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GENOCIDE AND DEPORTATION OF THE AZERBAIJANIS OF ERIVAN PROVINCE

(1918-1920)

(continued from previous issue)



ON 5 JANUARY 1919, THE BOARD OF THE COMMUNITY OF MUSLIMS OF ERIVAN PROVINCE WAS ESTABLISHED IN BAKU.¹ ONE OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY WAS TO PROMPTLY INFORM THE GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT OF AZERBAIJAN, AS WELL AS THE ALLIED COMMAND ABOUT THE SITUATION OF THE MUSLIMS OF ERIVAN PROVINCE, TO RENDER MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO MUSLIM REFUGEES FROM ERIVAN PROVINCE. ON 8 JANUARY 1919, AN APPEAL FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF MUSLIMS OF ERIVAN PROVINCE WAS READ OUT AT A MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC.

«The Life of Refugees». Artist A. Azimzadeh. 1924. This is how the Soviet-era painter saw Azerbaijanis expelled from their native lands

The first page of the list of attacks of Armenian forces on the Azerbaijani villages of Zangazur. 12 January 1919

It stated that «the Armenian troops have captured the entire Surmali County and parts of Erivan, Yelizavetpol and Sharur counties and are moving to Nakhchivan, and the civilian Muslim population is partly massacred and partly expelled from their villages and is forced to flee to the mountains inside Persia, which threatens them with imminent death. The territory cleared by force is populated by Armenian refugees from Turkish Armenia. It is necessary to take steps to protect the physical existence of the Muslim population of Erivan Province.»² A telegram from the chairman of the Board and later the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Armenia, Teymur Khan Makinski, to ADR Prime Minister F. Khoyski on 18 January 1919 described the situation which developed in the province after the withdrawal of Turkish troops: «As you know, last summer Turkish army units occupied parts of Erivan Province almost totally populated by Muslims, namely the Surmali and Sharur counties, as well as parts of the Echmiadzin, Erivan and Nakhchivan counties. In the latter county Muslims also make up a significant majority. As the Turks withdrew from these places, the government of the Armenian Republic, considering for unknown reasons the entire Erivan Province to be an integral part of the Armenian Republic, seized the entire Surmali county and the parts of the Erivan and Echmiadzin countries where Muslims live almost as a solid mass, and intends to take the Sharur and Nakhchivan counties, where troops have been sent and where, according to our information,

С П И С О К

донесениям пристава 3 участка Зангезурского уезда, Зангезурскому Уезду
му Начальнику о нападениях, ограблениях, кражах и пр., совершенных армя-
н в пределах 3-го участка.

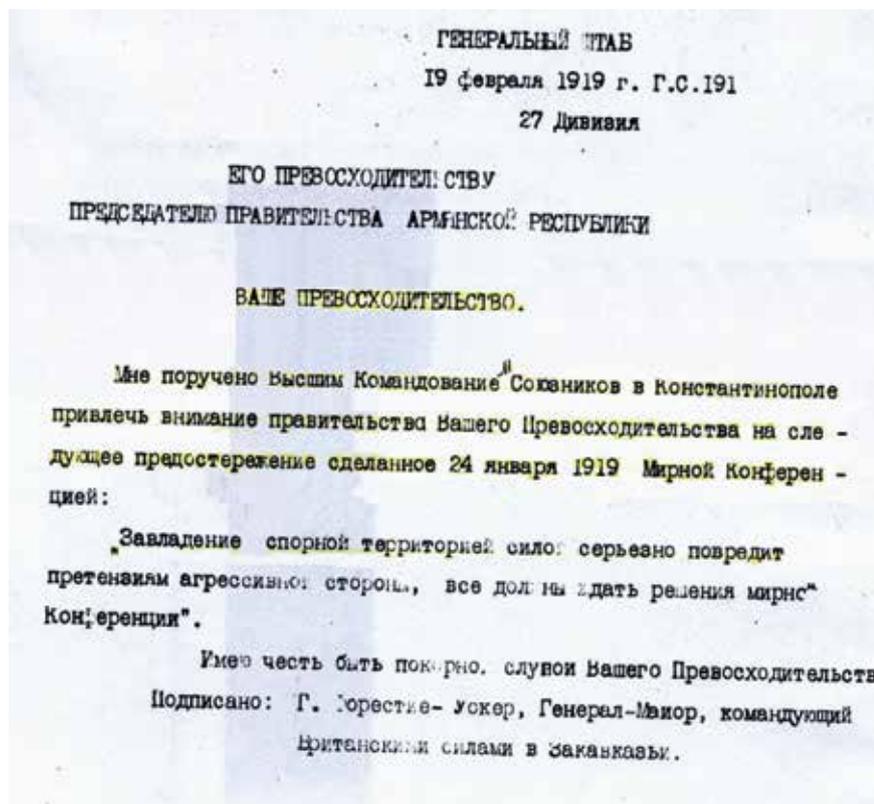
Составлено 12-го января 1919 года.

№	Р О Д П Р Е С Т У П Л Е Н И Я .	Когда и за каким № до- несено уезд- Начальнику	З а м е ч а н и я
1.	Об угоне скота Кантабев и кражи их основ армянами	24 IX-18г. ва № 54	Занг. У. Н. 19 11-18г. ва № 54 со списком.
2.	Об ограблениях Ганджи-Мястохана	24 IX-18г. ва № 53	
3.	Об угоне армянами сел. Агавурт скота и баранту Чаралинцев	29 IX-18г. ва № 54	
4.	Об угоне армянами сел. Зейва скота у Карапачев	Тогда же ва № 55.	
5.	О краже у джанами 15 голов скота и таджикских	2 окт. ва № 61	
6.	Об обстреливании армянами сел. на-сел Ганджи-Аубанку	Тогда же ва № 58.	
7.	О нападении армян соседних сел. на сел. Аятлаб	3 октября ва № 81	
8.	Об обстреливании армянами сел. Муган- джих сел. Довутлу	4 окт. -18г. ва № 90.	
9.	Об угоне армянами сел. Зейва у Чарда- лы двух лошадей	5 октября ва № 98.	
10.	О присвоении армянами сел. Агавурт имущества Степана Самилл-Самед-оглы оставлен. во время отъезда. на эйлак	6 октября ва № 99.	
11.	Об угоне баранты у Аралашиев баран- ты армянами	10 октября ва № 119.	
12.	Об отобрании армянами сел. Зейва у Джибллина Аллахия Абулла-оглы лошади с вьюка на, пшеницы и зерно. Мехралия.	10 октября ва № 120.	
13.	Об угоне всего стада баранов у Джа- фар-Муллы Саб-оглы и убийств его пастуха армян сел. Шилатар	11 октября ва № 121.	
14.	Об угоне у Шахна Гасан-бека бека и др. два быка, две коровы армянами сел. Артанам	16 октября 1918 г. ва № 154.	
15.	Об убийстве армянами сел. Хатали двух ханлахцев Наджафулла Хустафа оглы и др. и разграблении имущества	16 октября 1918г. ва № 156.	
16.	О разграблении сел. Довутлу армян. сел. Муганджих	16/X-18г. ва № 157.	

military clashes are taking place between the Armenian forces and the Muslim population.» Given that «the Azerbaijani government has no opportunity to actively defend the population of these areas, which are an integral part of

Azerbaijan», Makinski offered to organize a special conference of representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani republics and the allied command in Tiflis. In addition to the diplomatic representative of the ADR in Georgia, M. Jafarov,

1 Azərbaycan xalqına qarşı 1981 il mart soyqırımı. 3 cilddə. İkinci cild, ikinci kitab: İrəvan quberniyası soyqırımı. 1918-1920-ci illər, s. 60
2 Azərbaycan Xalq Cumhuriyyəti (1918-1920). Parlament (Stenoqrafik hesabatlar). I cild. Bakı, 1998, s.111-112



A caution from the commander of the British troops in the Transcaucasia to the prime minister of the Republic of Armenia on the termination of attempts to resolve territorial disputes by force. 19 February 1919

the commission was supposed to include members of the Azerbaijani government familiar with the issue of Erivan and a representative of the community. Makinski noted the need to take urgent measures to appoint a diplomatic representative of the government of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Armenia as soon as possible.³ On 31 January, Azerbaijan newspaper reported that Attorney Muhammad Khan Tekinski was appointed diplomatic representative of the ADR to the Ararat Republic.⁴

Azerbaijan newspaper on 14 January 1919 published a letter from an outstanding representative

of the Community of Muslims of Erivan Province, Mir Hidayat Seyidov, to the chairman of the ADR Council of Ministers, F. Khoyski. It noted that under the pretext of accompanying Armenian refugees to Erivan Province, Andranik and his unit are going to help the Armenian troops fighting the Muslims of the province. At the same time, the Armenian refugees, who are Turkish nationals, settle in Muslim-populated areas, while Muslims are expelled by force of arms. The report also stated that after the withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Nakhchivan and Sharur, the Muslim population of these counties

declared the establishment of the Aras government. The report reflects the plight of the Ordubad population, which was also threatened with physical extermination by the Armenian armed forces and gangs of Andranik. At the end, the report expressed a strong belief that the government of Azerbaijan would take urgent and decisive action to ensure that the population of these districts of Yerevan Province «is not wiped out, crushed and broken up», would send the required number of troops, as well as report the woeful state of the Muslim population of the province to all nations and people through the press.⁵

The study of another note from Foreign Minister A. Ziyadkhanov on 21 March 1919 to the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Georgia, M. Jafarov, shows that the destruction of Muslim villages in Erivan Province - Garagach, Gadilu, Garabaylar, Agasibayli, Dahnaz and Shaganlu - was accompanied by the capture of several hundred girls and women.⁶ This action of the Armenian armed groups outraged the government of Azerbaijan, which sent a protest to the government of Armenia through its diplomatic representative in Armenia, M. Tekinski, on 24 March 1919: «On behalf of my government, I suggest that the government of the Republic of Armenia immediately release all captured Muslim women and girls from the hands of the Armenian soldiers.»⁷ As can be seen from the contents of the telegram from the deputy diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan to Georgia, F. Vakilov, to

3 Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика. (Документы и материалы), с.143-144

4 Газета «Азербайджан», 31 января 1919 г.

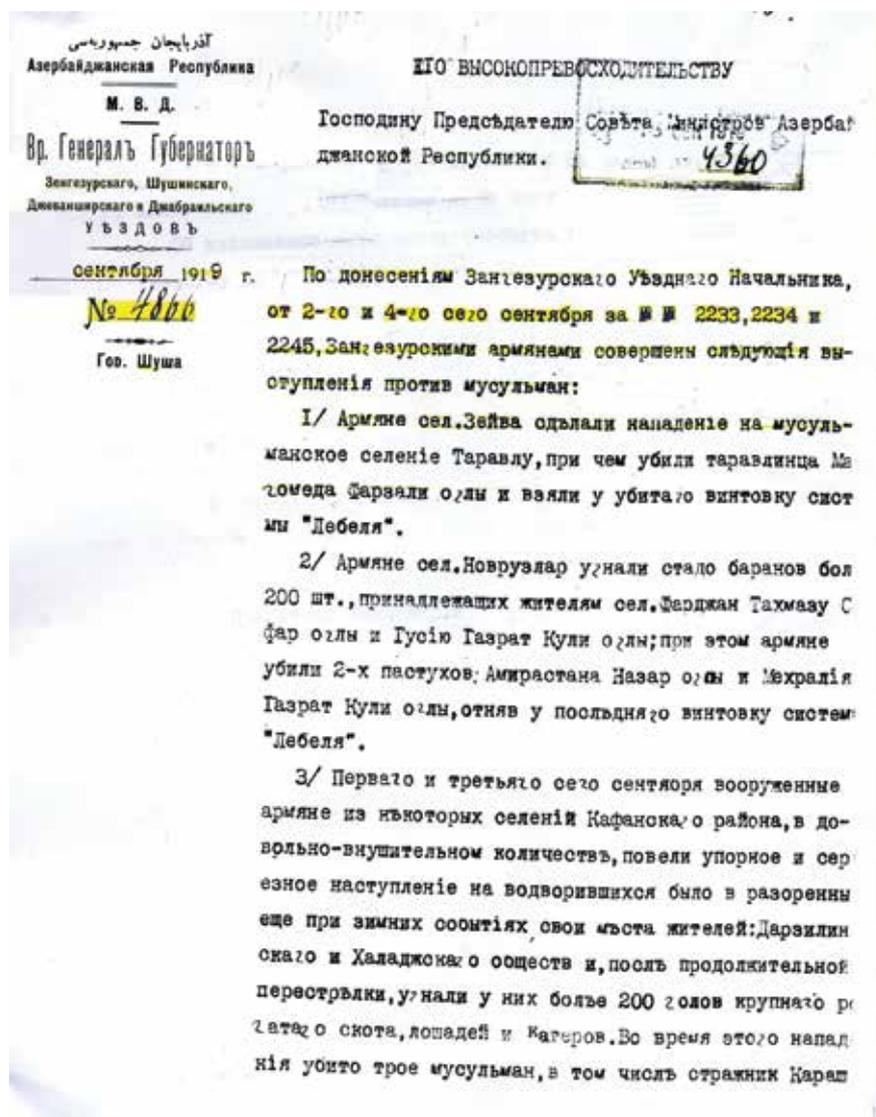
5 Газета «Азербайджан», 14 января 1919 г.

6 Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика..., с.186

7 Газета «Азербайджан», 27 марта 1919 г.

Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Jafarov on 31 March 1919, the issue was raised with the representative of the Supreme Allied Command in Erivan.⁸ However, according to a telegram from the authorized representative of the ADR, M. Tekinski, to Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs on 12 July 1919, the Armenian side was not going to return the several hundred Muslim women taken away as concubines by Armenian soldiers.⁹ Questions concerning the plight of the Muslim population in Armenia were also discussed during a meeting between the diplomatic representative M. Tekinski and the Armenian catholicos on 18 March 1919. In a telegram dated 2 April 1919 to ADR Foreign Minister M. Jafarov, Tekinski notes that the catholicos pointed to the need for friendship between Armenia and Muslims and promised to urge the Armenian people to live peacefully with the Muslims.¹⁰

The problem of the territorial conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan was discussed at the peace conference which was convened in Tbilisi on 27 April and continued its work in commissions during May 1919. The conference discussed the prospects of the independence of the peoples of Transcaucasia and looked at ways of political and economic unity among its peoples. In the same vein, Armenia's Foreign Minister S. Tigranyan spoke on behalf of the government of Armenia and F. Kh. Khoyski on behalf of the government of Azerbaijan. Tigranyan said that now for the first time the independent peoples of Transcaucasia have



Report from the Interim Governor of Zangazur, Shusha, Javanshir and Jabrayil counties of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the prime minister of the republic on the attacks of Armenian forces on the Azerbaijani population of the region with the aim of exterminating and evicting them. September 1919

come to realize the necessity of unity, and this realization is the key to the fact that joint and harmonious life becomes possible. The conference agreed that, in the course of determining the mutual borders between the republics of the Caucasus, only areas with a

mixed population can be the subject of talks.¹¹ However, as subsequent events showed, through the fault of Armenia these agreements remained only on paper. The traditional tactics of the Armenian diplomacy were to make fine-sounding statements first, presenting themselves as

8 Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика..., с. 190-191

9 Azərbaycan xalqına qarşı 1981 il mart soyqırımı. 3 cildde. İkinci cild, ikinci kitab: İrəvan quberniyası soyqırımı. 1918-1920-ci illər, s. 132

10 Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика..., с. 194-195

11 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti Ensiklopediyası. 2 cildde, c. 2, s. 112



The state of Azerbaijanis being deported from their native lands did not worry the tsarist authorities and later the Soviets. «The Refugee Boy». Artist B. Kangarli, 1916

staunch peacekeepers, and make loud-mouthed promises about their commitment to resolve the conflict, and then take their words back at the last moment. Such a

hypocritical position of Armenia, which it firmly held in 1918-1920 at peace conferences on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict convened regularly, nullified any peaceful

initiative of the Azerbaijan Republic.

The handover of Erivan to Armenia in May 1918 (according to the Caucasus calendar for 1917, 12,557 Azerbaijanis lived in this city¹²) tragically affected the fate of the Muslim population of the city. Having received Erivan in exchange for giving up claims to Karabakh, the Armenian armed forces, in violation of the agreement, launched an offensive in the Karabakh conflict in July 1918. This prompted the Azerbaijani government to warn the Armenian side of a possible revision of the previous decision on Erivan. For example, the prime minister of the Azerbaijan Republic, F. Khoyski, wrote in the dispatch of 31 July 1918 to the head of the Azerbaijani delegation in the Istanbul talks, M. A. Rasulzadeh: «If the Armenians make a claim to Karabakh, refuse to give them Erivan.»¹³ In a telegram to the Armenian Foreign Ministry on 8 October 1918, referring to the outcome of his meeting with the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Georgia M. Jafarov, the diplomatic representative of Armenia in Georgia, A. Jamalyan, reiterated these arrangements: «Today Mr. Jafarov came to me ... The conversation quickly turned on the issue of Karabakh. He mentioned the Azerbaijanis' good attitude towards us in the Batumi conference, that the independence of Armenia was recognized with their efforts and that they ceded Erevan to us because we promised not to raise the issue of Karabakh.»¹⁴

On 29 June 1919, Azerbaijan newspaper published memoirs of one of the witnesses of the

12 Ibid, p. 150

13 Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика..., с.42-44.

14 Нагорный Карабах в 1918-1923 гг.: Сборник документов и материалов / Отв. ред. В.А. Микаэлян. Ереван: АН Армении, 1992, с.30

To substantiate the claims on Azerbaijani lands, hundreds of medieval Turkic tombstones in the form of horses and sheep were destroyed by Armenians

harassment of the Muslim population in Erivan: «The Muslims are so defenseless and outlawed in Erivan that in broad daylight, let alone at night, they have their clothes taken off them if they are more or less intact even in the Muslim part of the city. Similarly, the Muslims have their money and valuable taken away from them... Looting and violence also affects private homes of Muslims from which young Armenian armed to the teeth take away the 'extra' things. All this is still happening in the capital of Armenia - Erivan. The troubles, suffering and torture experienced by Muslims in Erivan defy any description. Many people cannot stand it and go crazy, others have aged prematurely ... This is the situation of Muslims in the city.»¹⁵ A report from the acting governor-general of Southwestern Azerbaijan, S. Jamilinski (Nakhchivan, Ordubad, Sharur, Daralagoz and Vedibasars districts) to the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Armenia, M. Tekinski, in October 1919 noted that Supreme Allied Commissioner Colonel William Gaskell appointed by the Paris Conference and other U.S. officials who visited Erivan at the height of the extermination of Muslims did not recognize him. It was also noted that the Armenian authorities prevented Gaskell's meeting with representatives of the Muslim population in Erivan who wanted to tell him the truth about the torture and suffering experienced by Muslims.¹⁶

In April-May 1919, the territory of Novobayazet County of Erivan Province, which included the area



around the Lake Goycha, suffered a massive attack from Armenian gangs. Below is an excerpt from the report of the authorized representative of the 5th area of Goycha District, Ismayil Sultanov, to the Ganja County chief: «From 13 April this year, the troops of the Ararat (Armenian – I. N.) Republic launched an offensive on peaceful Muslim villages in Goycha District, Novobayazet County, to clear the area of the Muslim population inhabiting the eastern and northern margins of the Lake Goycha, and so far, 22 villages with a population of 60,000 people have been destroyed, burned and cleared. The unfortunate Muslim population is dying under

gunfire from the Armenian forces whose aim is to wipe out the Goycha Muslims, which they are implementing now; One is horrified at the sight of such inhumane and bloody actions of the Armenians and the Armenian government against their former Muslim neighbors and Muslim subjects, and they do not accept any requests despite the pleas and cries of the Muslim population. Muslims who fell into the hands of the Armenian troops were not left alive for any benefits, on the contrary, they are tortured with untold sufferings, women, children, old men and young people are killed with the exception of a few women

15 Газета «Азербайджан», 29 июня 1919 г.

16 Azərbaycan xalqına qarşı 1981 il mart soyqırımı. 3 cilddə. İkinci cild, ikinci kitab: İrəvan quberniyası soyqırımı. 1918-1920-ci illər, s. 266-267

and adolescent girls ... the surviving refugees are persecuted by the troops ... they cram into canyons and snowy peaks,... get stuck in the snow and die en masse. The task of the Ararat Republic has been solved - there are no more Muslims in the Goycha area. So far, 84 Muslim villages have been destroyed in Novobayazet County.»¹⁷ Interestingly, the violence perpetrated in Novobayazet County against the Muslim population also raised concerns with the Armenian population of Baku. On 13 June 1919, *Nashe Vremya* newspaper published a telegram from the chairman of the Baku Armenian Council to the Armenian foreign minister, in which the Erivan government was informed that reports of an official nature published in the local press about the violence perpetrated in Armenia, particularly in Novobayazet District, against the Muslim population, thicken the atmosphere in relations between the Armenian and Muslim population of Azerbaijan.¹⁸

The crimes of Armenian troops who committed mass violence against the Muslim population of Armenia and the futility of protests to the Armenian government forced the ADR government to take concrete measures to determine the extent of the losses among the Muslim population and the amount of property losses. For this purpose, under a special directive of 4 June 1919 issued by Foreign Minister Ziyadkhanov, the diplomatic representative of

Azerbaijan in Armenia, M. Tekinski, was tasked to collect materials about Armenian violence over the Muslim population.¹⁹ On 10 June 1918, in a dispatch from the Foreign Ministry of the Azerbaijan Republic, M. Tekinski received more detailed instructions that were expressed in the need to «collect statistical data unofficially with the help of representatives of ravaged Muslim villages in Erivan Province, and where possible in the Kars region, about losses incurred by Muslims both in people and in property, with the names, last names, residences and age of the victims who were killed and injured, taken captive, men and women who returned and did not return from captivity, ravaged villages, orchards, stolen cattle, and so on. It is desirable to compile descriptions of major Armenian attacks on Muslim villages from the words of representatives of witnesses or victims themselves.» At the end of the dispatch, it was noted that the main purpose of this dangerous mission of Tekinski is the intention of the government to «establish an international commission involving British, Italian and other representatives to determine the size of the human and property losses caused by the Armenians to Muslims.»²⁰

In addition, in his telegram of 23 June 1919 to the foreign minister of Armenia, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister A. Ziyadkhanov put forward a proposal to create a joint mixed government-parliament commission of representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan, which would include

«representatives of the civilized nations of Europe and America», to investigate the massacres that had taken place between Azerbaijanis and Armenians within the republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan since the declaration of their independence.²¹ However, the Armenian government, despite assurances to cooperate and resolve all problems by peaceful means, continued to send punitive expeditions against the defenseless Muslim villages of Erivan Province.

These bloody actions intensified even more after the British command placed the territories of Erivan Province with a Muslim population (Nakhchivan, Sharur, Daralagoz, Ordubad) under the jurisdiction of Armenia at the beginning of May 1919. In contrast to the Karabakh, it was difficult to delineate Armenian-populated areas in Nakhchivan, Sharur Daralagoz and Ordubad as the Muslim population there formed a solid mass. Despite the arguments of Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister M. Y. Jafarov, which he expressed in a letter dated 30 April 1919 to the commander of the British forces in the South Caucasus, Major-General George Cory²², on 2 May 1919 Nakhchivan was visited by a representative of the British military mission, General Davie, who demanded that all Muslims accept the authority of the Armenian government. On 3 May 1919, General Davie and the commander of the Armenian armed units, Dro, signed a joint order, which legalized the handover of the region to the Armenian government. In his appeal

17 Газета «Азербайджан», 17 мая 1919 г.

18 Газета «Наше время», 13 июня 1919 г.

19 Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика. (Документы и материалы), с.250-251

20 Ibid. p. 263

21 Ibid. p. 274-275

22 Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика. (Документы и материалы), с.211-212

Up until the deportation of Azerbaijanis from the territory of Irevan Province, there were hundreds of medieval Muslim gravestones here, which were later destroyed by Armenian chauvinists



to the Armenian prime minister on 15 May 1919, representatives of the Nakhchivan people rightly assessed this act of the British command «as violence against the Muslims of these areas and expressed their fair protest to General Thomson».²³ The allied command considered the Armenian government in Nakhchivan as a temporary solution

until the border issue was resolved at the Paris Conference. In turn, the Armenian government undertook to ensure the security of the Muslim population of the region and the return of refugees. Describing the dire consequences of this decision for the Muslim population of the province, the deputy diplomatic representatives of the ADR in

Georgia, F.Vakilov, wrote in a letter to the commander of the British forces in the Caucasus, General Cory, on 12 July 1919: «My government receives daily information on the persecution of the Muslims in Erivan Province by the Armenian government. Armenian regular troops are sent against Muslim villages and expose them to devastation, sparing neither

23 Azərbaycan xalqına qarşı 1981 il mart soyqırımı. 3 cildə. İkinci cild, ikinci kitab: İrəvan quberniyası soyqırımı. 1918-1920-ci illər, s. 99



women nor children. Hundreds of refugees from the devastated villages pass through Tiflis every day, seeking refuge in Azerbaijan. Against their will

and by the will of the allied powers, the Muslims of Erivan Province have been temporarily placed under the control of the Armenian

government. Not considering myself entitled to interfere in the internal affairs of the areas temporarily handed over by the allied powers

to the Republic of Armenia, I, on behalf of my government and in the name of the sense of humanity, declare my categorical opposition to any kind of violence perpetuated by the government of Armenia against the civilian Muslim population and consider it my duty to point out that this conduct by the Armenian government might lead to the worst consequences. The news of the troubles suffered by Muslims of Nakhchivan County spreads among the masses of their co-religionists in the border regions of Azerbaijan and Armenia and causes fair indignation and a desire to defend the suffering innocent.»²⁴ The Muslim population of the districts handed

over to Armenia tried to resist the Armenian authorities. For example, Armenian representatives were not allowed into Ordubad County and were expelled from Shahtakhti. Naturally, these actions of the Muslim population caused repression by the Armenian authorities with the full knowledge and approval of the British administration. In Nakhchivan, Sharur and Ordubad, arrests of Muslim leaders began. At every step, the Muslim population was subjected to searches and had its property seized, while the regular troops of the Armenian government fired at their villages.»²⁵ However, the Armenian government in Nakhchivan did not last very long and was

eliminated at the end of July 1919 as a result of armed resistance from the local population to the regular units of the Armenian government, which attempted to establish full control over Nakhchivan and the surrounding areas in a military way ahead of the departure of the British troops from Azerbaijan. In early August 1919, the government of Azerbaijan appointed Samad bay Jamilinski head of the office of the temporary governor-general of southwestern Azerbaijan. 🌟

(To be continued in the next issue)

24 Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика. (Документы и материалы), с.292-293.

25 Газета «Азербайджан», 25 июня 1919 г.

