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**ONE OF THE “HEROIC” PAGES  
OF THE HISTORY  
OF AZERBAIJAN IN PICTURES**

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In the book there are represented the bloody carnages in Baku in 1905 realized by the Azerbaijani nationalists of the city against the peaceful Armenian city population and the Armenians' worthy counterattack. The photo documents, depicting those sanguinary events, are being published for the first time.

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On the days of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide committed by the Anatolian Turks we involuntarily recalled one of the bloody crimes of their kinsmen committed against Armenians in Transcaucasia.

Russo-Japanese War, started on January 26, 1904, brought failures to the Russian troops from the very first days. They suffered heavy defeats in Mukden, Port Arthur, in all the parts of the war, as well as at sea.

Crushing defeats suffered by the Russian army, which hadn't happened before, led to a gigantic wave of national agitations, particularly in its large industrial center, Transcaucasia, with its multinational population.

In 1905 the total number of the permanent and temporary residents in Baku and in the settlements, adjacent to the surrounding oil-fields, was 240,000. From the ethnographic point of view the image was the following: almost 90,000 Muslims (Transcaucasian Turks, Persians and the Turks obedient to Persians, Lezgins, Kazan Tatars, etc.), 61,000 Russians, 51,000 Armenians, 7,000 Ossetes, 3,000 Georgians, 3,000 Germans, 3,000 Jews, 3,000 Greeks, 2,000 Poles, 2,000 Assyrians, Abkhazians and Estonians. There were also French, Englishmen, Swedes and representatives of other nations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See "Iskra" ("Искра"), № 24, September 1, 1902, see also **A-DO**, Armenian-Turkish collision in Caucasus (1905-1906). With documentary, statistical and topographic elucidations, Yerevan, 1907, p. 13.

In Baku there were different political organizations: the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), SRs (Socialist Revolutionaries) and anarchists. Armenian national revolutionary organizations and firstly A. R. Federation, as well as The Hnchakyan Party had great influence on different social classes of the Armenian population in Baku.

Petersburgian bureaucracy in Caucasus considered Armenians to be the most revolutionary element. Even at the beginning of the century tsarist authorities, in their policy towards this territory, were guided by the ideas of Lobanov-Rostovsky, continuing the cruel policy of russolization which was given to the iron hands of Prince Golitsin. It weighed heavily particularly on Armenians, who had reached high national identity, bringing many disasters. Golitsin's regime in Caucasus cruelly persecuted tens of thousands of Turkish Armenian refugees who had settled in the territory, forcibly hampered all the contribution made by the Armenians in Caucasus, heavily curbed the tongues of Armenian promoters who were thinking about the Armenian problem, like a robber carried out the tsarist law about the confiscation of the property of Armenian Church, with the consent of tsarist authorities Russian frontier soldiers, hand in hand with Turk soldiers, on the Caucasian border shot and slaughtered the participants of the expeditions which were hurrying to help the rebellious Armenians from Sasun, etc.

And now, after the bloody slaughter of laborers in Petersburg on January 9, 1905, Caucasus was also in a state of disquiet.

The Government of Petersburg thought that in Caucasus "the main sinners of the disorders were Armenians", from which radical revolutionary national parties were descended; Armenians in Caucasus gave the considerable part of the leading personnel to the

Russian social-democratic movement; Armenians hoisted an obvious struggle flag against the authorities as they didn't adapt to the law signed by the tsar about the confiscation of the property of their church, etc.

Armenian "sins" weren't excusable; consequently, illimitable outbursts and wickedness weren't less.

Studying and analyzing the developing process of Armenian social life, the tsarist politicians came to the conclusion that in the visible future the logical outcome of the Armenian social development would be a demand for self-government within the limits of possibility of the Armenian political activity. There was a persuasion that it would be difficult to stop that process if they didn't take necessary oppressive actions.

According to the authorities, the demand for the Armenian self-government would be a part of the demand for acquiring self-government for Transcaucasia. Therefore if there had been splitting conditions of the populations in the territory, not only the concept of the Armenian self-government but also of Transcaucasia would have been buried forever.

"Moskovskie Vedomosti" ("Московские Ведомости"), "Novoe Vremya" ("Новое Время") and other organs of regressive press, who sowed obvious misanthropic concepts, started a campaign against the non-existing concept of the Armenian self-government. The "Kavkaz" ("Кавказ") newspaper, which was the official organ of the administrators in Caucasus, didn't fall behind them, either.

Those official organs of press found that the concept of the Armenian self-government leaned on the power of the Armenian funds in Caucasus. The industrial present and future of the territory would be able to become the monopoly of the Armenian capital after some

time. It caused natural displeasure among Russian manufacturers in Caucasus and generally among the representatives of the Russian capital. They criticized the government as it couldn't "regulate" the competitive struggle, that's to say, secure the absolute superiority of the Russian capital.

The tsarist government was going to induce the obscure forces of the Muslim society to misdeeds, was going to encourage murders and in this way squander popular forces, put out the inflaming anti-tsarist fire, make masses give up antigovernmental actions, keep away from the possibility to participate in the Russian Revolution which had started. That devil role was assumed by the representatives of Russian regime; the governor of Baku Mikhail Nakashidze, the chief police officer of the city and region of Baku Fyodor Diminsky, the chief police officer of the oil-area Yulian Khometsky, the director of public security (chief of gendarmerie) lord Tavkeridze.

And just with the encouragement and instigation of the brutal people on Sunday, February 6 (13), 1905, bloody clashes broke out between Azerbaijani Turks and Armenians, which lasted four days. The fire of hatred and spite was spread all over the city.

Armed groups of Turk ghochibashis were rushing to streets from different places and slaying Armenian passers-by with a sword. At the same time Armenians were being shot by Turks from their balconies and windows.

Shots were heard from all sides. In the streets the ferocious crowd was breaking the shop doors and windows and stealing the goods. The Cossack commanders and policemen were quietly standing here and there in the streets; nobody stopped the burglars, nobody took away either weapon or robbery.

One of the Russian participants of the events recalled: "The

crowd was invading the shop which was on the ground floor of Sahakov's house. I was living in that house. The Armenian family, living on the first floor, ran to us terror-struck. I offered them to spend the night in my flat and rang up the department of the governor and asked to send a guard. Knowing that the caller was a teacher of the realschule (a type of secondary school in the Russian Empire), they promised to send Cossacks. Nearly in 10 minutes the Cossacks came and the crowd dispersed. I went out to see if the guard would stay. Hardly was I on the pavement when the Cossacks turned back the heads of the horses and went away. I didn't get any answer to my requests to leave a few guards. The Cossacks went away."<sup>1</sup>

The newspaper "Novoe Obozrenie" ("Новое Обозрение"), published in Tbilisi, printed a correspondence of a Russian, Orest Syomin, where such lines were written:

"My landlord is afraid that the Turks will attack his flat at night... The Armenians are afraid to go out of their houses where you can now listen to tearful moans and see inconsolable tears because of their killed and wounded relatives. We, Russians, who dare to go out to the city, serve Armenians and everyone makes easy their unwilling imprisonment in their flats. While writing these lines I can hear sounds of shots, and imagining what will be at night, I picture the familiar scenes of Turkish brutality, and terror reigns my soul..."<sup>2</sup>

The fusillade was getting stronger in different parts of the city. The Turks, divided into groups, armed with revolvers and rifles, shot and killed the Armenians wherever they met them. Boxes of ammunition were being taken after the Turk fighters for the reserve of bullets not to lack.

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 1, files 383, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> "Novoe Obozrenie" ("Новое обозрение"), February 10, 1905.

When the slaughterer rabble saw that the Armenians were shut in their houses and weren't coming out to the street, it started to set fire to the houses with their inhabitants pouring oil.

The number of those houses was more where the slaughterers, throwing down gates and doors, burst into, destroyed everything, massacred the wretches then started the robbery. After the robbery the Armenians' houses had a general picture: empty and profane rooms, crumbled items, broken plates, various cheap items thrown on different sides.

It was particularly unbearable the situation of those Armenians who lived in Turkish districts near Balakhanskaya Street: the upper part of Nikolaevskaya Street, Chemberekend, Shamakhu district, Ghuba Square and the surroundings. In Turkish dense population the Armenians were also not small in number in an old labyrinth named Berd.

Taking into account the clashes occurred in Turkish districts on February 6, the correspondent of the newspaper "Novoe Obozrenie" of Baku wrote: "It wasn't known what was happening there in the depth of Bazarni and Shamakhi streets... Only a sea of Turkish hats were seen in a distance and a wild howl of the crowd was heard... The evening was coming and everyone was waiting for "Bardughimeosian night" with terror. The bloodshed terrors of Kishiniov are nothing compared with the ones happening now. There (in the depth of the Turkish districts: - H. S.) the Armenian crowd is crying and supplicating, and here almost everyone, without exception, is armed with fire-arms, khanjars, yataghans and other mortiferous weapons, aren't they?"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Novoe Obozrenie" ("Новое обозрение"), February 10, 1905.



Here is a corpse fallen face downwards on the pavement, a little away there is another one in agony, stabbed with a dagger. In front of the gate which opens out to the street, there is a dark mass of blood... Therefore not far from here in the yard or on the basement people were slaughtered... The Timur disaster blew up on unarmed people's heads like a storm, spreading a heap of corpses, grief and moan, imprecation and fury on all sides.

The situation of the Armenians who were closed in their workplaces and hotels was horrible, too. In his memoirs entitled "Bloody slaughterhouse in Baku" the former employee of the financial department of the municipal bureau of Baku Nikolai Najarov wrote: "On Sunday, February 6, I was in the office as an employee. Nearly at 10 in the morning shots were suddenly heard and after a few minutes armed groups of Tatars appeared in Nikolaevian Street. Revolvers were shining in their hands... nobody, except Armenians, was touched. After an hour in the office only the Armenians stayed closed and a Turk, who was afraid to go out, as he looked like an Armenian.

After a while Mayor came. We all surrounded him and tearfully asked for help as we were afraid of an attack. Firstly he was surprised and said that it was nonsense, nobody would hurt us, that he had been passing through the streets since morning and nobody had touched him. And finally, after our supplication he promised to pass our request to the governor. We also asked to give four Cossacks to defend the doors of the office. Mayor went away and we didn't see him any more. After that we applied to him by phone several more times, but in vain. Finally the operator from the center told us, "Don't you see that Mayor doesn't want to speak to you?" After some time Cossacks appeared in the streets; from the windows we

asked them to help us. The Cossacks answered from downstairs, “We aren’t ordered to shoot; we are only allowed to take away dead bodies.”<sup>1</sup>

The murderers, who had entered the hotel named “Islamie”, demanded the workers to show where the Armenians lived. Being refused and not being able to get the keys they broke the doors, invaded the rooms and put to the sword the Armenians who they met. Searching all the block of flats, they caught the wretches hidden in the dark corners of the basement and put them to the sword right away. Only a few ones managed to jump from the windows and free themselves escaping<sup>2</sup>.

The same happened with the Armenians, who had been saved from the massacre, taken shelter in that hotel and now gathered in the streets. The witnesses testified, “In front of us Tatars were massacring the unaware Armenians who were going to their usual workplaces. Almost 30 of them managed to find shelter in “Islamie” hotel, but furious murderers invaded the building after them and put to the sword all of them. Only four people were saved with the efforts of the Turk owner of the hotel.”<sup>3</sup>

Catching the Armenians by surprise, the Turks very quickly managed to take under control Shamakhina district, 80-90 % inhabitants of which were Muslims, the biggest part of Armanaskaya and Vorontsovskaya streets, the area from Parapet to the beach, Telephonnaya Street from the side of Black city.

One of the slaughterers, the former tax-collector Salimkhanov, informed the chief police officer by phone that Armenian and Russ-

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 2, files 129, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., files 234, p. 10.

ian laborers had been united and were going to undertake active actions. Here is the content of their conversation, which was put down by a Russian:

“Good morning, dear,” Salimkhanov says addressing to the chief police officer by name. “My horsemen have informed me that in Beibat the Armenian and Russian workers are gathering, they want to come to the city. We must take actions.”

“Don’t believe it; it’s nonsense. I’ve sent riding patrols to Beibat. They are worried but there is no need to be afraid.”

“No, believe me; everything I’ve said is true. They’ve gathered there in the valley, almost 300-400 people and are moving towards the city.”

The chief police officer said strictly and angrily,

“Let them come. Our soldiers’ company and the Cossacks’ detachment are standing there ready. We’ll beat to snuff everyone.”<sup>1</sup>

In the evening of February 6 the telephones of many Armenians and Russians were already switched off. Here is what a teacher of the realschule said, “On February 6 something was wrong with my telephone. I couldn’t ring to the central station as much as I tried. Then I knew that the same had happened with many people’s, especially with Armenians’ telephones with the help of which they had tried to speak to the authority.”<sup>2</sup>

On the very first day of the massacre it became clear that all the members of the authority, both civil and military, were acting according to a certain program and purpose. All the threads of the actions were in the governor’s hands. He repeated the same thing to

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 1, files 383, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Armenians' all requests, "I can't do anything; there is no army." And this was on the condition that in previous months at worker-class demonstrations the forces of the city were enough to disperse the demonstrators in one or two hours. However, at the time of the massacre those forces "had disappeared".

In that chaos, in that tartarus of violence and crying, not taking into account a few people, there weren't any fellowships which would sympathize the victims of monstrous conspiracy; they were like careless audience with the exception of some Russians.

The general indifference was the reason that exhortations to peace, suasions to conciliation, directed to the Turks by the Armenians, remained disdained and futile<sup>1</sup>. Human logic, conscience and morality were incongruous with the impudent and unpunished bloody feast of the furious rabble.

The Turks' inhuman attack surprised the leaders of the Armenian community and also the Central committee of Baku of A. R. Federation.

Mikayel Varandian wrote: "The disaster was so unexpected that the organization of A. R. Federation was also stunned with surprise and lost its head. The forces were dispersed, the majority of the fighters were in the surroundings: Black city, Balakhani, etc. Their centralization was too difficult as the police cut the roads, banned the flow of Armenians from regions to the city, or in case they were allowed to come they had to be disarmed, while the Turks were walking freely and armed."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See **Hayk Asatrian**, "Armenia - Aryan outpost in Southwest Asia", Sofia, 1942, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> **Mikayel Varandian**, "The history of A.R. Federation", Vol 2, Tehran, 1981, p. 45.

Surely the surprise wouldn't have been so terrible and baneful if Armenians had had less belief to the friendship with their Turk neighbours.

In the evening of February 6 the Central committee of the Federation of Baku sent the following threatening letter to governor Nakashidze:

“Mr. Governor.

The bloody events in the city which had been happening for several hours suggested us a thought, which is becoming a conviction, that all the reason for the shed blood is You and the police within the jurisdiction of Yours. Not considering important to bring proofs for your criminal actions which had caused numerous people's deaths, the Central committee of A.R. Federation, before undertaking the accomplishment of the sacred duty, that is to defend innocent victims, doesn't consider needless to inform You, Mr. governor, that if You don't take all the actions to stop the bloodshed, You are responsible with Your accomplices' and Your blood.

A.R.F. Central committee of Baku.”<sup>1</sup>

Punishing the criminals was a determined task for the organization. It was at the moment of the carnage done by the Turks when Armenians' resistance arose. The Armenians, who were taken unawares on February 6, were gradually coming round the following day, on February 7. The Central committee of A. R. Federation decided to reverse by all means at its disposal.

At that fatal moment the role of an old fedayi, a famous military figure of the Federation, Nikol Duman (Nikol Ter-Hovhannisyan), was invaluable.

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<sup>1</sup> Gyulkhandanian A., “Armenian-Tatar collision”, Vol. 1, Paris, 1933, p. 14.

Duman... He was one of the brave and honest children of the exhausted nation, whose life was an epopee full of stormy episodes. He was always filled with inextinguishable belief to the victory of the national revolution; a revolution which had become an innermost cult for him.

When the massacre started Duman was in the area of mines in Balakhani where he worked as a manager of Arshak Ghukasyan's mines. Abraham Gyulkhandanian phoned up Duman and told him that the Turks had begun to slay the Armenians in the city and that the authorities of the city, who had nearly 6000 Russian military units at that moment, didn't take any actions to prohibit the bloodshed. The news was so unexpected that Duman thought Abraham was joking and wanted to drag him to a meeting.

After Abraham's serious insistence Duman hurried to Baku by the rail connecting the mines to the city, but it turned out that the railway had been cut by Turks. So he harnessed the coach and taking one of the fighters with him, immediately went through Turkish villages and passing 20 km he reached the city in the evening of February 6.

As soon as he reached the city, Duman, without losing time, hastily undertook the organization of Armenians' self-defense in Baku. He made Isahak Melikyan's "Rembrandt" painting house, which was at the corner of Torgovaya and Marinskaya streets, into the headquarters. At that time he had at his disposal only an armed group consisted of 7 people but at night he could organize and gather 60 fighters, who were to defend the Armenian districts in the morning. The majority of the boys were without weapons, the others had several pistols, generally of "Borchardt" and "Smith & Wesson" models.

The second day, February 7 (20), Monday.

The night passed comparatively quietly. Nobody thought that the events could restart. But the city of terrors, absorbed in the darkness of night, wasn't asleep, the slaughterers weren't jobless. In several parts of the city invisible hands were marking inscriptions like "Ya Allah" ("With God") on the doors of Muslims, "Urus" ("Russian") on the doors of Russians. It meant that the doors without inscriptions were Armenians' and they were subject to be destroyed<sup>1</sup>.

In the morning of February 7 Baku seemed to start living its usual life. People were hurrying to work, shops, workshops and stalls were opened. The city got back its normal appearance.

But in the morning from 10 o'clock the situation changed again. A Turk rider appeared with a rifle in his hand in the area where Parapet Square, which was next to the Armenian Church, led to Muslim district, and he started to shoot right and left and to trot the horse to Ghubi Square in Muslim district. Immediately everybody took alarm and a panic started.

This time the fusillade started not from the center but from those parts of the city where the Turks' districts were.

Terror and anxiety; the shops and workshops instantly were closed, the streets became empty. Some people threw themselves into their houses, others who didn't manage to go home, stayed at the shop, office, in other words at the places where they were at that moment; family members were separated from each other, unaware of each other's state.

Here is what A. Parsadanyan, B. Kocharyan and S. Isahakyan, the witnesses of the events which had taken place in Bazarnaya

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 2, files 136, p. 40-41.

street, testified: “We saw them breaking and stealing the shops on both sides of the streets. The police, as usual, had a role of an indifferent audience.”<sup>1</sup>

The throng of the bloodthirsty wolves, armed with pistols and daggers, were swarming in the streets from one end to the other, augmenting the number of innocent victims. There were corpses all over the street. The police and Cossacks either were taking part in robberies with Turks or gathering and putting the corpses into the carts. One of the Cossacks, seeing a Turk hauling a cart with stolen goods, examined his load and striking his shoulder with caress said, “Well done! You can go.” Another Cossack took the pistol from a Turk and after examining returned it to him smiling and not forgetting to lavish praises<sup>2</sup>.

Here the governor appeared again in the street accompanied by the chief police officer and surrounded with Cossacks. Coming out of the coach he and the chief police officer were shaking hands with the murderers who were approaching, and then they were talking to them. At that time a large crowd of Turks gathered around them; all of them publicly had rifles and daggers. After 10-15 minutes the governor went with all the Cossacks and soldiers<sup>3</sup>.

The slaughterers recommenced their work; attacking people, houses and shops<sup>4</sup>. Late in the afternoon the attacks became stronger. A crowd of nearly 1000 Turks was moving from Chemberekend towards the Armenian Church to invade Armenian districts.

At that time Duman and his armed group of seven people, out

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 2, files 234, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, files 234, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, files 136, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, files 234, p. 10-11.



of which the most famous ones were the brave fighters of Federation Martiros Charukhchyan, Mkrtich Aghamalyan, Hmayak Janpolyan and Mko from Akhalkskha, were at Melikyan's "Rembrandt" studio, which was the headquarters, and young men, capable of self-defense, gathered in the yard waiting for command.

So that group of 7 selfless Armenians, with the head of Duman, firstly rushed to the Turk crowd, which was invading from Chemberekend, to save lives and honor of their kinsmen. At the studio Abraham Gyulkhandanian and the central figure of A.R.F. organization of Baku Levon Tadevosyan (Papasha) were trying to ban that audacious step and asked Duman not to go to meet the furious crowd, not to endanger the lives of the members of the group and his life, but they received a terse refusal. Duman knew what he was doing.

Vahan Minakhoryan, who had joined Duman's group with his small "Smith & Wesson" pistol, in the future described Nikol as follows: "He was made of the same dough of which Madateans, Lazareans, Loris Melikovs were made, only time and conditions were different. In Armenian reality he had the same fortune hundreds of leaders had. ... In any business he had his planned program which he used, after using up all other means. If something could be in a different way than the thought, he tried it. From here his unconditioned, natural democracy, sharp and tense attention to the environment, people, and opinions were. At the same time he didn't belong to the range of those, who aimed to divide responsibility by means of democracy. No. At a decisive moment he verified everything and only was he the responsible. But his resoluteness wasn't undoubted. A whole day he had been hesitating before ordering to shoot the first rifle. All the hopes of avoiding collisions hadn't come

to the end yet. But when it became inevitable he pursued the most severe execution of the order given.”<sup>1</sup>

And Duman acted the same way this time too, in this decisive minute, when the Turk crowd was coming forward swaggering. V. Minakhoryan gave the readers the image of the moment:

“Suddenly sinewy, bony and tall Nikol came out of the studio.

-Who’s here? Mukuch\*, Martiros\*\*, Hamo\*\*\*, Mko\*\*\*\*, come out and wherever you see Turks, Tatars, shoot and slaughter them mercilessly.”<sup>2</sup>

Carrying out the order, the group gathered. Young men with pistols also joined the group. The fighters with the head of Mkrtich Aghamalyan had just came out to the street when a large group of Turks started shooting at them from the high Turkish market, then running with hubbub, occupied the upper part of Vorontsovskaya Street. A fight started, during which the Turks reached the center of the district full of Armenians and occupied the corner of parallel Armyanskaya Street, near the Church. It was impossible to stand up to them for a long time as the opponent was armed with rifles and could shoot at Armenian posts. It was clear that the fight could be profitable for Armenian fighters only in a short distance. They had to withdraw to the end of Tatarskaya Street and the Turks occupied their posts. A violent fight started from one corner to the other corner of the small street behind the Church. The defense of Armenian fighters’ posts was becoming weaker.

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<sup>1</sup> “Hayreniq” («Հայրենիք»), № 7 (270), July, 1948, p. 22.

\* Mkrtich Aghamalyan.

\*\* Martiros Charukhchyan.

\*\*\* Hmayak Djanpoladyan.

\*\*\*\* Akhaltskhatsi Mko.

<sup>2</sup> “Hayreniq” («Հայրենիք»), № 7 (270), July, 1948, p. 18.

It was at that exact moment when Nikol Duman came to the boys. Let's again give speech to Vahan Minakhoryan, a participant of that fight: "... Quiet, experienced, reasonable Nikol instantly clarified his future actions. Pointing out the entrance of Tatarskaya Street to Mukuch and Hamo, he ordered,

"When I cry out, occupy the corner of that street, the rest of you let come off."<sup>1</sup>

At that moment Nikol, pistol in his hand, rushed out and running forward, stood upright in the center of the street, just in front of the Turks and started to shoot at them.

Not standing the unexpected, impudent action, the Turks jumped out of their posts in a panic and ran away. V. Minakhoryan recalled: "Nikol was pursuing them and we were running after him like puppies."<sup>2</sup> The fighters followed him and started to persecute the enemy, who disappeared from the sight, after leaving several corpses.

Thanks to the Armenian fighters' actions, which lasted 1-2 hours, in the afternoon the Turk rabble was restrained. The center of the city was occupied and the connection among different Armenian districts was restored.

The fearless resistance of a handful of brave men as well as the will-aimed attack flabbergasted the slaughterers, who had stayed unpunished for their cruelties before that. On the other hand the Armenians' resistant spirit immediately rose. The revenger, who had undertaken their defense, gave them a hope. They thought that if they were organized they would be able to block the murderers' way

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<sup>1</sup> "Hayreniq" («Հայրենիք»), № 7 (270), July, 1948, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

everywhere. That change in spirit was the beginning of the strong resistance which the Armenians would make on the following days.

Hearing about the action of Duman's small group, self-defensive detachments were formed in different parts of the city. The Central committee of A. R. Federation of Baku undertook the management of the detachments. Western Armenian famous fedayis Mokatsi Grigor and Aryuts Avag, who were in Baku at that time, joined the detachments and fought bravely on the days of the first collisions in Baku, after which they passed to the regions.

Touching upon the importance of the actions done by Nikol Duman on the days of Baku collisions, A. Gyulkhandanian wrote: "It can be said without hesitation, that if on the days of February Duman hadn't been seen in Baku, the self-defensive action in Baku either wouldn't have succeeded or would have received an accidental character and probably the Armenians in Baku would have terribly suffered, without being able to give the opponent a deserving answer.

Thanks to Duman's sharp consciousness and decisive attitude, our fighters, who had been in an indecisive resistance before that and only God knows how they would have been able to save themselves from the Tatar rabble, after receiving Duman's order came out of the faltering spiritual state and being absolutely transformed, started to stand up to the forces, 10 times more than them, like heroes."<sup>1</sup>

But in contrast to the impudent Armenian brave men, the Armenian bourgeois class was still in a distorted emotional state, pinning its hope on God's mercy.

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<sup>1</sup> Gyulkhandanian A., "Armenian-Tatar collision", Vol. 1, p. 62.

In the afternoon of February 7 nearly 300 young men, who were ready to fight, came to Nikol; some of them were armed with different types of weapons generally with shotguns, and the others came without firearms, armed only with daggers. They hoped to get weapons from the center of Federation, but there weren't any. It turned out that the Armenians of Baku, in fact, were unarmed.

The Armenians carelessly considered unsuitable to spend money on getting weapons.

Seeing that alarming situation, some of the Armenians brought their rifles and pistols and gave them to the young men who were ready to fight. A limited number of weapons and ammunition was added to them. These had been taken out of the public storehouses with great difficulty by the Armenian soldiers, who were serving in the military garrison in Baku, and had been given to Nikol Duman's authority. One of the rooms of Melikyan's studio was changed into an arsenal of the Federation. But in comparison with the quantity needed, the brought ones were very few, so the Armenian fighters were instructed not to attack first and save bullets.

At about 4 o'clock a military company came to Parapet Square in front of the Armenian Church. The Armenians thought that the authorities were going to take up arms at last and defend them. But soon it turned out that the company didn't intend to give them a helping hand. Moreover, as it turned out later, their task was to suppress the actions of the Armenian defenders.

Seeing that, the Turks who were afraid to come out of their districts after being beaten by the Armenian soldiers, took heart and became courageous. In the presence of the Army they started to break down and rob Armenians' manufacturer and grocery stores, which were in Tsitsianovskaya, Kolyubiakinskaya and Bazarnaya

streets. The Russian soldiers, standing a little further, were indifferently looking at all that. Moreover, Russian women and city policemen joined the Turk robbers soon<sup>1</sup>. In some places soldiers and policemen, getting drunk with the drinks stolen from the storehouses and shops, were taking part in the robbery<sup>2</sup>. The city police were stealing the corpses of the Armenians and putting on their boots.

The robbery would have lasted long if a group of Armenian fighters hadn't appeared. They opened fire to the robbers from rifles and pistols; some of the Turks fell, the others took to flight.

The police and the troops who had been watching the robbery indifferently before that, now, seeing the growing resistance of the Armenian defenders, started to fire a rifle. The Armenians had forgotten that during the clashes between Armenians and Turks before, Russian troops had taken mainly the Turks' side. The "heartfelt" amity, which was among the Russian troops, the police and the Turk rabble, was showed up fully. This situation must have been too disappointing if the Armenians had fallen short of determination and courage.

The Armenian soldiers turned to bishop Anania, who was the leader of Shamakhu diocese, the "official representative" of the Armenians in Baku, to speak on the phone to governor Nakashidze and demand that the authorities protected the city from the criminals, but if they couldn't do that, let them take out the police and troops from Baku so that the Armenians could organize their defense themselves.

The weak-willed and fearful bishop refused even to go nearer

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<sup>1</sup> **Gyulkhandanian A.**, "Armenian-Tatar collision", Vol. 1, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 2, files 129, p. 2.

to the telephone, but under weapon pressure he phoned. The governor assured that the chief police officer Diminsky was walking in the city with his detachments and the riots would be over soon. He also said that the chief police officer would certainly visit His Holiness and that he himself was ready to fulfill “all the orders” of the bishop. He also informed that he had telegraphed to Tbilisi in order to send subsidiary troops from there to Baku.

Nakashidze was meanly cheating. There were enough troops in the city which could instantly avert the massacres, but, sure enough, it wasn't involved in his plans.

The chief police officer really came soon, approached His Holiness with fake respect, kissed his right hand and assumed such an air as if he were ready to serve him. His Holiness tried to hint that the Turks were armed, but the chief police officer interrupted him very politely and started to tell that he had been walking in the city for several hours, had visited all the districts but nowhere he had met a single armed Turk, quite the reverse; only the Armenians had been armed, so he had ordered to disarm them.

On Monday, February 7, the fight was going on continuously all day long. Especially a strong fight occurred in Velikokniajskaya Street. There was Petrosyan's weapon shop which the Turks aimed to attack but they didn't manage to do that. In the evening the street, at full length of the beach, was taken under the control of the Armenians. During the night the small in number weapons and ammunition of the shop were transported and put at self-defensive organ's disposal.

In the evening of the same day in the house of Ganjetsyan, which was in front of Malakanski Park, a workshop of making and repairing weapons was organized and Gaspar Ter-Mkrtchyan di-

rected the work. Having served in the army and being an expert in making firearms, Gaspar played an invaluable role in the self-defensive actions those days.

The initial problem was the transportation of the weapons which were stored in Simon Simonyan's flat, in Turkish Shamakhinka district. The problem solving was firstly undertaken by the warehouse manager of the Federation weapons. As soon as the night came S. Simonyan, taking with him Mko from Akhaltskha, Pztik Yapon and an Armenian soldier of the Russian Army, who had devoted himself to the "nation" running from the military barracks since the first hours of the events, sank in the darkness of the night. The leaders of self-defense, who were in Melikyan's studio, were waiting for Simonyan and his group's return with great impatience. The undertaking was too dangerous, wasn't it? Before reaching the place it was necessary to pass imperceptibly a great distance from the center, penetrate into the districts inhabited only by Turks, every moment being ready to undergo fatal surprises. Fortunately everything passed successfully and at midnight the group brought 9 rifles, 9 Mauser hunting rifles and a considerable number of bullets taken out of the store.

At night in the other end of Nikolyanskaya Street after which Turkish districts were, helping shouts of the Armenians could be heard. They had repulsed an attack of a large group of Turks, but they didn't have any ammunition for averting the second attack. Passing the posts of the Turks' armed crowd, a young lady, with Shagidanyan surname, reached the studio to ask for weapons, bullets and fighters for that endangered region. She came at the time when S. Simonyan's group had just arrived. Taking everything she could, the brave girl hurried to the posts to her own people.



Besides making an organized resistant force, A.R.F. committee of Baku also took other measures to stop the bloody conflicts. Particularly it was decided to call fleeting meetings urgently in all mines and factories and to call multinational staffs to calm down as well as to reveal the nefarious role of the authorities in the interracial fight occurring in the city. That undertaking of the Dashnaks was instantly responded by the local organizations of the other revolutionary parties: RSDLP committee of Baku, leading figures of SRs (Socialist Revolutionaries) and Hnchakyan Party.

The third day, February 8 (21), Tuesday.

At the third night of the clashes none of the Armenians slept; everybody's nerves were too tense.

At dawn both the Turks and the Armenians were on foot, ready to fight.

If on the first two days of the clashes the authorities armed the Turks secretly, from February 8 they did it openly. The police and its agents were giving out weapons and bullets to Muslims just in the streets.

The number of armed Muslims was rapidly growing. The Armenians were asking each other, "Where do they get so many weapons from?"

On the other side the policemen who had been walking in the streets since early morning and the Cossacks who joined them in the evening, meeting Armenians and Russians, were ransacking them and if they found weapons they immediately took them away. The police, Cossacks and soldiers also started rummages in the Armenian houses.

In answer to the anti-Armenian actions of the police and the troops, the committee of A.R. Federation of Baku gave an order to

its soldiers to resist even in the smallest attempts of disarmament. Giving weapons to the authorities was considered a serious crime, the consequence of which would be a strict punishment. The order had a beneficial effect. A. Gyulkhandanian wrote, “Our fighters who before that hadn’t known how to behave in case of rummage, now felt themselves free and indeed showed resistance both to the police and the troops when they met such a surprise. But besides that, our fighters were ordered to avoid incidents and conflicts with the Russian soldiers or the police in every possible way. Fortunately after several resistances shown by our friends the troops and the police didn’t dare easily to search our people.”<sup>1</sup>

At the same time it turned out that the governor had given a strict order to the police; proceeding from a specific situation, to start shooting at Armenian inhabitants in case of need if they tried to attack Turkish districts first. And that was in the case when the police not only didn’t ban the Turks to kill and rob but also didn’t even try to disperse anti-Armenian gangs with whips, didn’t arrest the murderers, didn’t take the robbery. Moreover, the Berdan rifles, taken from Muslims by the Cossacks, were returned. The Cossacks and the police were walking quietly or riding horses in the bloody streets, through the crowds of brutalized robbers and murderers, impudently refusing to come to the aid to the victims imploring to help, banned to put out fires and save the ones dying in fire<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, they often encouraged murders. When Russian citizens reproached the soldiers, officers and city police asking why they didn’t interfere in the events, they frankly answered that they didn’t have an order to interfere.

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<sup>1</sup> Gyulkhandanian A., “Armenian-Tatar collision”, Vol. 1, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> See Revolution and Socialist-Revolutionary Party, materials and documents (Chrestomathy), Vol III, 1905, M.-L., 1926, p. 432.

At that time it was clear for everyone that one or two companies would have been enough to avert the massacre from the very beginning. In the soldiers' smallest attempt of using weapons the Muslims, who were doing ferocities, took to flight. In one place it was managed to persuade soldiers to disperse the crowd. The Turks, killing several Armenians, were making fun of corpses. 20 soldiers, standing not far away, were watching that horrible scene gloomily and indifferently. One of the Russians from Baku ran to them and reproached with indignation,

"Why are you watching? How aren't you ashamed letting kill people in broad daylight?"

"What can we do? We aren't ordered to interfere," the soldiers said confused.

"Brothers, be ashamed. If your chiefs are beasts, at least be humans yourselves. At least shoot in the air. Hurry up."

The soldiers looked at each other confused.

"We'll be punished," they said with horror.

"Brothers, nothing will happen. I assure you."

The soldiers gave two volleys in the air. Everybody disappeared instantly. But then the soldiers said with horror that they would be arrested when their empty shells were found<sup>1</sup>.

The soldiers refused rudely to accompany Armenians, sometimes even Russians who wanted to go out of enclosed houses and districts. They proclaimed that it was banned for them to accompany Armenians.

A worker of Khatsov's factory in Bibi-Heibat, told how the Cossacks, as if accompanying Armenians, had brought them to the

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 2, files 129, p. 4.

killer gangs and left them; the gangs instantly had torn the wretches to pieces<sup>1</sup>.

Gyulkhandanian wrote that the Turks were so impudent that in the presence of the police and even the troops and the Cossacks they were pouring oil onto the front doors and windows of Armenians' houses, setting fire to them and were quietly watching the houses start to burn. If people in the houses had the courage to save themselves from the fire resisting, the Turks made them go away from the windows by shooting. They were shooting so long until their resistance was stopped and the house burnt wholly. Mad shouts of the people burning in the houses, the last sobbing of the dying ones didn't influence on the Cossacks and especially on the Turk rabble at all, who were responding to the dying people's shouts with amusement and impudent, disgusting witticisms<sup>2</sup>.

In Baku everyone used to think that wealth was the most powerful, almighty thing and you could live with that not only calmly but also safely. But the disaster didn't spare the rich as well.

On Tuesday afternoon the Turks burnt the big and luxurious palace of an Armenian opulent man Aslanov. The inhabitants beforehand had managed to run out of the house, which was burnt after being robbed by the rabble. The scene was horrible; there were innumerable Turks everywhere, covered with fur-coats, who were capering around the fire pulling out bundles, different things. The noise was mixed with cracks of the fire.

On the same day № 93 house in Tserkovnaya Street was burnt, the owner of which was wealthy Babajanov. The house was sur-

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 2, files 128, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Gyulkhandanian A., "Armenian-Tatar collision", Vol. 1, p. 41.

rounded in advance and a violent firing started. The enclosed people were also shooting from the windows of the third floor, but their bullets didn't hurt the Turks as they couldn't raise their heads and take aim. Eventually the Turks burnt the house with its inhabitants<sup>1</sup>.

Here is what a witness told about the fire in that house. "At nine in the evening when everything was burnt except the basement, the Turks entered the house and found 9 Armenians hidden in the boxes. I can't describe the horror which could be seen on the faces of the wretches. They were taken out one after the other and shot before everybody's eyes... When they shot at a head of one of them a big spurt of blood flooded the ground. A dark human image was seen who, raising the hems of the coat and closing his head with it, was coming from the yard of the burning house. The old mother seeing him shouted and fell down. She recognized his son. This wretch couldn't stay in the secret corner of the burning house and in order not to be burnt alive, decided to come out, setting his hope on tender-heartedness of the enemy. But the crowd, being happy to find a new victim, attacked and instantly broke him into pieces. The unfortunate mother, on whom nobody paid attention, fell down on the smoking logs and lost her consciousness. The fire approached her slowly and her clothes started to burn. Not coming round, she was burnt before the eyes of the violent crowd."<sup>2</sup>

Only late at night the fighters received the news that Babajanov's house was burning. And when they came everything was over. They saw how the Turk crowd had surrounded the smoking house and were rejoicing on their "feat".

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<sup>1</sup> "Mshak" («Մշակ»), № 25, February 17, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 1, files 383, p. 34.

The next-door houses were also on fire, surrounded by the furious rabble which was ready waiting for the wretches, who were running out of the fire, to tear to pieces. Numerous families, gathered on the roof of a house, were waiting for a terrific end any moment.

The Armenian fighters hurried to the burning houses and knocked down several Turks with Mosin-Nagant thrusts. Seeing that, the crowd fled terror-struck. Then the fighters ran into the burning houses and saving almost 100 people, accompanied them to the surroundings of the Armenian Church<sup>1</sup>.

The fire in the house of a wealthy man, Alexander Adamov, was more terrific. From these fire flames the next-door houses which were built of stone were also burnt<sup>2</sup>.

When the violent Turk rabble surrounded Adamov's house, he was showing resistance with rifles with his two young sons, shooting from the windows and the balcony, which opened to the street. Just at that moment Adamov's wife was asking for help by phone from the representatives of the authorities, relatives and acquaintances, but all tearful calls were in vain, nobody gave a helping hand<sup>3</sup>. The house was burnt with all Adamov's family, servants and Armenian neighbours who had taken shelter there. From the Adamovs only a young boy Aramayis was saved who by chance was in the relative's house on that day.

In the afternoon the famous Bekzadyan's house in the end of Malakanskaya Street was threatened with danger of death. A large

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<sup>1</sup> "Droshak" («Դրօշակ»), № 4 (157), April, 1905, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file 237<sup>b</sup>, doc. 57, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 2, files 175, p. 5.

crowd of armed Turks was approaching the house. From the large family only Hovsep Bekzadyan, his sisters Mariam and Yelena were there at that moment. It was going to happen the same as had happened with other Armenian houses. Fortunately it didn't turn into a tragedy; a group of young Armenians, who were near, seeing the Turks coming, went to meet them and with volley shots made them escape.

The houses of Armenians were burning but neither fire brigades nor soldiers and Cossacks were seen and if they had come into sight they were "late".

There was one conclusion: complaints were in vain, the Armenian population must set hope only on itself.

Since the morning of February 8 the Armenian fighters started to take the initiative in different parts of the city. If the power of Armenians' resistance on the first two days of the clashes was notable, from the beginning of the third day the dictators were Armenians, they were the instigators. All the attempts of the Turks to penetrate the Armenian centers failed.

In the evening the Turks' resistance in the biggest part of the city weakened, the Armenian fighters went on expanding the circle of their actions continuously. The detachment of Dashnaks, consisting of 40 young men, armed with pistols and a dozen of Berdan rifles, cleaned quickly all the lower part of the city from the slaughterers and drove away the armed Muslim crowd, consisting of several hundred people, from Malakanski park nearly to the end of the city, that's to say through the whole city. Hundreds of Armenians owed their rescue to the selfless fight of that detachment. Another detachment of Armenian fighters drove the groups, which were killing and robbing people in Nikolayevskaya Street, to Ghuba

Square after which the Turkish dense districts were.

Turk leaders who had refused Armenians' all the offers of peace on the previous two days, seeing that they were losing, in the evening hurried to the governor and asked him to call a meeting with the Armenian leaders for making peace, "barechleg".

The Turks' failures and the perspective of their absolute defeat worried the authorities very much, so they took up urgent means to save the situation.

Governor Nakashidze came down to bishop Anania and offered him to turn to Armenians with persuasions of making peace. He said that the Turks had sworn at ghazi that they would stop fighting if the Armenians did the same. At the same time the governor addressed to other famous Armenians calling them to make peace.

Everybody realized well that the reason of that instant change was the actions of the organization of the Federation of Baku. Bishop Anania turned to A.R.F. Committee asking not to attack first and do everything to finish the fight. The committee sent instantly a return message to the bishop where it was written that the Armenians hadn't attacked first, they had only defended themselves for two days, and if the Turks put down their weapons the Armenians would do the same. At the same time it was said that if the Turks continued attacks they would receive a stronger counterattack.

However, the Turks broke their promise breaking down and robbing the shops in Bazarnaya Street. They were invading the shops robbing, taking and storing goods and running back to rob again like ants. The robbers seemed to compete with each other, take away goods and often break each other's heads.

The Armenian fighters ran out instantly from their posts and drove away the rabble. The troops who had had the role of a silent



audience before that, started to shoot but... at the Armenian fighters, who managed to evade and disappear.

Every hour in the bustle of the fights new unassuming heroes were born, most of whom silently, without a word did many deeds that deserved admiration.

In the evening it was managed to take out all the rifles which still remained in the store of the Federation. The weapon store, as it was said, was far away: in a Turkish district. Deep devotion and death-bringing courage were needed to take weapons out of there. The witness tells the following about one of the participants in that dangerous undertaking:

“At that difficult moment an Armenian soldier appeared in front of us, a poor man who could hardly express his thoughts. For a test we offered him to go to our store and bring a rifle. He went and brought one successfully. He went again and brought several more. Animated we thanked him a lot but he seemed not to listen to us and without saying a word, went away... I happened to see that silent soldier of duty once more; a poor Armenian was telling him that fire was devouring his house and if he didn't hurry to help, the children, who had gone up to the roof, would be burnt. The soldier's eyes were filled with tears and he went with him. The children were saved. I don't know what happened next, where the soldier went...”<sup>1</sup>

The brought rifles were given to the reliable fighters. From Ermenikend (Armenian village) a group of Armenian young men, armed with those rifles, with the head of Mkrtich Melik-Aghamalyan made their way to Ghuba Meidan, the Turkish citadel

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<sup>1</sup> “Droshak” («Դրօշակ»), № 4 (157), April, 1905, p. 59.

of Baku, and gave a violent blow to the slaughterers.

The attack of the Armenian young men was going on. At about 12 at night the fighting groups entered the other Turkish districts to save the lives of the Armenians living there. At that time an Armenian's rescue was to come only from an Armenian.

A. Gyulkhandanian wrote: "Those midnight rifle volleys, bold and victorious exclamations of our friends: "Armenians, don't become desperate, we're coming to free you." were spreading far away from the Armenian street, inspiring hope and animation to thousands of Armenians who had gone through terrific hours of 3 days."<sup>1</sup>

So at night of February 8, 4/5 part of the city was cleaned from the armed rabble, nearly all the important posts were in Armenians' hands, the robbery and carnage were finished. At the same night a considerable number of ammunition was transferred to different posts. The detachments were replenished with new fighters.

But the Turkish attacks were still going on in the upper parts of Nikolaevskaya Street, in Shamakhina district and Berdakaghak next to them. Seeing that all the attempts to penetrate into Armenian centers were being failed, the Turks continued their barbarism towards the Armenians who lived in their districts.

One of the citizens wrote in his testimony in the future that at that night he heard from an officer the following words directed to the Turks who were robbing, "Gentlemen, we've only given you three days to become dissolute and play pranks. That's already enough."<sup>2</sup>

The fourth day, February 9 (22), Wednesday.

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<sup>1</sup> **Gyulkhandanian A.**, "Armenian-Tatar collision", Vol. 1, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 2, files 137, p. 43.

On Wednesday morning it was already clear for everyone that Armenians were not only defending themselves bravely but also giving counterattacks, beating and making the murderers escape.

The biggest tragedy of February 9 happened in the area of Ghuba Square in Shamakhinka. The huge many-storied palace of opulent Armenian merchant Balabek Lalaev was situated here with numerous shops. That wonderful house, which dominated the Square, had made Turk millionaires envy for a long time, not speaking about street robbers.

Still, on the second day of barbarisms, February 7, the Turks were shooting rifles at Lalaev's house and shots went on the following day as well, on February 8. On those two days for 15 hours Lalaev was speaking on the phone to his relative Karapet Lalaev who lived in another part of the city, to other relatives, acquaintances, the police officer of the second district and also to the governor and was asking for help. But nobody came to help and the ferocious governor said that the people, enclosed in the house, were exaggerating the situation. When in the evening of February 8 the telephone line of Lalaev's house was cut, the calls for rescue were hung in the air<sup>1</sup>.

Eventually, in the morning of February 9, at about 10 o'clock the governor appeared in the area of Lalaev's house. For a moment a hope for rescue flashed in the souls of the wretches enclosed in the house. But it was in vain. The governor started to blame Lalaev saying that he was shooting at innocent and disarmed Turks from the house, and they had informed him that there were bullets and bombs stored in 10 barrels of cement, in the cellar of the house.

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 1, files 137, p. 5, 6.

Lalaev answered the governor that there was no weapon in the house and it would be better to search the house to be sure. But it didn't enter into the governor's plans so he left. The unrestrained crowd of Turk hooligans, encouraged by that action of the governor, started doing decisive actions. The murderers attacked the house and breaking into it, slaughtered all the terrified Armenians having taken a shelter there, including Lalaev's brother with his family. And pulling out the homeowner and his wife to the street, they shot them<sup>1</sup>.

Russian Orest Syomin described that evil deed in the following way: "Lalaev was going ahead. Suddenly the bullets thundered. He fell down injured but was still going on all fours. His wife ran to him and wanted to defend him with her body from the bullets of the criminals. More than 20 bullets were shot at the back of the woman. Shaking two hands in the air, the woman fell down on her face."<sup>2</sup>

After killing the Lalaevs the Tatars threw their corpses into the inner space of the main entrance then burnt the house.

"When about 30 Cossacks approached the burning house an Armenian jumped out of the basement, judging from the clothes he was a peasant, and threw himself to the Cossacks hoping that they would defend him, but one of the Cossacks knocked him down with a thrust of an ironlike hammer. The poor peasant, gone mad from terror, threw himself to the opposite side of the street, to the entrance of Zuev's house, near which a few soldiers were standing with the head of vice-captain Nevrotsky, an officer of Salyan regiment. The soldiers put the peasant under their bayonets. However, he squeezed into the entrance but soon the doors opened and the soldiers, hitting in his nape, threw him out. There were shots addressed to the peas-

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<sup>1</sup> Matenadaran, Archieve of the Catholicosate, file 237<sup>b</sup>, doc. 57, p. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Novoe Obozrenie", February 10, 1905.

ant. He ran into the entrance again but he was thrown out once more. Already stabbed with a dagger, for the third time he threw himself to the door, but at that moment the Turk crowd captured him and literally tore him into pieces under the encouragement of two city policemen.

“Beat that Armenian bitch.”<sup>1</sup>

When Lalaev’s house was on fire, the house of famous merchant Tatosyan, situated in the same square, was also burnt with all the family. The witness told how a city policeman was bringing buckets of fuel oil to the Turks for burning the building<sup>2</sup>.

The tragedies related to the houses of the unfortunate Lalaevs and Tatosyans were the last scene of the bloody carnages which lasted in Baku 4 days in February, 1905.

The majority of the Muslim peaceful population treated the massacre with the same horror as the Christians.

The four-day clashes were left behind and now each side of the fighters was counting its human losses and they together were counting the huge material damage done to the city.

In historic sources the quantities of the losses from both sides differ from each other greatly. Bolshevik Filipp Makharadze pointed the number of the killed and injured people in 4 days more than 1000<sup>3</sup>. Another literary source testified that there had been killed 750 and injured 830 people on those days<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> NAA, fund 1022, list 1, files 383, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file 237<sup>b</sup>, doc. 57, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> See **Filipp Makharadze**, *Outlines of the Revolutionary Movement in Transcaucasia*, State Publisher in Georgia, Tbilisi, 1927, p. 300.

<sup>4</sup> See *Revolution and Socialist-Revolutionary Party, materials and documents (Chrestomathy)*, Vol III, 1905, p. 435.

Different numbers were fixed by senator Kuzminsky, Bogdan Dolukhanyan, Davit Ananun, Hovak Stapanyan, Abraham Gyulkhandanian and others. Several dozen from the killed Armenians had been burnt alive in the burning houses. There had been many women, children and old people among the killed ones. There were 2 killed women from the Turks but they had been killed by accidental bullets, and there weren't any Turk children killed.

So much loss of the Armenians is explained with two factors: a) one and a half day, from February 6 till the afternoon of the following day, the Armenians' blood had been shed by the Turks, it could be said unpunished, b) for all 4 days of the carnage the Turks hadn't taken into account whether those unfortunate Armenians had been women, children or old people. In contrast to them, the Armenian fighters had counterattacked the slaughterers only in the open fight.

Material loss was big. 97 from 138 shops and workshops, which had been robbed, belonged to Armenians<sup>1</sup>. All the Armenian shops in the Turkish districts had been robbed, whereas the Muslim shops and workshops in the Armenian districts had hardly been damaged. The Armenians had banned the robbery and fire of the Turkish shops in their districts. Turk shopkeepers were looking at their shops with amazement; everything was in its place, nothing had been taken or demolished.

The Armenians' damages would have been more if they hadn't been organized quickly and given a deserving counterattack to the Turk rabble. No house belonging to the Turks had been burnt.

The role of the organization of the Federation of Baku was in-

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<sup>1</sup> **Gyulkhandanian A.**, "Armenian-Tatar collision", Vol. 1, p. 55.

valuable in organizing the resistance.

The main organizer of the Armenians' self-defense was, as previously mentioned, an old fedayi, owner of strong will and natural intellect, Nikol Duman from Karabakh (Nikolay Ter-Hovhannisyan). Mkrtich Aghamalyan (Sahrat), Abraham Gyulkhandanian and Martiros Charukhchyan shared the difficulties with him.

On the days of the conflicts a dozen of brave fighters became tempered: Hmayak Janpolandyan, Hambardzum (Hambi) Balayan, Hovhannes Kocharyan (Ivan from Shamakhi), Ghachagh Aslan, Gaspar Ter-Mkrtchyan, Vahan Minakhoryan, Tadevos Amiryan, Lady Shagidanyants, Mrs. Shek-Hovsepyan, Mrs. Margarit Melik-Beglaryan-Ohanyan, Mrs. Ann, Pokrik Ghazar (Ghazo), Kurd Arsen, Mokatsi Grigor, Aryuts Avag, Gapo, Pokrik Sergey (Ahghasi), Shamir and many others.

The efforts made by several rich, famous Armenians of Baku on the days of the conflicts and after them couldn't be forgotten. From famous lawyers and oil producers of the city Bogdan Dolukhanyan; the manager of oil company, the chief of exchange, engineer Stepan Taghianosyan; from the great representatives of bourgeois intelligentsia of the city the chief of technical company of Baku, the founder of the Armenian cultural company of Baku Konstandin Khatisyan; the manager of one of oil companies Hayk Ter-Mikaelyan behaved themselves especially bravely at that time. They did everything to support their kinsmen in misfortune, and also had a great role in restoring peace in the city and establishing bearable relations between Armenians and Muslims.

The events of those anxious days made the Armenians be ready to confront new possible dangers.

The bloody events of Baku in February 1905 are widely elucidated in memoirs and historical literature. Now new rare photos are added to them which we are publishing for the first time with this brief research.

How have those photos appeared in my hands?

At the beginning of the Artsakh movement, at the end of the usual mass meeting taken place in Freedom Square, a woman in black, nearly at my age approached me. We got acquainted. It turned out that she was from Goris too, from Karahunj village. Moving to Goris city she had married Vardan Torozyan, who was my old close friend from school. After a few years they had moved and settled in Nor Hachn, a new country town.

Their only son Edik, who had been brought up in a large family, was one of the first victims of the Artsakh movement, if not the first one. The Armenian, saturated with great patriotic sense, had hurried to Artsakh a day before to defend its heroic people but he hadn't been able to get a weapon, so he had decided to make a self-made weapon. During the test it had exploded in the hands of the patriot and had taken his life.

Parandzem was telling me about that, hardly repressing her tears. I didn't know how to console a little the unfortunate mother's enormous grief.

When Parandzem calmed down a little, she herself changed the theme of the conversation saying, "I know that you are a historian so I think you'll be interested in what I'm going to speak about." And she said that a part of the terrific scenes of Armenians' murders and house-firings on the days of the carnages in February, 1905, she had in photo documents, which on those bloody days had been taken



by Aghajan Alaverdyan (writer, publicist Gabriel Arevyan's uncle), one of the famous photographers of those days in Baku, born in Karahunj village of Goris region. After the massacres he had returned to his native village, but here he hadn't been able to adjust to the life conditions and had moved to Tbilisi with his family and settled there. Before that he had given the photos, depicting the carnages of Baku, to Parandzem's father to hide, at the same time warning him not to show them to anyone, as they didn't coincide with the Soviet principles of Armenian-Azerbaijani "brother amity". After several years, the father gave 31 photo documents to Parandzem before his death. Giving them to us, Parandzem said that, as far as she knew, the daughter of the dead photographer was alive and it was possible that she had other photos, too. And she gave her address in Tbilisi.

When I was in Tbilisi in 1989, I visited 80-year-old Nvard, whom I still remember with gratitude after so many years. She gave me 2 photos, which had accidentally remained with her and were depicting February carnages.

The photos, given to me by Parandzem and Nvard, have stayed in my own archive for many years. Now they are being published for the first time.

With regret we mention that the photographer didn't take notes on the photos except the four ones.



## The carnages of Baku in pictures

















Opulent Lalaev's house from the inner  
courtyard, after the carnage



The façade of the burnt house of opulent Lalaev













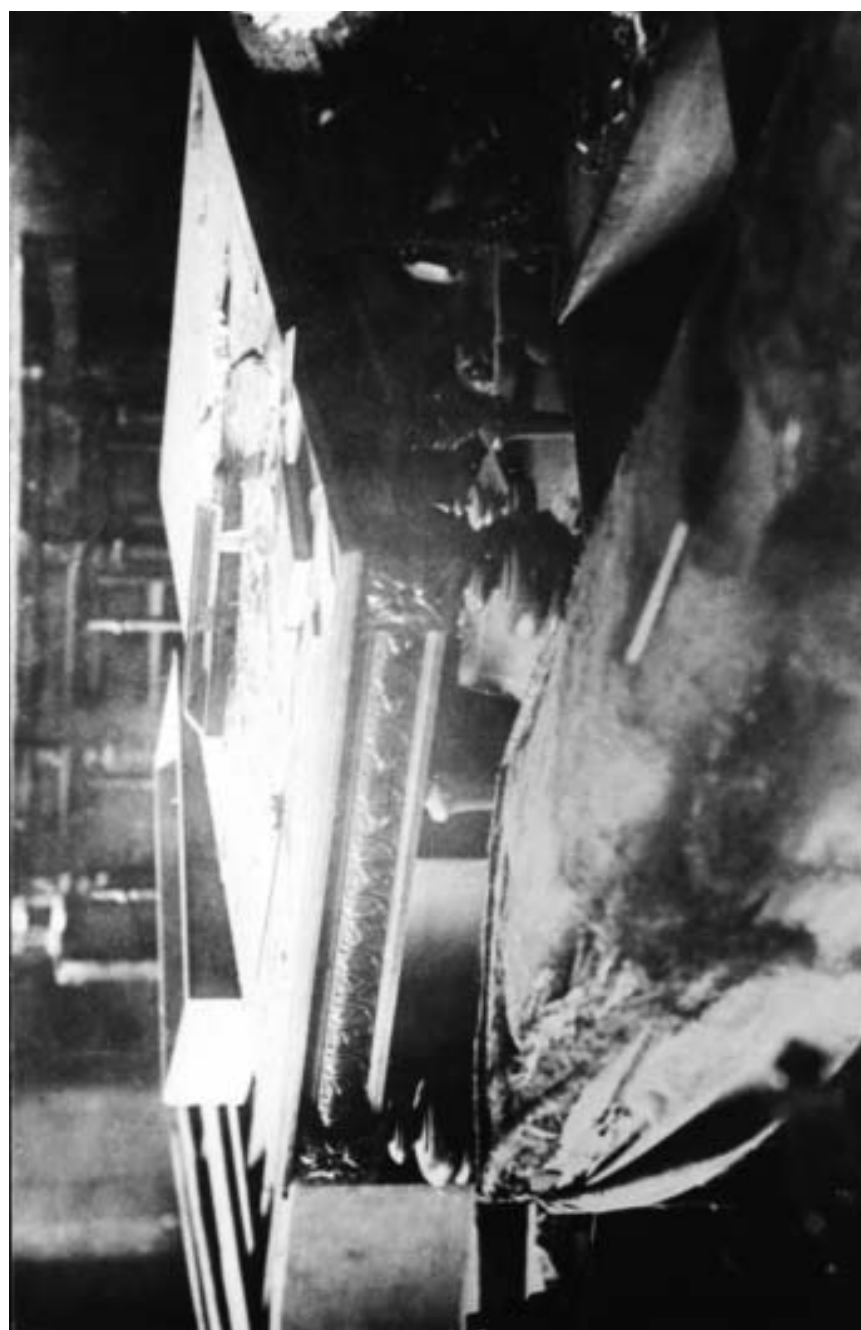
















Benevolent Organization is giving  
flour away to tormented Armenian  
families

















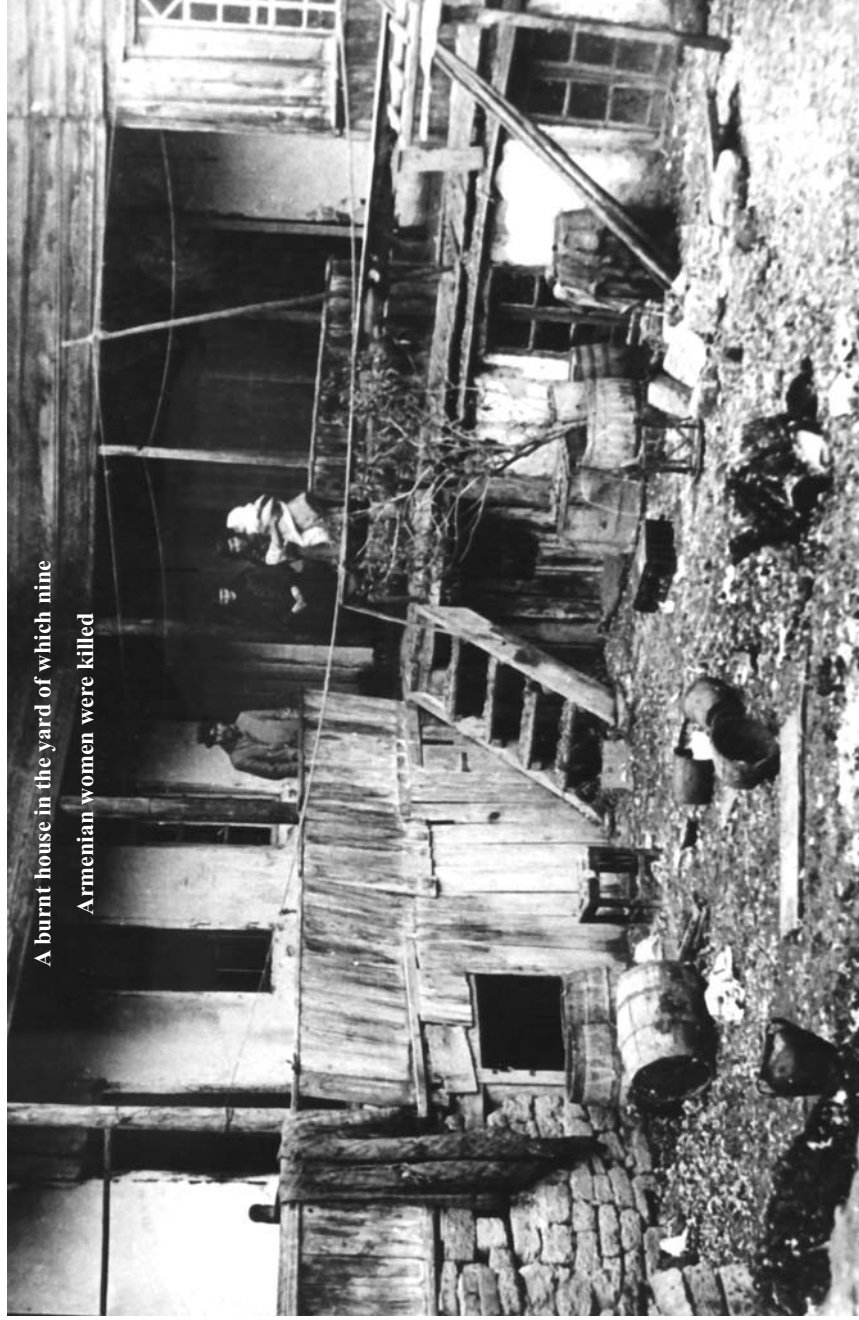








A burnt house in the yard of which nine  
Armenian women were killed



HR. SIMONYAN

ONE OF THE “HEROIC” PAGES OF THE HISTORY  
OF AZERBAIJAN IN PICTURES

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