

**THE MILITARY-POLITICAL SITUATION IN AZERBAIJAN IN CONDITIONS
OF THE CONFLICT OF THE BOLSHEVIKS AND THE NATIONAL FORCES
(April-July 1918)**

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Abstract: The military-political situation in Azerbaijan in April-July 1918 in the context of the struggle of the Baku Soviet of People's Commissars against the Republic of Azerbaijan is analyzed in the article. Since at the time of the establishment of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Baku gubernia was under the authority of the Baku Soviet of People's Commissars, there was actually dual power in the country. But soon the Baku SPC started a war with the national government, due to which the Bolsheviks suffered heavy results. The article elucidates the relationship between the forces on the political scene in Baku. In the summer of 1918, the factors that determined the anti-Bolshevik activity of the forces represented in the Baku Soviet are revealed, and the reasons for the isolation and subsequent overthrow of the Bolsheviks are determined. The causes of disagreements between the Bolsheviks and the Dashnaks are analyzed in detail. Altogether, the influence of the Armenian factor on the events of the period is being studied.

It also clarifies to which extent the military assistance of Soviet Russia played a role in the struggle of the Baku SPC against the Republic of Azerbaijan. The main source base of the paper is the press materials of the mentioned period and the memories of participants in the event of different political orientations.

Keywords: *Azerbaijan Republic, Baku Soviet of People's Commissars, Transcaucasian Seim, the Ottoman State, Caucasus Islamic Army, Bolsheviks, Armenian National Soviet, S.Shaumyan*

Introduction

Although the first period of Bolshevik rule in Azerbaijan in April-July 1918, which covered only the Baku gubernia, was a short period, it has become the object of historical investigations for many years. This period was studied in Soviet historiography in the context of the struggle of the Bolsheviks for power in Azerbaijan, and in the Azerbaijani one - in the context of the struggle of the Republic of Azerbaijan to establish its power in the country and the anti-Azerbaijani activities of the Bolshevik-Dashnak regime. The change of approach in the analysis of events from one pole to another (Soviet and modern Azerbaijan) did not allow us to fully determine the essence of a number of issues. Therefore, there is a need to dwell on the relations between the political forces in Baku, especially between the Bolsheviks and the Dashnaks, between the Armenian political forces in the tense situation that arose during the confrontation of the Bolsheviks with the Azerbaijani national forces, the role of the British factor in leaving of the Bolsheviks the power and other questions. For instance, if the Bolshevik-Dashnak alliance is mainly mentioned in Azerbaijani historiography, then the essence of the subsequent

contradictions between them remains unclear. Relations between the head of the Baku Commune S.Shaumyan and the Armenian national forces before the summer of 1918 differ from the relations then. It would also be appropriate to pay attention to the interference of Soviet Russia in the events taken place in Baku in the summer of 1918.

As we know, in March 1918, after the massacre of the Muslim population in Baku, the Bolsheviks established their first government - the Baku Soviet of People's Commissars (Baku SPC), which existed from April 25 to July 31 under the leadership of S.Shaumyan. The Baku SPC was the local authority of Soviet Russia here. Despite the fact that the official power was in the hands of the Bolsheviks and the left-wing socialist-revolutionaries (S.R.- member of Socialist Revolutionary Party), in fact, the Bolshevik-Dashnak regime was established in the city. The Bolshevik-Dashnak regime ensured the same position regarding the national political forces of Azerbaijan, the participation of the Dashnaktsutyun party in the Baku Soviet and the inclusion of the Armenian armed forces in the newly formed Baku Army of the SPC. Since the detachments sent by the Baku SPC to establish Soviet power in the regions were mainly Armenian military units, the "struggle for Soviet power" in these regions was carried out through serial massacres of the Muslim population in April-May. However, the Bolsheviks, who had managed to consolidate power in Baku gubernia, faced a difficult struggle.

The impact of relations within the Transcaucasian Seim on the military-political situation in Azerbaijan in April-May of 1918

The aggravation of the national-political struggle in the region had a serious impact on what was happening in Azerbaijan. In April 1918, the Baku gubernia was under the jurisdiction of the Baku SPC, and all other territories of Azerbaijan were formally and legally under the authority of the Transcaucasian Seim. The power of the Seim depended on the mutual relations of the Georgian, Armenian and Muslim factions within it, which in turn affected the struggle with the Bolsheviks.

Since its foundation, the general policy of the Transcaucasian Seim, which implemented the will of the Georgian and Armenian factions, led to an 8-day war with the Ottoman state and, as a result, the Seim, which was defeated on April 22, announced the establishment of an independent Transcaucasian Federative Republic and further estranged itself from Bolshevik Russia. But, after the fightings between the Ottoman state and the troops of the Seim, who were trying to fulfill the conditions of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, on May 11, a conference between the parties began in the city of Batum. The fate of the South Caucasus was already being decided here.

At the time, the Muslim faction of the Transcaucasian Seim discussed the situation in Azerbaijan, and it appeared that as a result of the "advance" of the Baku Bolsheviks into the population, Bolshevik sentiments in the population began to increase [Minutes of the meetings...1918 (2006): 64]. Certainly, at that time we could not talk about the growth of sympathy of the Muslim population for Bolshevism, but only about the strengthening of Bolshevik power in places. The national forces of Azerbaijan had urgently to reveal their positions. Thus, in this situation, the most important task facing the Azerbaijani national forces was the liberation of Baku, which was possible only with the help of the Ottoman state. So, the Muslim faction sent its representatives M.H.Hajinsky and

M.A.Rasulzadeh to the afore-said conference. The issue was so important for the Azerbaijanis that even a large number of influential people from uyezds took the initiative to go to Batum for asking help from the Turks. [Minutes of the meetings... 1918 (2006): 66]. Since the active intervention of the Entente and Soviet Russia in the region was impossible, it increased the chances of victory for the Ottoman state.

In this case, the representatives of the Dashnaktsutyun party in the Seim, seeing the danger of getting Baku out of control, tried to discuss the future fate of Baku with members of the Azerbaijani faction and achieve a favorable result for themselves. Taking on the obligation to rectify the situation, they put forward the condition that power in Baku should belong not only to Muslims, but be international, and the Armenian military units should remain in Baku. However, representatives of the Azerbaijani faction rejected any concessions to the Dashnaks, contrary to the expectations of the Armenians, taking the position of “all or nothing” in this matter [Minutes of the meetings...1918 (2006): 66]. By this time, the Ottoman troops had already seized Alexandropol, creating disconnection along the common front line where the Armenians were fighting, and creating an unfavorable situation for the Armenian troops on the Kars and Iravan sides.

The harsh position of the Azerbaijani faction prompted the Dashnaks to take retaliatory measures. So, in mid-May, the Dashnaks, who form the basis of the armed forces of the Baku SPC, requested the approval of the head of the Baku SPC, S.Shaumyan, for an attack on Ganja. But S.Shaumyan was against hastiness. He considered first to ensure the delivery of a sufficient amount of food from the North Caucasus to Baku, and then take an offensive against Ganja [Meeting of the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Sailors' Deputie... (1918, June 12)]. Such a step had to confirm to the policy of Soviet Russia, that is, the Center, and backed up with help from there. Baku SPC tried to get support from the Center in a short time. This is evident from Shaumyan's letter to the Soviet of People's Commissars of Russia dated May 24 and from the report of the commander of the Caucasian Red Army (or the army of Baku SPC) G.Korganov attached to this letter. G.Korganov provided detailed information about the state of preparation and the needs of the army. There was information in Shaumyan's letter received by him from the Dashnaks: “The Dashnaks received information from Tiflis that they promised autonomy to the Georgians in Batum under the protectorate of Wilhelm, and the rest of the South Caucasus should be autonomous Azerbaijan”[Bolsheviks in the struggle... (1957): 424].

It appears from the letter that Shaumyan, who made haste to capture Ganja, was planning to start an Armenian rebellion there and further. In his opinion, this step would mobilize the Georgian peasants and result in the dismissal of the Seim ”[Bolsheviks in the struggle...(1957): 425]. On the eve of the attack on Ganja, the Caucasian Red Army consisted of 19 battalions with 18.000 men. As for the supply of weapons and ammunition, it consisted of 60 machine guns, more than a thousand shells, 9 million rifle bullets, 12 cannons, 7 mortars, 3 armored trains, and some hydroplanes. Korganov's report stated that there is a great need to send a high command staff from the Center to the army [March 1918 genocide... (2009): 97].

The influence of the establishment of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the political course of the Baku SPC

The further development of the events faced the Baku SPC with new facts. Thus, after the dissolution of the Transcaucasian Seim on May 26 and Georgia's decision on independence, the Muslim faction of the Seim, seeing that the South Caucasus cannot be an alliance, created the Azerbaijan National Soviet on May 27 and the next day, on May 28 announced the creation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. This also meant that dual power had already emerged in the territory of Azerbaijan, with the National Government of Azerbaijan and the local government of Bolshevik Russia controlling only the Baku gubernia. A sharp military-political conflict between these two forces standing in an irreconcilable position was inevitable.

The government of the Republic of Azerbaijan did not have the military power to establish its authority in the entire territory of the country. Therefore, on June 4, the representatives of Azerbaijan and the Ottoman state signed an agreement "On Peace and Friendship" in the city of Batum, and according to the 4th clause of the agreement, the Ottoman state undertook to provide military assistance to the Republic of Azerbaijan. In order not to provoke the protest of its ally Germany, which has its own interests in the region, the Ottoman state decided to create an "Islamic Army" consisting of its own army and Azerbaijani volunteers, and to conduct military operations through it.

Since the Baku SPC was primarily a local authority of Soviet Russia, the head of the Russian SPC Lenin tried to direct its activities in the region. Worrying about the increasing Ottoman threat, in his telegram sent to Shaumyan on May 24, as a way out of the current situation, Lenin advised to enter into an alliance with the Georgian Mensheviks [ЛЕНИН (1970): 82]. Although the Georgian Mensheviks and Bolsheviks had long since parted ways, in the current situation, Shaumyan appealed to Jordania on June 6, following Lenin's recommendation. Despite the fact that the letter sent to Jordania through the Tiflis Bolsheviks was delivered to Jordania only on the 25th of the month, he promised, even though it was late, that under any circumstances Turkish echelons would not be allowed to enter the North Caucasus from its territory [Bolsheviks and N.N. Jordania (1918, August 7); Bolsheviks at N.N. Jordania (1918, August 9)]

At that time, also Stalin, being in the defence of the Saritsyn city, was worried about the current situation of the Baku SPC. His sending a new mandate to Shaumyan on behalf of the Central government and advising him to act as he knows in certain situations [Bolsheviks in the struggle...(1957): 426] gave Shaumyan even more authority. On June 5, without waiting for further instructions from the Center the Baku SPC, began the war with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

It should be noted that during this period, since the civil war in Russia was gaining momentum, the necessary assistance that will be provided to the Bolsheviks in Baku became a difficult matter. Despite this, the leadership of the Baku SPC hoped that assistance would reach Baku from the Center in any case. S.Ter-Gabrielyan, whom Shaumyan trusted greatly, was negotiating. He was told that 100 million rubles will be given to Baku. In the end, Ter-Gabrielyan was able to receive only 50 million rubles of the promised amount, but Lenin instructed that the money given to Baku should be spent just on oil production [ЛЕНИН, В.И. (1970): 516].

On June 10, the deployment of the 5th Caucasian division sent by the Ottoman state to Ganja was ended. Its military staff consisted of 257 officers and 5.575 soldiers [Qafarov, V. (2020): 64], and it was planned to merge the division with the Azerbaijani

military forces. From June 14, Nuru Pasha took direct control of the operations of the Caucasus Islamic Army. By starting a counterattack he intended to go behind the troops of the Baku SPC and isolate Baku from the southern grain regions and block the road to Iran. On June 16, a battle took place between the troops of the Baku SPC and the Caucasus Islamic Army near Kurdamir, and the army of Baku SPC was able to gain an advantage for the time being.

Finally, on June 23, aid consisting of 4 armored vehicles, 13 airplanes, and other weapons was delivered to Baku through Ter-Gabrielyan. At that time, most of the weapons and ammunition at the disposal of the Caucasian Red Army were the weapons that the Bolsheviks bought from the corps of the Russian army commander N. Baratov in Iran. As early as the beginning of 1918, the Baku Soviet sent a group of guardsmen to Iran to obtain these weapons.

It should be noted that although Lenin advised Shaumyan through Ter-Gabrielyan to take a waiting position in the current situation for the difficulty in the international situation [Bolsheviks in the struggle ... (1957): 519], but he considered going forward as the only way out.

The invitation of the English to Baku and the strengthening of disagreement within The Baku Soviet

The serious resistance of the Caucasus Islamic Army created an opportunity for the emergence of an opposition group against the Bolsheviks within the Baku Soviet. The right wing of the Soviet - socialist revolutionaries, social-democrats (Mensheviks) and Dashnaks began to look for alternative ways in the current situation and persistently offered to call the British forces stationed in Iran for help against the German-Turkish bloc. The Armenian National Soviet in Baku was also in this position and was particularly active in order to achieve this. The idea of calling the English to Baku among the aforementioned forces appeared already in the spring of 1918. L. Dunsterville, the head of the British mission in Iran, shows in his memoirs that in the second half of April, when he was in Hamadan, the Baku Armenian National Soviet sent a representative to him and asked for help from the British [Денстервилл (1925): 100]. To the point, on the other hand, the Armenian National Soviet in Tiflis sent a delegation consisting of Melik-Karagezov (Armenian People's Party) and A. Jamalyan (Dashnak), and then A. Zurabyan (social-democrat) and A. Ohanyan (Dashnak) to achieve German influence in Turkey [Киракосян (1989): 137].

Another active group that tried to establish contact with Dunsterville was the Baku SRs, which had strong positions in the navy. It should be noted that Armenians (Ter-Ohanyan, Dr. Zakharyan) were active among them [Verbatim report...p.73]. The idea of inviting the British was fueled by the critic situation within the country, the acute dissatisfaction caused by the shortage of necessary foodstuffs, especially bread. The idea that the British would solve this problem quickly was spreading among the workers.

It appears from Dunsterville's writings that at this time the British were able to create a whole intelligence and courier system in the entire area from Hamadan to the Caucasus [Денстервилл (1925): 56]. R. McDonnell, the former British vice-consul living in Baku,

was widely active in this direction. It appears from McDonnell's memoirs that he was able to establish close relations with Shaumyan and Japaridze in Baku [Макдонелл (1938): 207]. Calling Shaumyan "his friend", McDonnell tried to convince him that the British could play an important role in the course of events.

However, there was a difference of opinion within the Baku SPC on the calling the British. If Japaridze was in favor of accepting this help, (At one time, during the discussions in the Baku committee regarding the Brest-Litovsk Peace, Japaridze spoke against this peace. In other words, in some cases, he considered it possible to abandon the general policy of the Bolsheviks.) Shaumyan was hesitant, and at first opposed. On June 5, after receiving instructions from Moscow, Shaumyan informed the British consul that the Soviet government would not allow the British to enter Baku [Suny R.G. (1990): 281]. No matter how much it was in the interests of the Armenians, as the head of the Bolshevik government in Baku, Shaumyan could not appreciate such cooperation with the British.

For this reason, the British agency in Baku tried to use the manpower of the Caspian Navy against the Bolsheviks. In a short time, a fairly positive result had been achieved in this issue, and the number of those agitating for the acceptance of help from the British in the navy was constantly increasing. At that time, the idea of inviting the British seemed so attractive that its rejection even led to an open attempt against the existing government. So, on June 12, 1918, an attempt was made against Shaumyan under the leadership of the right-wing socialist revolutionary P.Ivanov and S.Kirichenko, the mechanic of the "Ardahan" ship. The purpose of the attempt was to seize power in the Baku SPC and to dissolve the Baku Soviet by arresting Shaumyan [Şaumyan (1978): 357]. But accidentally, the attempt ended in failure.

On the whole, the ideas about inviting the British brought into question the "reliability" of the Baku Bolsheviks in the eyes of the Russian Bolshevik authorities. For this reason, on June 21, Shaumyan and Japaridze had to send a radiogram to the Soviets of the North Caucasus and Volga and to Lenin himself to refute the ideas spread about it [Deputies of Soviets: Petrovsk (1918, June 23)].

But, Shaumyan being in the difficult situation, instead of the help of the British, decided to use the help offered by L.Bicherakhov, head of the Russian-Cossack partisan group located in Iran. Representatives of the Anzali Military Revolutionary Committee, especially Dashnak Nerses Jigityan, played an important role in the formation of a positive opinion about Bicherakhov [Безугольный (2011): 72].

After the negotiations for some time, Bicherakhov first came to Anzali and then to Baku and met with Shaumyan. According to the initial agreement between the parties, Bicherakhov, who included his military force in the Red Army, had to be the commander of one of its units. Bicherakhov assumed the task of holding the right flank along the Shamakhy-Goychay road. Then, Bicherakhov intended to advance towards Tiflis with this flank, and on the way to raise up the North Caucasus highlanders, especially the Ossetians [Bolsheviks in the struggle (1957): 519]. There were approximately 1,500 soldiers in his detachment, 880 of whom were Cossacks. However, it should be noted that after Bicherakhov announced "voluntary mobilization" in Baku, a considerable force joined the detachment. One of the factors that led to this was the fact that his soldiers were paid more.

On July 1, after the Caucasus Islamic Army inflicted a heavy defeat on the forces of the Baku SPC near Goychay, Bicherakhov's detachment went to the front. Bicherakhov, who started commanding the Red Army on July 6, took a position on the right flank of the front, while G.Korganov took a position on the left one. Despite the help of the new force, the Caucasus Islamic Army gained the upper hand in the battles near Kurdamir on July 10 and Karrar station on July 14, and after that the military initiative passed into the hands of the Caucasus Islamic Army.

In the telegram sent on July 13 by Shaumyan, he still hoping for Soviet Russia, asked for immediate strong help [Bolsheviks in the struggle (1957): 557]. Along with several other representatives, he even had to send his son Suren to Moscow. As mentioned, the beginning of the civil war on the territory of Russia certainly did not allow the sending of necessary military aid to the Baku SPC. The leadership of Soviet Russia first solved issues that it considered important and that could be solved more quickly.

However, on July 19, help - a detachment headed by G.Petrov came to Baku from the Center. However, Petrov, who had to give most of his soldiers for the defense of Saritsyn, was able to bring only 780 men to Baku. On July 24, a cavalry battery of 170 men, armed with 4 cannons, joined them [Bolsheviks in the struggle (1957): 583].

It should be noted that the position of Extraordinary Military Commissar for Caucasian Affairs was given to Petrov by the Russian Foreign Ministry. According to Suren Shaumyan's writings who tells about Petrov's activities in Baku, considered himself equal to Shaumyan, if not higher than him [Meeting of the Azerbaijan Assistance ...:12].

The position of Armenian political forces

At the time, the fate of the newly declared Republic of Armenia was being decided as well, and this issue worried the Armenian political forces. The defeat of the Armenians in the struggle against the Turks on the Caucasus front created a serious disagreement among the Armenian political forces, which were faced with the dilemma of war or peace. In fact, disagreement between Armenian political forces existed from the very beginning. After it became clear that Turkey insisted on implementing the terms of Brest-Litovsk, the Armenian National Soviet in Baku considered admissible not to follow the Baku Soviet, but to send a peace delegation to Tiflis [Ceremonial meeting of the Soviet. (1918, June 4)].

The Armenian National Soviet in Baku and the Dashnaks here hoped for the British in the current situation. Not recognizing the new Armenian government and the old Armenian National Council in Tbilisi, they wanted to amend the Batumi Treaty and save the Armenians with the help of the British [Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (2008): 117]. Therefore, they parted ways with the Soviets, which implemented the Bolshevik policy. One of the Dashnak leaders, O.Kachaznuni, expressed the interests of the part of the Baku Dashnaks who wanted to distance themselves from the Soviet. Afterwards, Kachaznuni clarified their goals and stated that they had their own political line and believed that by consolidating in Baku, they could attract Turkish-Tatar (that is, Azerbaijani – A.A.) forces here and protect the rest of Armenia from Turkish attacks [Качазнуни (1990): 22]. However, as the situation escalated, the Dashnaks had already begun to accuse Shaumyan, and this became clear at the meeting of the Baku Soviet on

June 9 [Orders of the Provisional Dictatorship ...(1918, August 8)]. Unlike them, Dashnaks of Tiflis considered relations with England very problematic and tended to talk with Turks. They also undertook to influence the Dashnaks in Baku to surrender the city [Radiotelegrams (1918, July 30)]. Thus, according to the 11th article of the Batum Treaty, the Armenian National Soviet had to succeed in removing the Armenian units from Baku by separating from the Bolsheviks. Therefore, on June 10-12, the Armenian National Soviet in Tiflis sent its representatives M.Arzumanov and M.Arutunyants to Baku accompanied by the Ottoman representative Husameddin Bey [Pogroms of Armenians in Baku (2003): 61]. But, not reaching the goal the representation returned from Kurdamir [Pogroms of Armenians in Baku (2003): 127].

Shaumyan, who had to implement the political course of Bolshevik Russia, insisted on continuing the war with Turkey and tried to use another force interested in it – Andranik Ozanian, who made a name for himself with his brutality in his attitude towards Muslims in Azerbaijan. Rather, the parties mutually hoped to receive help from each other, and the initiative came from Andranik. So, on July 14, Andranik himself sent a telegram to Shaumyan and stated that he unconditionally obeyed the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, that he declared the Nakhchivan uyezd, which he had captured at that time, an integral part of the Russian Republic, and that he, together with his detachment, was at the disposal of the Central Russian government. Shaumyan, who called Andranik a “people’s hero”, immediately sent him a reply telegram [*Radiotelegrams: Julfa. Folk hero Andranik (1918, July 20)*]. But at the time, the tactical steps of the command of the Caucasus Islamic Army did not allow Andranik’s units to join the commune army.

The fall of the Baku Soviet of People’s Commissars

In the last decade of July, Shaumyan, feeling helpless in the face of the successful operations of the Caucasus Islamic Army, sent representatives to Russia several times.

After the defeat of Kurdamir by the army of Baku SPC, contradictions within the Baku Soviet intensified and calls for inviting the British began to increase [The Last Days of the Commissars of the Baku Commune (1928):18]. The misperception of non-Muslim population about the real power of the British in the region led the political forces to open action against the Bolshevik government. This option was proposed as the only way to get rid of hunger and the threat of defeat in workers’ and sailors’ meetings. Until the mid of July, there was uncertainty between the British Ministry of Defense and the “Government of India” about the possibility of conducting military operations on Russian territory [Эллис (1963): 23], but finally, after learning about the Soviet-German secret talks in London, the British agreed to send a mission to Baku. [Эллис (1963): 26]. However, the position of the Central Bolshevik government on this matter was clear, and Stalin in his telegram demanded from Shaumyan a decisive struggle with the supporters of inviting the British and “agents of foreign capital” within the Soviet [Bolsheviks in the struggle...(1957): 574]. It was evident that in such a situation, a certain personal initiative of Shaumyan could not be the subject of discussion. Moreover, Shaumyan, who had more correct information about the British military forces in Iran, was sure that they would not go beyond Baku by strengthening themselves in the Caspian basin. For this reason, he did not believe that they would help against the Turks [Extraordinary meeting of the Soviet

...(1918, July 21)]. Therefore, in any case Shaumyan did not support the separate negotiations of the Armenian political forces.

At the July 17 meeting of the Baku SPC, Shaumyan informed that the members of the Armenian National Soviet in Tiflis, together with the representatives of Azerbaijan and Georgia, wanted to come to Baku with a delegation of 5 people for negotiations with the Armenian National Soviet here, and that a letter had been sent to Hamazasp, the head of the Armenian military unit. In the letter, Hamazasp, who was in the battle line, was asked to help the afore-mentioned representatives to go to Baku. At that time, it was decided at the meeting not to allow the delegation to Baku [Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee...p.61]. However, the matter was also that in the current situation, the Armenian National Soviet and the Dashnaks did not accept any decision of the Baku SPC against them. Already Dashnaks and Shaumyan were definitely parting ways in Baku. This was also manifested in the attitude of Dashnak military forces to military operations. So, at the end of July, Hamazasp and Tatevos Amirov withdrew their cavalry units from the front line. [Bolsheviks in the struggle...(1957): 588].

At the initiative of Shaumyan, a large meeting of the Baku Soviet was called to discuss the situation. By the decision of the meeting, the Bolsheviks once again appealed to the Center for instructions. The Center, first through Stalin, and then through the Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee Sverdlov (in his telegram dated July 25 – A.A.), categorically demanded from the Baku Bolsheviks to obey the decision of the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets (July 4-10, 1918). and to give up British military assistance [Bolsheviks in the struggle...(1957):593]. On July 25, an extraordinary meeting of the Baku Soviet was called with the participation of 459 men. The Dashnaks and others who wanted to invite the British believed that the Soviet power in Baku was a federative power and that Shaumyan, as the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, could make the necessary decisions about foreign policy [Extraordinary meeting of the Soviet together ...July 25 (1918, August 3)]. Disagreeing with this position, Shaumyan stated that a large amount of military ammunition from Russia - 80 cannons, 10 thousand rifles, 20 thousand cartridges, 150 machine guns - had already arrived in Baku and tried to dissuade the S.Rs, Mensheviks and Dashnaks from inviting the British to Baku [Bolsheviks in the struggle (1957):594]. But they did not agree to it. When it was proposed to form a coalition government consisting of all the parties included in the Soviet as a way out of the situation, the Bolsheviks protested and announced that they would resign. As a result, two resolutions were put to be voted, one proposed by the Left S.Rs, Bolsheviks and Left Dashnaks, and the other by the Right S.R.s. After the first resolution submitted by Shaumyan was rejected by 236 votes against 259 votes, it was reported that the Baku SPC resigned as the Bolshevik government [Extraordinary meeting of the Soviet together...July 25] (1918, August 5)]. However, the Bolsheviks remained part of the Baku Soviet, the only authority in the city. It should be noted that the demand of the forces gathered in the Baku Soviet was not the resignation of the Baku SPC. This was Shaumyan's position as the chairman of the Baku SPC and was intended to show that the Bolsheviks had no intention of making any deals.

But that night, the Baku committee of the Bolshevik organization held an extraordinary meeting and stated that the decision to resign was not the right step [Микоян (1971): 164], and then the next day, on the 26th of the month, a meeting of the

Executive Committee of the Baku Soviet was convened under the chairmanship of Japaridze, and Commissars were asked to remain in place and not to follow provocations until the issue of the organization of the new government was resolved. [Bolsheviks in the struggle...(1957): 611].

In the current situation, the power of the Bolsheviks could be saved only by a large military force sent from the Center. But, in the next telegram sent to Shaumyan on July 29, by Lenin, who warned that any activities of the Dashnaks against the decision of the Fifth Congress of Soviets would be treated as treason and rebellion, still did not promise to send troops to Baku [ЛЕНИН (1987): 71].

The advancement of the Caucasus Islamic Army led to the active support of the Muslim population in the uyezds of Azerbaijan, especially in Baku gubernia, and the rapid increase in the number of volunteers who wanted to join the army. The merciless actions of the Armenian military against the Muslim population in the areas through which the army of Baku SPC passed accelerated this even more. This situation strengthened the demoralization of the Caucasian Red Army as well. Seeing that the situation was hopeless, on July 20, Bicherakhov gave the command to Avetisov, citing the demoralization of the army units and the fact that no measures were taken against it.¹ And on the morning of July 29, Avetisov offered to surrender. The Armenian National Soviet was already intending to reach an agreement with the Turks, and negotiations had even begun with the mediation of the Swedish consul [Микоян (1971): 171].

After being isolated in the direction of Shamakhy during the attack of the Caucasus Islamic Army, Bicherakhov separated his detachment from the front and left for Derbent on July 30. After that, the Armenian political forces, thinking that they had no other choice in the face of inevitable defeat, took action, and on the night of July 30, Dashnaksutyun party called a debate; at its headquarters and after discussing the situation with the Armenian bourgeoisie decided to surrender.

Unwilling to accept the option of surrender, the leadership of the Baku SPC made a last attempt to save the situation and demanded from the commanders of the Dashnak military units to send the detachments under their command to battle. Although the Dashnaks promised to send up to 3000 armed forces, it turned out that only 320 soldiers arrived the next morning, but they also refused to fight. After that, the members of the Armenian National Soviet came to Shaumyan and demanded that the Baku SPC leave power and hand over the city. Following this, the leadership of the Baku SPC, which also took into account the information about the situation on the front line, was forced to completely abandon from its authorities. Thus, the first Bolshevik government in Baku fell. Along with the Bolsheviks, the activity of the second convocation Baku Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (December 1917-July 1918), which implemented an anti-Azerbaijani policy, ended.

In his telegram sent to the Center, Shaumyan clarified the issue of the resignation of the Bolsheviks and stated that the votes of the Dashnaks actually played a decisive role

¹ Телеграмма Сталина в Баку т. Шаумяну, в Москву, Совнарком т. Ленину по поводу приглашения англичанов в Баку // Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidenti İşlər İdarəsinin İctimai-Siyasi Sənədlər Arxivi, Fond №456, siyahı №14, iş №79-83, vərəq – 38-79.

[Bolsheviks in the struggle...(1957): 610.]. *It was clear that the Dashnaks wanted to get the British to be invited by blackmailing the Baku SPC in refusing to fight.*

Conclusion

In April 1918, after the establishment of the Baku SPC, the local government of Bolshevik Russia was formed in a part of Azerbaijan - in Baku gubernia. The establishment of the Republic of Azerbaijan on May 28 created a situation of dual power in the country. Azerbaijan became the arena of confrontation between Bolsheviks and national forces.

The fact that the national government of Azerbaijan used the only opportunity - the military assistance of the Ottoman state - to establish its rule in the entire country decided the fate of the Bolshevik government here. First, the continuation of the massacres against the Muslim population in the uyezds, and then the war against the Republic of Azerbaijan, led the authorities of Baku SPC to collapse. The tense military-political confrontation strengthened opposition against the Bolsheviks within the Baku Soviet. In particular, the position of the Armenian political forces influenced the course of events. National interests drew the Dashnaks, the main political force of the Armenians, to resort to various means. In April, with the help of the Dashnaks, the Bolsheviks, who gained power in Baku by defeating their main rival - the Azerbaijani national forces, only three months later had to hand over this power due to the "betrayal" of the Dashnaks. This also meant that the course of events was determined by the interests and changing activities of the Armenian political forces.

Out of interest, the Dashnaks turned against the Bolsheviks, whom they once supported. Despite the fact that the leadership of the Baku Bolsheviks by an Armenian Bolshevik ensured the trust of Dashnaks in the Bolsheviks in a certain sense, Shaumyan, as the representative of Bolshevik Russia here, was deprived to take steps independently contrary to its political course. This, in turn, caused the Dashnaks to turn away from Shaumyan.

So, the analysis of the military and political situation in Azerbaijan in April-May 1918 showed that the "failure" of the first experience of power in Azerbaijan by the Bolsheviks, who came to power as the result of support of Dashnak, was inevitable, but not due to the acceptance of Bolshevism by the local people – Azerbaijanis.

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