

Transferring of Western Zangazur to Armenia

On April 28, 1920, when was established Soviet power in Azerbaijan, most of the territory of the Zangazur region was under the control of Armenian armed formations. Parts of the Bolshevik army that entered Azerbaijan from Russia after the occupation of Baku, headed towards Karabakh and Zangazur. The movement of the Bolshevik troops in this direction seriously disturbed the Dashnak Armenia.

Although Nariman Narimanov was elected as a chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan, the real power was in the hands of non-Azerbaijanis. After the seizure of the power in Azerbaijan by the Bolsheviks, Narimanov was unable to fight such forces alone. Later he himself admitted it. In a letter to Stalin, he wrote: "After the coup, this began to be especially felt, even Mikoyan said:" We will elect Narimanov as a chairman of the Revolutionary Committee, but we will take him into such an environment that he will not be able to use his authority too widely. "

On April 30, 1920, the Soviet government of Azerbaijan sent a note to the Dashnak government of Armenia demanding that the territories of Karabakh and Zangazur be cleared of Armenian armed formations, ensure the withdrawal of Armenian troops to its borders and stop the ethnic massacre, otherwise, Azerbaijan would consider this situation as a state of war with Armenia. In a telegram dated May 1, signed by Sergei Kirov, Russia's plenipotentiary representative in Georgia, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, head of the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party, and Mikhail Lewandovsky, commander of the 11th Red Army, it was required that the Armenian government withdraw its troops within 24 hours.

At that time, the Armenian government was aware of the prejudiced attitude of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of Russia Georgy Chicherin towards Turkey and Azerbaijan. The Armenian deputy of G. Chicherin L. Garakhan (Lev Mikhailovich Garakhanyan) played an important role in the formation of this position. A telegram sent from the Armenian Foreign Ministry to Chicherin on April 30, said that the Red Army men were advancing in the direction of Karabakh and Zangazur, thus trying to unite with Turkey.

On May 3, Armenian Foreign Minister Hamazasp Ohanjanyan sent a telegram to the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Mirza Davud Huseynov, in which he stated that he considers Karabakh and Zangazur to be part of Armenia and is concerned about the deployment of Azerbaijani troops there. In the telegram G. Ohanjanyan stated that the government of Azerbaijan had never existed in Zangazur, allegedly the Armenian National Council of Zangazur ruled this territory and the population considered this territory an integral part of Armenia.

Behind such extreme behavior of the Dashnak government in Armenia was the support of some circles in Russia. On May 15, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of Russia L. Garakhan sent a telegram to Yerevan and Baku, in which he said that Russia had assumed the role of mediator in resolving disputes between Armenia and Soviet Azerbaijan.

Although the Russian leadership initially announced that Soviet troops will sent to Nakhchivan, Zangazur and Karabakh, it did not make any effort to liberate the Azerbaijani territories occupied by the Armenians.

By a decree of the Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan, dated May 18, 1920, in the Karabakh and Zangazur districts were established the posts of the extraordinary commissioner. Later, by the decision of the Politburo of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Azerbaijan on August 26, 1920, Alikheidar Shirvani (Mustafabekov) was appointed as an Extraordinary Commissioner, and the Armenian Armenak Garagezov was appointed as his deputy.

In a telegram sent to G. Chicherin on June 19, 1920, S. Ordzhonikidze wrote that Soviet power was proclaimed in Karabakh and Zangazur and the inhabitants of these territories considered themselves part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic. However, later the position of S. Ordzhonikidze changed significantly.

At the same time N. Narimanov, Budu Mdivani - a member of the Caucasian Bureau, Anastas Mikoyan - a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, and Avis Nuriyanyan - a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, sent a telegram to G. Chicherin and S. Ordzhonikidze. The telegram was with the following text: "As for the allegedly controversial Zangazur and Karabakh, we decisively declare that these places are undeniable and must remain within Azerbaijan»

However, the development of events showed that G. Chicherin did not agree with the position of the leadership of Azerbaijan. He argued that Narimanov wanted the Russian armed forces to seize Karabakh, Zangazur and Nakhchivan and handed them over to Azerbaijan as a gift, but it should not have been allowed.

In May-June 1920, negotiations were held in Moscow between Dashnak Armenia and Soviet Russia. Levon Shant (Segbosyan) was a head of the Armenian delegation, and Chicherin and L. Garakhan led the Russian delegation.

Chicherin, acting under the dictation of Garakhan, informs Lenin that the Armenian delegation does not agree to the voluntary surrender of the territories occupied by Armenia to Russia, with the exception of the Karabakh region.

Boris Legrand, Russia's representative in Dashnak Armenia, also played a special role in the transfer of a part of Azerbaijan's territories to Armenia.

On July 10, 1920, the "Report on Karabakh" was heard at the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan with the participation of B. Legrand. The report says that Zangazur devastated by the troops of Ararat (Armenia) and that the Armenian refugees from Turkey, fueled by Anglo-American capital, were the mainstay of the Dashnaks. Dashnak general Dro fled with his gang from Karabakh to Zangazur, and the Armenian peasants did not want to join to Armenia.

On July 14, S. Ordzhonikidze and B. Legrand sent a telegram from Baku to G. Chicherin. The telegram read as follows: "We consider it necessary to resolve the issue in such a way as to partially satisfy Azerbaijan: Karabakh completely and unconditionally remains a part of Azerbaijan, Zangazur is considered a disputed territory, and the rest of the regions remain as part of Armenia»

On July 28, units of the 11th Red Army entered Nakhchivan in the direction of Gorus-Shahbuz-Jakhri, and on the same day was announced, that Soviet power established there.

On August 3, General Dro's gang attacked the 32nd Division of the Bolshevik Army and captured Gorus. On August 5-7, units of the 11th Red Army, after serious preparation, expelling Dro and Nzhdeh,

liberated Sisian and Gafan, and on August 9 - Gorus. The remnants of General Dro's military forces returned to Daralayaz. The Nzhdeh army took up a position in the Meghri region.

On August 10, was signed a peace agreement in Yerevan, between Soviet Russia and Dashnak Armenia. Clause 3 of the agreement stated that the occupation of the disputed territories by the Soviet troops does not resolve the issue of whether these territories legally belong to Azerbaijan or Armenia. In other words, with this agreement, Soviet Russia showed that it does not perceive Zangazur as part of Soviet Azerbaijan, and thus wants to win over to its side Armenia, which cooperated with the Entente.

Having received a large amount of ammunition from Western countries and General Wrangel, the commander of the tsarist army that fought against Soviet Russia, the Armenian armed forces under the command of Dro again attacked Zangazur from Daralayaz and re-captured Gorus. In early September 1920, Nzhdeh declared himself the commander-in-chief of all Armenian armed formations in Zangazur.

On November 4, at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan with the participation of I. Stalin and S. Ordzhonikidze, was resolutely protested an agreement between Russia and Armenia on the transfer of Nakhchivan and Zangazur to Armenia.

In the second half of November 1920, the political and military situation in Zangazur changed again in favor of the Armenians. The focus of Russia was on the establishment of the Soviet power in Armenia. On November 29, was overthrown the Dashnak government in Armenia and the Soviet power was established.

On November 30, at a joint meeting of the Political and Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, was discussed the telegram "On the declaration of the Soviet power in Armenia by the Armenian Revolutionary Committee", and was made a decision against the interests of Azerbaijan. The decision stated that Zangazur and Nakhchivan would become part of Soviet Armenia, and the right to self-determination was given in the mountainous part of Karabakh.

On December 1, Narimanov made a statement at a solemn meeting of the Baku Council on the establishment of the Soviet power in Armenia. This statement says "the territory of the Zangazur and Nakhchivan regions is the indivisible territory of the Soviet Armenia," and "the working peasants of Nagorno-Karabakh are given the right to self-determination." The military operations in Zangazur were suspended; the Soviet Azerbaijani troops were departed.

The text of the statement appeared in the issue of the Baku Russian-language newspaper "Kommunist" on December 2, 1920, and in Yerevan on December 7, 1920, in the Armenian-language newspaper "Kommunist". The text of the statement, which published in Yerevan, was completely fabricate and in the part of the statement concerning Nagorno-Karabakh, said that this region "is recognized as an integral part of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic."

Ordzhonikidze, also falsifying Narimanov's statement, in a telegram sent by him from Baku to Lenin and Stalin on December 2, said: "Azerbaijan announced yesterday that Nakhchivan, Zangazur and Nagorno-Karabakh have already been transferred to Soviet Armenia."

Narimanov protested against the falsification of the facts stated in his statement by the Armenians. However, Moscow continued in that spirit. Pro-Armenian leaders in Moscow regardless of the will of the Azerbaijani people made political decisions.

On December 2, 1920, a military-political agreement signed in Yerevan between Soviet Russia and Soviet Armenia. The agreement signed by the diplomatic representative of Russia in Armenia Boris Legrand, and from the part of Armenia -generals Dro and Terteryan, who went over to the side of the Bolsheviks. In exchange for the Sovietization of Armenia, Russia declared that it indisputably recognizes the annexation of the entire former Erivan province, Zangazur district and the mountainous part of Gazakh district to Soviet Armenia.

On December 25, 1920, Colonel Nzhdeh, stationed with his group in the Tatev monastery, announced the creation of the "Syunik Autonomous Republic" in the part of Zangazur under his control. On January 21, 1921, the "Nagorno-Armenian Republic" was established in Zangazur under the leadership of Simon Vrasyan, who was the Prime Minister of Armenia for a week, during the period of the Dashnak. Colonel Nzhdeh again led the armed forces of the toy republic.

The government of Soviet Armenia and the command of the 11th Red Army were negotiating with the toy "Nagorno-Armenian Republic" in Zangazur on the completion of the annexation of Upper Zangazur to Armenia. Soviet Armenia considered the territory, which controlled by Nzhdeh in Zangazur, as a barrier between Yerevan and Karabakh, and was preparing for an attack on Zangazur in order to remove this barrier. On April 21, 1921, at the II Congress of Armenians of Zangazur, held in the Tatev Monastery, Nzhdeh was simultaneously elected as a Prime Minister, Minister of War and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the contrived "Nagorno-Armenian Republic". In a word, the executioner Nzhdeh became the sovereign ruler of Upper Zangazur. On May 12, Soviet Armenia and the "Nagorno-Armenian Republic" negotiated in the village of Galanjig on the annexation of Upper Zangazur to Soviet Armenia. Nzhdeh agreed to annex Zangazur to Soviet Armenia on the condition that the Armenian government officially confirms that Nagorno-Karabakh belongs to Armenia. Official Yerevan soon fulfilled Nzhdeh's condition.

On May 25, 1921, when the command of the 11th Red Army was preparing for new hostilities, the armed forces of Nzhdeh left Gorus and settled in Bazarchay and Gafan regions. Bolshevik troops attacked Zangazur from two sides - Karabakh and Yerevan. The Yerevan group of the 11th Red Army, known as the Separate Caucasian Army, attacked from three directions - from Vedi to Keshishkend (Daralayaz), from Nakhchivan to Anghalavi (Sisian) and from Ordubad to Meghri. The red battalion, led by the heroic Abbasgulu bey Shadlinsky, also fought against Nzhdeh who was as a part of the Bolshevik army attacking Zangazur.

On June 26, from the Dashnak troops was liberated Daralayazi, on June 28- the Bichenak pass, and on the 30th- the Sisian region. On July 2, the Karabakh-Zangazur group of Bolsheviks, advancing from Shushi, entered Gorus together with a group from Erivan. The Nzhdeh grouping retreated from the Tatev monastery on July 4, and on July 7 from the Gafan copper mine. On July 9, Nzhdeh and his entourage fled from Meghri to Iran, crossing the Araz River.

On July 20, 1921, the Council of the People's Commissars of Armenia approved the administrative-territorial division of Armenia into 8 counties and 33 regions. There was no Zangazur district in this administrative division. On August 31, a new 9-th Zangazur district was created, with the center in Gorus. Azerbaijan, in turn, withdrew from its administrative-territorial division the western part of Zangazur (Gorus, Sisian, Gafan regions and part of Meghri region). Thus, Zangazur was divided into two parts, and its western part was annexed to Armenia.