbaijani origin Firuz Kazemzadeh described as “a Bolshevik island in an anti-Bolshevik sea”, was very complicated and the city was run by an Armenian-Bolshevik coalition. (14, p. 128) The Armenians, who openly supported Stepan Shaumyan and his Bolshevik associates, hoped that Russian Bolsheviks would send the required forces to protect them from the “Islamic army”. However, with the failure of the Bolshevik regime in Moscow to provide the necessary support to defend Baku, the Armenians appealed to General Lionel Charles Dunsterville who came to Anzali in June 1918. The Armenians called a meeting and made proposals on British aid for the defense of the city led by Dunsterville in Anzali and the British consul in Baku McDonnell. At the meeting held on 25 July, proposals to invite the British were accepted by a group comprised mostly of Armenians and socialist revolutionaries. On 1 August, a new reactionary government called the Central-Caspian Dictatorship comprised of socialist revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Dashnaks was established in Baku (for more details, see 15, p. 111-112; 16, p. 136; 17, p. 242; 18, p. 206). The first thing the new government did was to contact Dunsterville and ask the British for help. As Dunsterville accepted this request, the first British military unit under the command of Colonel Stokes arrived in Baku on 4 August. (19, p. 9) The main reason why the small allied army called Dunsterforce defended Baku was to take control of the Caspian, which was an important corridor for Turks’ advance to Central Asia. However, the army Britain deployed in Baku was too small. It was impossible for such an army to “defend the city”. The most realistic option was to organize and strengthen the Armenian forces in Baku. It is no accident that according to the instruction of the British Supreme Headquarters, the main purpose of the dispatch of Dunsterville’s mission to the region was to prevent pan-Turanist tendencies and to supply, train and organize the military force of Caucasus peoples (since the Georgians tended mostly towards the Germans, mainly Armenians are implied here – E. Sh.) to indirectly support the British army in Mesopotamia. (20, p. 102-103)
Dunsterville, who set sail from Anzali on 16 August, reached Baku on 17 August. According to some sources, Dunsterville’s military force consisted of 900 people, and according to others, 1,400 people. (21, p. 39; 22, p. 139) To rule out disputes, Dunsterville recorded in his memoirs that he had 800-900 soldiers. (23, p. 276) About 10 days after Dunsterville’s arrival in Baku, the Ottoman state, which wanted to benefit from the events in the South Caucasus in order to take over Baku oil and implement ideas of pan-Turanism, sent its army to Baku. The Turkish offensive was successful and the Caucasus Islamic Army entered Baku in September 1918. (24, p. 141) Failing to follow orders, the Armenians left the front line that was under fire. Although their number was about 9,000, the real number of Armenians who resisted the Turks was no more than 3,000. Dunsterville relied on Armenian forces. However, during the war, some Armenians escaped and hid in their homes. (25) There was nothing Dunsterville could do. It is no accident at all that after these events, the Armenians were called “worthless cowards”. (27, p. 301) According to the British war minister’s order to withdraw the British army from Baku, Dunsterville left the city on 15 September and returned to Anzali. On 16 September, Baku was taken over by the Turks (26, p. 7) The British army’s attempts to defend Baku from the Turks ended in a failure, and the city and its oil reserves were seized by the Turks (For more details, see 27, p. 302; 28, p. 208). Dunsterville directly blamed this failure on the Armenian forces. The British war minister also put the whole blame for the situation on the Armenians and these accusations were extensively reported by the British media. In its 20 September 1918 edition, The Times newspaper published a report headlined “British leave Baku: Detection of the Armenians” and noted that the British force sent to Baku at the request and invitation of Armenians failed to achieve success through the Armenians’ fault. (29, p. 6)

Another British newspaper Daily Mail, in a report headlined “Baku evacuated: Armenian treachery to British”, spoke about the Armenians’ negative actions and said that they fled the war and betrayed the British.

Worried about the publication of such reports which humiliated the Armenians in the British media as a result of the evacuation of Baku, the Armenian representative office in London sent a letter to the British Foreign Office. Written with a feeling of regret, the letter said that it was wrong to apply all events to the Armenians. In turn, the Foreign Office, which informed the Department of Military Intelligence, about the wishes of the Armenian representative office, thought it inexpedient to disseminate such reports as the news of evacuation could form a negative opinion about the Armenians among the British people and thus cause damage to British policy. (31) It must be noted that the main source of these reports published in the press was the War Ministry itself. (32)

One of the prominent figures at the Propaganda Bureau of the War Ministry, Arnold Toynbee, stressed that such reports caused great damage to British interests and noted in his report that Armenians were of great importance from a British point of view, putting the blame for the Baku events on the Armenians and reports about their betrayal could support enemy (Turkish – E. Sh.) propaganda, reduced trust in the Armenians would weaken their position on the issue of pan-Turkism and if Armenian claims weakened, this would deal a blow to British policy. (32)

The evaluations of both the British Foreign Office and Arnold Toynbee clearly show that the Armenians were
the main potential for the British as a valuable means of propaganda and from this point of view, it was necessary to make the people forget about their negative opinion about the Armenians and publish some reports and articles in favor of Armenians in the press saying that they heroically fought together with the allies during the war. British foreign policy experts and the Foreign Office approached the events from a wider angle and began activities to soften British-Armenian relations and to win the hearts and minds of the Armenians.

As we noted, the British army’s efforts to defend Baku from the Turks suffered a setback. Dunsterville realized that there was no point in defending the city and withdrew the army from the city and as a result, the Caucasus Islamic Army entered the city. The command of the Caucasus Islamic Army established law and order in the city and treated representatives of all nations equally. On 17 September, the national government moved from Ganja to Baku and Azerbaijan regained its natural, historical, political, cultural and national-spiritual capital again. However, the Ottoman state lost the First World War and, according to the terms of the Armistice of Mudros signed on the British cruiser Agamemnon on 30 October 1918, it was forced to withdraw all its troops from the whole of the Caucasus, including Baku. (33, p. 31; 15, p. 141; 18, p. 214-215; 24, p. 141-142). The armistice resulted in the strengthening of British positions in the South Caucasus. According to the terms of the agreement, Britain consolidated its hold on the South Caucasus and gained the most favorable region leading to northern Iran, i.e. South Azerbaijan. The capture of this strategic region, which connected Europe to Asia, boosted Britain’s role and capabilities in world politics and secured relations with India. (18, p. 215) It must be noted that Dunsterville’s army, i.e. Dunsterforce, which withdrew from Baku on 15 September, was dissolved in Anzali three days later, on 19 September, and General William M. Thomson was appointed commander of the newly-created Northern Iran army. (16, p. 191) On 17 November, a 10,000-strong allied army led by Thomson arrived in Baku. Initially, he denied the existence of a state called Azerbaijan. The British general said, “What we know is that there is no republic established out of the will of the Azerbaijani people, although there is a government formed owing to Turkish instigations. If there is a claim to the contrary, we will assess the entire situation and come up with a decision”. (34, p. 99)

At the same time, Thomson said that the allies are coming not to destroy but to build. At the end of the negotiations, William Thomson declared that Baku had to be purged of both Azerbaijani and Turkish troops. Control over Baku and its oil resources would be handed over to the British, and he himself would be the governor-general of Baku (16, p. 192)

When Winston Churchill, a prominent British politician who later became prime minister, worked as war minister, he wrote about the occupation of Baku saying that in a short period of time, the British created a fleet that gave them an advantage in the Caspian Sea. The British army seized one of the greatest strategic lines in the world. (35, p. 105) However, the presence of the British army in the South Caucasus did not last very long. Three month after its arrival in Baku, the Lloyd George government decided to withdraw the army from the South Caucasus as soon as possible in February 1919. (15, p. 248) Britain’s decision to leave the Caucasus still remains one of the unclear and serious problems.

To be continued
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