

Boris KHARSIYEV*PhD in Philosophy (Russia)*

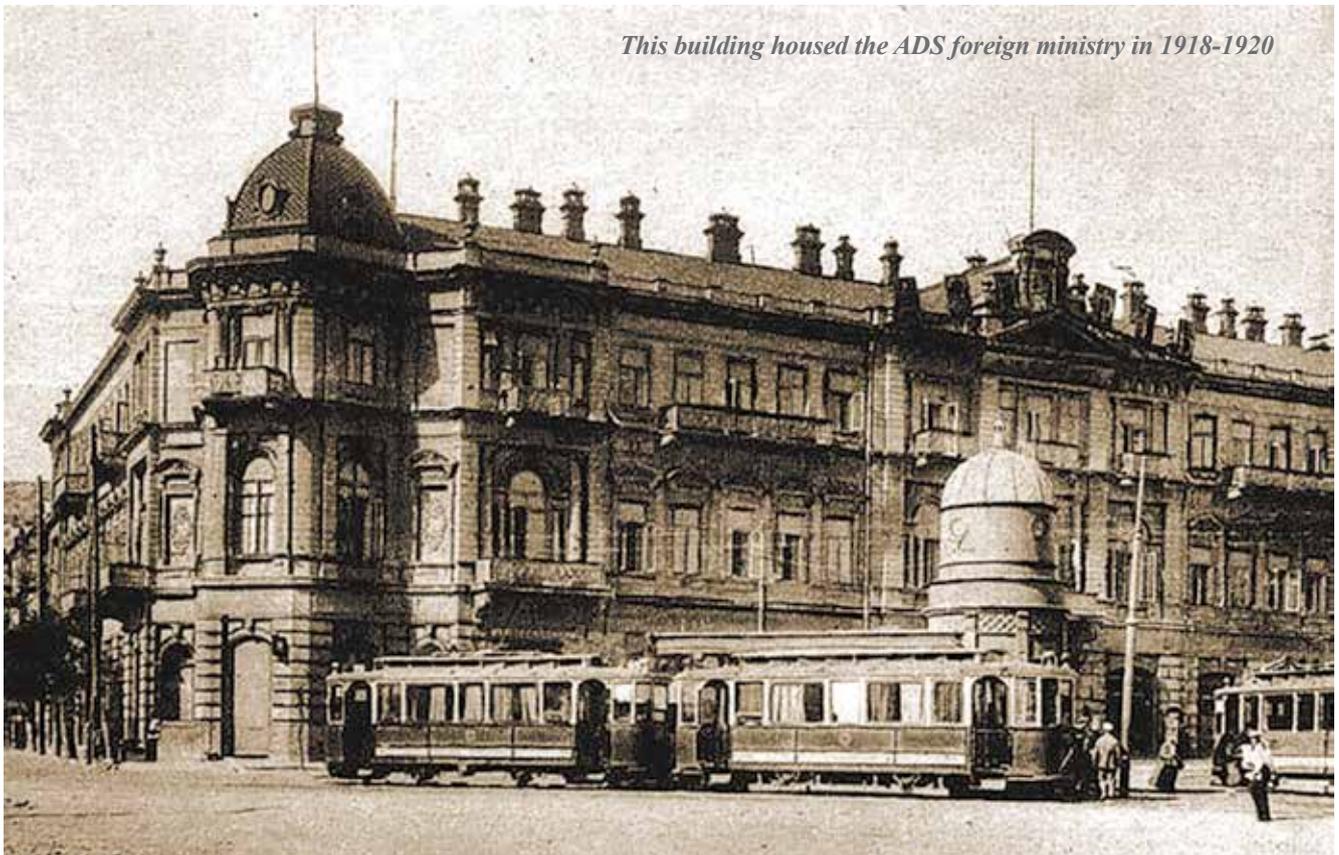
ADR'S FOREIGN POLICY IN 1918-1919

Conclusion. See the beginning in IRS-Heritage 2-3(39-40), 2019

Since its establishment the Azerbaijan Republic vigorously pursued a foreign policy, seeking to become involved in international relations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed Khalil Bay, the Ottoman foreign minister "who simultaneously headed the Turkish delegation at the Batumi talks, of the inception of the Azerbaijan National Council and the

Cabinet of Ministers chaired by Fatali Khan Khoyski" (24). Mammad Hasan Hajinski, a prominent politician and statesman, was appointed Foreign Minister of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR). As early as on May 30, a radiotelegraph message regarding the ADR's establishment was sent to the foreign ministers of world powers. The message was delivered to cities

This building housed the ADS foreign ministry in 1918-1920



Credentials issued by the ADR government to M. E. Rasulzade, H. Khasmammadov and A. Safikurdski to represent Azerbaijan in Istanbul. 17 June 1918

including Constantinople, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, London, Rome, Washington, Sofia, Bucharest, Tehran, Madrid, the Hague, Moscow, Stockholm and Kiev. Turkish diplomats based in numerous countries made relevant statements at the request of M. H. Hajinski.

The Batumi negotiations launched by the Transcaucasian government were continued by the national republics established after the break-up of the Transcaucasian Seim, with each of the republics citing its own pre-conditions for peace. The issue of drawing borders among the Caucasus republics came to the forefront and Armenia faced a challenging situation (25).

On May 29, Prime Minister F. K. Khoyski informed the Azerbaijan National Council of the course of ongoing talks with the Armenian National Council. In particular, F. K. Khoyski said that the Armenian federation needed a political center and that "Irevan could serve as such a center, therefore, an idea had been put forward to cede the city to the Armenians. Speaking afterwards, K. Khasmammadov, M. Y. Jafarov, A. Sheikhuslamov and M. Maharramov condemned the proposed concession of Irevan as inescapable evil. Nevertheless, the national assembly expressed its consent to that concession" (26). Furthermore, the Azerbaijani and Armenian delegations discussed border-related issues in Batumi and reached an agreement. In accordance with its terms, Azerbaijan agreed to establishing an Armenian canton within the borders of the Alexandropol governorate, while Irevan would be transferred to the Armenians provided that they would give up their claims to a part of the Yelizavetpol province, i.e. Karabakh (27). It is noteworthy that Enver Pasha wrote regarding those concessions to the Armenians in a cable dated May 27 and addressed to Vahib Pasha, "Khalil Bay's cable makes it clear that in exchange for the land returned to us the Armenians are seeking to acquire a part of the territory that belongs to the Muslims of the South Caucasus and that the Muslims will go for it... If a little Armenia with a population of 500,000 to 600,000 and a fairly small territory is established in the Caucasus today, this government will take millions under its control in the future upon orders from America. As a result, it would be the same as Bulgaria here in the east and it would be more hostile than Russia." (28)

Disputed issues on border delimitation with Georgia were left at the discretion of the Zagatala province's



population and the local residents expressed support for Azerbaijan (29).

Wrapping up the Batumi conference, Turkey signed agreements with Georgia, as well as with Armenia with the mediation of the Azerbaijani delegation, recognizing their independence. The Batumi negotiations ended on June 4, 1918 with the signing of agreements "On peace and friendship" with all the three republics.

Diplomatic relations between the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and the Ottoman government of Turkey. "The Treaty of Friendship between the Imperial Ottoman Government and the Azerbaijan Republic" was signed on June 4, 1918. The agreement was inked by Minister of Justice Khalil Mentesh and the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Front, Vahib Pasha, on behalf of Turkey, and Foreign Minister M. H. Hajinski and the head of the National Council, M.A. Rasulzade, on behalf of Azerbaijan. This was the first agreement signed by the Azerbaijan Republic with another state. Its preface indicated that the Ottoman



Participants in a ceremony to mark de facto recognition of Azerbaijan by the Entente countries. January 1920

government, on the one hand, and the government of the Azerbaijan Republic, which had declared independence, on the other, agreed to establish friendly and good neighborly relations...(30)

A clause on military assistance that was included in the text of the treaty ensured elimination of the Armenian gangs that had been on a rampage in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the ouster of hostile forces from Baku.

As a result of the efforts made by Azerbaijani diplomats, Austria-Hungary and Turkey undertook a commitment to secure recognition of Azerbaijan's independence by their allies. "On behalf of the Foreign Ministry, M. H. Hajinski sought military aid from the Turkish government, referring to the fourth clause of the treaty. The Turkish delegation immediately responded, accommodating the request for assistance, which the Azerbaijani people had been looking forward to." (31)

Foreign Minister M. H. Hajinski, who was in Batumi at the time, said in a letter addressed to Khalil Bay, "As a result of the Russian revolution, the government of the Azerbaijan Republic has faced considerable challenges. The Bolsheviks, who provoked riots in many places in Azerbaijan, have a grip on Baku. We are being strangled by anarchy that is rife in the country."

Having decided to meet the Azerbaijani delegation's request, the Turkish government was seeking a way to send troops to Azerbaijan without "sparking Germany's ire. A decision was therefore passed to set up the joint Islamic Army of the Caucasus, which would be comprised of Ottoman troops and Azerbaijani volunteers. According to Enver Pasha, this would allow for suppression of the German resistance" (32).

The Islamic Army of the Caucasus operating under the command of Nuri Pasha was used to provide military aid to the ADR. In addition to Turkey's incoming 5th Caucasian and 15th Chanakhgala military units, it included the Muslim Corps (a separate Azerbaijani corps since June 26), established by the ADR government (33). The Islamic Army of the Caucasus "reached Tabriz on May 9 and headed toward Ganja on May 20, having crossed Araz" (34).

Georgia and Germany, which were disgruntled over the Turkish army's advances, failed to block its movement toward Ganja and Baku. However, their attitude toward the Azerbaijani government based in Tiflis later changed dramatically and the latter was relocated to Ganja together with the National Council at the request of the Georgian government on June 16.

A. M. Topchubashov's letter to the chairman of the Paris Peace Conference with a proposal to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan. 31 May 1919

From the early days of his stay in Azerbaijan Nuri Pasha declared his respect and confidence in the Azerbaijani government, pledging not to interfere with the country's internal affairs, and made it clear that the Turks had arrived not to rule over Azerbaijan, but to defend it. "However, the impact of clerical circles on it was noticeably sensed in the days of the June crisis" (35).

In mid-June, the Turkish military mission's lack of confidence in F. K. Khoyski's government caused a cabinet stalemate. Azerbaijan's sovereignty was essentially at stake. Thanks to the insistence of the Azerbaijani delegation, its members managed to meet with Nuri Pasha's political adviser, who called for disbanding the National Council. In this complicated situation, the principled stance of the National Council was the only factor that allowed the sovereign Azerbaijan to counter a lethal threat.

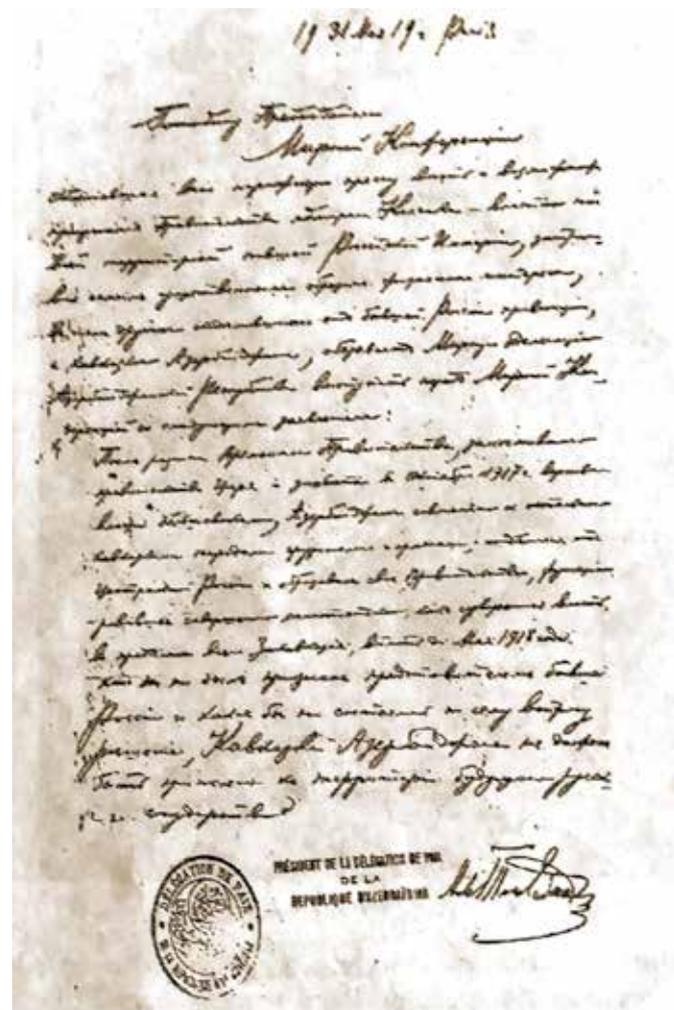
"We were told that the Turks were not to blame for this as they came here not to rule, but to defend our nation as warriors," M. A. Rasulzade wrote concerning those developments a year later. "It's true. However, it is also true that there were such Bays and Aghas in our midst who insisted that Istanbul govern this place." (36)

The so-called June crisis concluded with the suspension of the National Council's activity. However, the main task was fulfilled as Azerbaijan retained its independence. Late on June 17, a second cabinet chaired by F. K. Khoyski was formed. The new cabinet included six officials that served in the previous government, as well as six newly appointed ministers.

Following the government crisis, on June 19, 1918, Nuri Pasha headed to the frontline on a special train. On the same day, 600 Azerbaijani volunteers went to the line of fire as well (37). The newly established Islamic Army of the Caucasus was instructed to develop an action plan while taking into account the military situation under the guidance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The National Council made a crucial move before its self-dissolution. The agreements signed with the Ottoman government on June 4, 1918 were "welcomed with applause" at a session of the National Council. The documents, which were ratified by the Azerbaijani government on July 2, 1918, were submitted to the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

"One of the government's first steps was the June 17 approval of the composition of major powers' (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria) delegations at



the Istanbul conference. Given that this conference is to play an important role in the life of Azerbaijan, the government has approved the composition of the delegation consisting of three members, M. A. Rasulzade, A. Safikurdski and K. Khasmammadov, as well as four advisers and technical workers. The government authorized them to hold talks on political, economic, financial and military issues with all participants of the conference, as well as to conclude agreements with them. Moreover, the government empowered this delegation to sign confidential political and military deals of any type with the Ottoman Empire. The same powers have been granted with regard to the Mountain Republic." (38)

The Azerbaijani delegates brought the issue of an equal approach to the Caucasus nations to the attention of Turkey's allies, in particular, Germany. As for separate negotiations of the Armenians and Georgians with Germany, the letter noted that the Armenians were seeking to put forward their territorial claims with Germany's assistance.

N° 11

15 mars 1920

BULLETIN D'INFORMATIONS
DE
L'AZERBAÏDJAN

ORGANE BI-MENSUEL

RÉDACTION : Hôtel Claridge, 74, avenue des Champs-Élysées, PARIS (VIII^e)

— TÉLÉPHONE : ÉLYSÉE 48-13 —

En Dépôt aux ÉDITIONS ERNEST LEROUX, 25, rue Bonaparte, Paris-VI^e

La reconnaissance des Républiques transcaucasiennes

Paris, le 10 février 1920

A Son Excellence

M. l'ambassadeur des États-Unis
d'Amérique.

Paris.

Les soussignés, présidents des Délégations de la Géorgie et de l'Azerbaïdjan, ont l'honneur de déclarer ce qui suit à Son Excellence M. l'ambassadeur des États-Unis d'Amérique à Paris :

Les deux Républiques transcaucasiennes, savoir : la Géorgie et l'Azerbaïdjan, viennent d'être reconnues en tant qu'États indépendants, *de facto*, par le Conseil suprême des grandes puissances alliées siégeant à Paris, c'est-à-dire par la France, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Italie, le Japon ayant adhéré par la suite à cette décision. La reconnaissance *de facto*, sans parler de la reconnaissance formelle et définitive, n'a pas été jusqu'ici accordée aux Républiques transcaucasiennes par la Puissance qui, aux yeux de leurs peuples, incarne le mieux les grands principes de liberté et de justice par les États-Unis.

Or, dans ces derniers temps, de nombreuses missions américaines ont visité les pays susmentionnés et ont réuni sur ces Républiques toutes les informations nécessaires. Le Gouver-

nement fédéral n'ignore pas les sentiments de sympathie qu'inspire le pays américain aux pays transcaucasiens, ni leur désir d'entrer en relations suivies avec la grande démocratie américaine, et cela indépendamment de la décision que l'Amérique prendra en ce qui concerne les responsabilités à assumer par elle dans certains pays de l'Asie antérieure.

Aussi est-il naturel que les peuples et les Gouvernements de Géorgie et d'Azerbaïdjan attacheraient une très grande importance à ce que leur indépendance fût, dès maintenant, reconnue aussi par les États-Unis.

Les soussignés ont, par conséquent, l'honneur de prier Son Excellence de bien vouloir transmettre ce qui précède au Gouvernement qu'Elle représente, et de ne pas refuser son appui personnel à ce que la Géorgie et l'Azerbaïdjan soient au plus tôt reconnues en tant que Républiques indépendantes par le Gouvernement de Washington.

Le Président de la Délégation
géorgienne,

Signé : M. TCHÉRIDZÉ.

Le Président de la Délégation
d'AZERBAÏDJAN :

Signé : M. TOPTCHIBACHEFF.

Copy of the "Azerbaijan" bulletin released by the Azerbaijani delegation at the Paris Peace Conference to promote awareness about the realities of Azerbaijan. Edition dated 15 March 1920 focused on the recognition of South Caucasus republics by European states

Address of the head of the Azerbaijani delegation A. M. Topchubashov to the League of Nations

A delegation from the Mountain Republic was also invited to attend the conference on the initiative of the Ottoman government. Staunch rivalry unfolded between Germany and Turkey to secure the right to include the Caucasus republics into their sphere of influence. In the course of this struggle, Georgia expressed its commitment to the German side, while the Azerbaijanis backed Turkey. The Armenians were still confused and devoid of assistance. Afterwards, Armenian representatives launched an extensive promotional campaign in Istanbul in an effort to prove their “loyalty” to Turkey.

The Armenians’ enormous territorial claims ran counter to the real situation and their own capabilities.

The Azerbaijani delegates had already submitted a relevant document regarding the borders of the Azerbaijan Republic both to the Germans and the Turks.

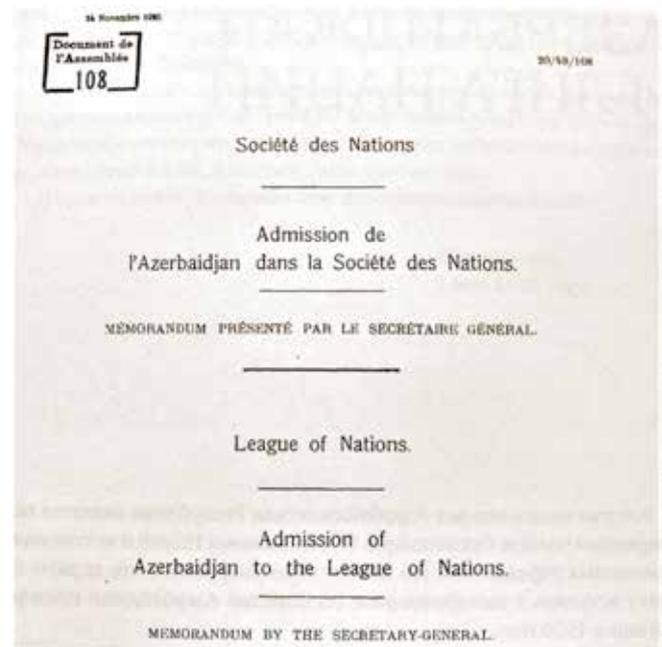
In a letter addressed to M. H. Hajinski and dated July 19, M. A. Rasulzade said that “the Armenians were pursuing Turkophile propaganda in order to expand their territory partly at our expense and partly at the expense of Turkey” (39).

The Battle of Baku. The battles that took place on the frontline from June 27 to July 1, 1918 were life-changing. The Baku Commune troops were driven back and the Islamic Army of the Caucasus headed toward Baku. It had to stop over at the “gate” of the ADR capital due to the intensifying diplomatic struggle for influence over the city.

German diplomats, who feared that the Bolsheviks could destroy the oil fields while pulling out of the city, were doing their utmost to prevent the liberation of Baku. In a meeting with M. A. Rasulzade in Istanbul, German Ambassador Bernstorff charged that “the operation of the Caucasus railway will stop” without Baku oil” (40), which could be detrimental for the German economy.

M. A. Rasulzade provided an explanation of the rising diplomatic tension over the “Baku issue” in a letter to M. H. Hajinski.

“The Germans’ argument on preventing an attack on Baku boils down to the fact that in case of a military invasion, the Bolsheviks would destroy the oil fields and oil reserves, while the warring allies are in need of oil just like those afflicted need water. Therefore, the Germans are trying to resolve the Baku issue peacefully... We have been informed by a private source that a special agree-



ment on oil is in place between the Germans and the Bolsheviks. For your information: oil is more of a Turkish-German issue than an Azerbaijani-German one. Under the Treaty of Batum, Turkey is entitled to the rest of the oil. Apparently, the Turks are trying to use the Germans when it comes to the oil factor,” Rasulzade wrote (41).

Despite a complicated situation, the tremendous effort made by ADR diplomats paved the way for overcoming the diplomatic intransigence of numerous countries. Istanbul was leaning toward providing substantial assistance to the Azerbaijani government. However, Germany’s dual stance with regard to Azerbaijan was deemed as insulting by Turkey. German politicians wanted Baku to end up eventually under Soviet Russia’s control and feared that the Turks would leave Germany high and dry after taking over Baku.

In the wake of Germany’s concerns over the possibility of the Bolsheviks’ setting fire to the Baku oil fields, Enver Pasha ordered in his public statements issued to the Islamic Army of the Caucasus not to launch a military campaign in Baku. However, Enver Pasha’s orders and telegrams on refraining from such an offensive were actually deceptive maneuvering (42). In fact, Enver Pasha issued secret orders to send the required amount of soldiers, weapons and military equipment for the Islamic Army of the Caucasus, urging to embark on an immediate attack, while preventing German intervention in Baku. He even deemed it appropriate to engage in fighting with the German military units that impeded his advances toward the city. Prime Minister

F. K. Khoyski, in turn, asked M. A. Rasulzade to redouble his diplomatic efforts in Istanbul and facilitate liberation of Baku.

The Azerbaijani government was trying to liberate Baku peacefully and seeking a negotiated solution. On July 24, Foreign Minister M. H. Hajinski told M. A. Rasulzade in a letter sent to Istanbul that he was heading to the Baku frontline, in a bid to launch peace talks with the Bolsheviks on the city's capitulation. On July 31, Prime Minister F. K. Khoyski told M. A. Rasulzade that "Mammad Hasan headed to the frontline two days ago and I am going there tonight."

"Our troops have approached Baku and took over Kobi, Khirdalan and Sumgayit...We hope to take over Baku in three to four days," F. K. Khoyski said (43).

The prime minister also issued instructions to the ambassadors concerning the Armenian issue. Rasulzade was opposed to substantial territorial concessions. He said in a letter to Hajinski that "making a concession to the Armenians on these issues means potentially whetting their appetite".

The Baku Council of People's Commissars headed by S. Shaumyan collaborated with any forces opposing the Islamic Army of the Caucasus, regardless of their political affiliation. On July 5, 1918, Bicherakhov's detachment was delivered to Alat through the Caspian Sea. On July 7, 1918, he undertook command over the right flank of the Baku defense line. Having realized the gravity of the situation, however, he headed north with his detachment in late July without engaging in a battle, defying the combat orders of the Baku Commune (45).

The Bolsheviks' attempt to hand over the city to the Britons failed as well. The British expeditionary force could not withstand the Islamic Army of the Caucasus led by Nuri Pasha. According to relevant notes, "Dunsterville wrote that the city residents imagined that a string of ships would disembark countless British troops." (46) Having assessed the pros and cons, the Britons deemed it unfeasible to launch military action on the side of the Baku Council, but engaged in fighting on the side of the Central Caspian Dictatorship, a government formed by the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Dashnaks. Having analyzed the ongoing developments, M. A. Rasulzade reminded the Azerbaijani government that it "must settle down in Baku so that everyone would face a fait accompli. Then the events will take an absolutely different turn" (47).

On August 2-3, 1918, Turkish and Azerbaijani troops headed toward the city to launch an offensive from

different directions. Leaving behind their political differences at this difficult time, the Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries and Dashnaks united to counter Turkey, a long-standing enemy of Russia, and once again showed that the issue was not class-related but had ethnic and religious grounds. On September 15, units of the Azerbaijani army entered Baku.

The political moves and plans of Germany, the Baku Council's actions and Britain's policies regarding the Baku issue fostered Azerbaijan's further rapprochement with Turkey. Amid exacerbated tension among countries during that time period, Azerbaijan could expect real assistance from no state other than Turkey. The Azerbaijani delegation based in Istanbul held talks in this regard, striving for international recognition of Azerbaijan's independence.

The Azerbaijani government, which was relocated to Baku on September 17, immediately issued a statement saying that the government, based in the capital city, declared to the residents of Baku and the surrounding settlements that all citizens of Azerbaijan, regardless of their ethnic background and faith, were entitled to equal rights. The government said it was equally committed to protecting their lives, property and rights.

Azerbaijani diplomacy, which emerged in the early years of the struggle for the country's independence, in 1918-1920, successfully passed the tests of history and maturity. Those very diplomats had to find the right answers to solve the daunting tasks pertaining to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. Prominent Azerbaijani politicians, including F. K. Khoyski, M. H. Hajinski, M. A. Rasulzade and many others, made a great contribution to the ADR's establishment and development. The historical developments that occurred in 1917-1918 ultimately shaped up the Azerbaijani people's resolve to attain statehood. 🌟

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This building was the seat of government of the Azerbaijan Republic, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from September 1918 to April 1920. Baku, contemporary photo

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