

## AZERBAIJAN, RUSSIA VE TÜRKİYE'NİN DİPLOMASİSİNDE NAHÇIVAN

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### Öz

1920-1921 yılları arasında uluslararası durum şiddetliyse de, Osmanlı Türkiye, Azerbaycan'ın, özellikle Nahçıvan'ın tarihsel kaderine kayıtsız değildi. I. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra tüm Transkafkasya milletlerinin özgürlük yönündeki direniş girişimlerini kendi siyasi iradelerine tabi ettirmeye ve türk- Müslümanların en güvenilir ortağı olan Türkiye'yi Güney Kafkasya, Orta Asya ve genel olarak, Türk dünyasına yönelik en uygun yoldan mahrum etmek için Müttefikler Nahçıvan ve çevresinin Ermeniler tarafından kısa zamanda istilasına çalıştılar. Rusya ve İran'ın bu siyasi burulganlıkta Azerbaycan'a taviz gideceğine inanmak saflık olurdu. Aynı zamanda İran da Nahçıvanı ele geçirmeye eğilimli idi. Böyle kırılğan bir zamanda, İran ajanları zor psikolojik durumdaki insanları İran'a yöneltmeye çalıştılar. Bu durumda Nahçıvan büyük devletlerin Azerbaycan ve Türkiye ile diplomatik ilişkileri düzleminde düğüm noktasına çevrilmişti. 20 yılların başlarında Nahçıvan Türkiye-Sovyet ilişkileri düzlemine geçti.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Azerbaycan, Nahçıvan, Türkiye, Rusya, Diplomasi, Ermeniler, İtilaf Devletleri, Moskova ve Kars Antlaşmaları.

### NAKHCHIVAN IN THE DIPLOMACY OF AZERBAIJAN, RUSSIA AND TURKEY

#### Abstract

Though the international situation was severe in 1920-1921, the Ottoman Turkey was not indifferent to the historical fate of Azerbaijan, especially Nakhchivan. After the First World War, Aliens tried to keep under control of the liberation aspirations of all the Trans-Caucasian nations to their political will. In order to deprive Turkey which is the most reliable partner of the Turkic-Muslims, from the South Caucasus, Central Asia and the Turkic world, Nakhchivan and its surroundings were planning to seize soon by Armenians. It would be naive to believe that the Allies, as well as Russia and Iran, would compromise Nakhchivan on this political turmoil. By the way, Iran was also inclined to seize Nakhchivan. At such a fragile time, Iranian agents have tried to incline people in difficult psychological condition to Iran. In this case, Nakhchivan became the cornerstone of the great powers' diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. At the beginning of the 20th century, issue of Nakhchivan transferred to the Turkish-Soviet relations.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan, Nakhchivan, Turkey, Russia, Diplomacy, Armenians, The Entente States, Moscow and Kars Treaties.

#### INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 20th century was a period when a new era of international relations has begun. At the end of the First World War, the United States established a new fourteen-point principle, eliminating the principle of "balance of power" in the international system of relations (Kissinger 2006: 9-14). In the Versailles conference, the great powers tried to divide the territory of the Ottoman Empire. While Turkey was facing threats from the Allies did not permit real enemies to impact Azerbaijan. At the end of the First World War, the Allies' leaders were only

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thinking about dividing Ottoman Turkey quickly. Even allied leaders announced that they would punish the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress in the world media individually (Atay 2011: 52). The revolutionary movement in Russia has hindered its active participation in the issue of Ottoman (Uçarol 2000: 546). Even though its international situation was so severe, Ottoman Turkey was not indifferent to the historical fate of Azerbaijan, especially Nakhchivan. There are many distortions in the history of Turkey in this period. Therefore, there are many problems on Azerbaijan-Turkey relations during early 20th century that our modern historicism explores today. The problems to be addressed in this context are as follows:

1. Generally, all the historical nuances of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations in the 20th century.
2. Investigating the historical facts about falsified "Armenian genocide" in Turkey and bringing fundamental scientific truths to the public of Azerbaijan as well as teaching in educational institutions.
3. At the beginning of the 20th century, Turkey's South Caucasus policy and factor of Azerbaijan in relations with Armenia.
4. Turkey's military-political and diplomatic assistance for providing the full territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in 1917-1922.
  - a. The resistance of the Ottoman army against the Turkish-Muslim genocide (ethnic cleansing) policy implemented by Armenians in the Nakhchivan, Karabakh and Zangezur regions of Azerbaijan in 1917-1918;
  - b. The clearing of Russian-Soviet and Armenian forces in Baku in September 1918;
  - c. To acquire new information about Araz-Turkish Republic history and relations with Turkey;
  - d. Turkey's diplomacy in the Moscow and Kars conferences for the indivisibility of Azerbaijan (especially the Nakhchivan region, which is regarded as the "Turkic gate" of Great Ataturk);
5. Political-scientific studies of the Azerbaijani Turks who migrated to Turkey during the Soviet era and the struggle for the freedom of the country.
6. Investigating the history of Turkey's liberation struggle, statehood processes during the Atatürk era, the traditions of parliamentary and the development of democracy (Musayev 1998: 4-5).

## 1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

This topic we have investigated has not been specifically studied in the Soviet period history of Azerbaijan. In the same period, Turkey's military assistance and political support to Nakhchivan unanimously assessed the position of the occupation, the arrival of the Russian troops and the establishment of the Soviet power as a "path of salvation." This historic problem has been given a special place in the Armenian historiography. Some of the Armenian historians have been focused on issues related to the establishment of soviet power in Armenia, problems between Turkey and Russia, as well as the history of the Nakhchivan and Zangezur regions of Azerbaijan as their own history. Certainly, this interest which arose due to the interests and purposes of the Armenians, has caused many historical facts to be distorted and falsification of many historical facts. The Armenian writers such as I.Agayan, A.Akoyan, S.Vartanyan, Q. Qaloyan, tried to cover up the actions of Andranik, Dro and Njden who was organizers of the massacres of the Azerbaijanis in the towns of Nakhchivan and Zangazur and distorted the essence of Turkey's Transcaucasian policy. One of the main lines in Armenian historiography is the destruction of the



purpose and content of the political and military aid of Turkey to Azerbaijan in 1918 (Musayev 1998: 14-22).

Different features of the problem we have investigated are reflected in the works of political figures of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. In Adil Khan Ziyadkhana's valuable scientific works, the actions of Turkey against Armenian violence, the salvation mission of the Turkish army in Azerbaijan, the politics of "ethnic cleansing" which is implemented by Andranik in Karabakh, Nakhchivan and Zangazur, and his relations with the Shaumyan, all these delicate problems have been included. (Ziyadxanov 79-104).

Different aspects of the subject we have studied have also been studied by Turkish Historiography on a variety of sources. Among the contemporary Turkish historians F.Kirziyoglu, R.Ucharol, G.Ural, M.Saray, İ.Sakarya, Erat.M and ect (Kırzioğlu 1999, Karabekir 1995,Saray1999, Sakarya 1984,Ucarol 2000, Ural 1998 :7) in their works The Ottoman political and military assistance to Azerbaijan, the prevention of violence by Armenians against the Azerbaijanis, the rescue of Nakhchivan from the Armenian occupation, assistance to the national army units, the activities of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Yerevan related to these issues have been stated. In the same period, K. Garabakir (Karabekir 1994: 6) and prominent militaries (Ünüvar 2006: 8) are also very valuable for clarification of these issues.

The interests of the Armenians in the context of the relations of the great powers, the importance of the Moscow and Kars treaties and the liberation of Nakhchivan from the Armenian occupation, the rescue mission of the Turkish troops in Kars and South-West Caucasus. such issues are widely covered in the works of K. Garabakir. Although there are certain contradictions in his works, but all these are very valuable in terms of our historiography. In October 1920, K. Garabakir showed that the Turkish army had the power and humanity feeling superior to the most civilized armies while taking the fortress of Kars. On October 31, even the American delegation there wrote about that to Admiral Bristol. (Karabekir 1994: 6)

## 2. GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF NAKHCHIVAN

Nakhchivan has always been an important part of Turkey's foreign policy for its geopolitical importance. The Nakhchivan district, located at the junction of four countries, has a very strategic and geopolitical importance. Turkey, despite the rapidly changing public and political system changes in Azerbaijan, provided military-political support to its territorial integrity and preferred to position Nakhchivan and Zangezur as strategic corridors linking Anatolia with Azerbaijan. Russia and Iran have sought to re-capture all of the northern Azerbaijan, including those regions, and have looked at it as "the return of their historical lands." Considering the strategic importance of Nakhchivan and Zangazur, Western states, primarily the United Kingdom and the United States sought to have influence in those areas. Speaking about the protection of the rights of minorities at the Versailles conference and the equal protection of the rights of the new nationalities emerged as the political result of national liberation movements, these superpowers, unfortunately, gave more political and military support to Armenians, and while Armenians relying on the support of these great powers, tried to invade Nakhchivan and its surrounding.

The Government of Azerbaijan considered the efforts of the diplomats operating in Transcaucasia to be the most important tool for the region's liberation in order to overcome the real threat to the



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region. Of course, it was not an easy task to neutralize the Armenian factor, which is the episcenter of the threat, with its allies, Russia and Iran through diplomatic means. Because after the First World War, they tried to keep under control liberation aspirations of all the Trans-Caucasian nations to their political will. In order to deprive Turkey which is the most reliable partner of the Turkic-Muslims, from the South Caucasus, Central Asia and the Turkic world, the Nakhchivan and its surroundings were planning to seize soon by Armenians. It would be naive to believe that the Allies, as well as Russia and Iran, would compromise Nakhchivan on this political turmoil. By the way, Iran was also inclined to seize Nakhchivan. At such a fragile time, Iranian agents have tried to incline people in difficult psychological condition to Iran. In this case, Nakhchivan became the cornerstone of the great powers' diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. At the beginning of the 20th century, Nakhchivan transferred to the Turkish-Soviet relations. After a long sixteen months, the Moscow Treaty is officially signed by the parties on March 18. However, the two sides change the history of this treaty to 16 March, the date of the occupation of Istanbul (Soysal 1989: 7-16, 47- 119). According to this treaty, the parties will not recognize any peace imposed on each other, and Soviet Union will not recognize any agreement that does not accept from the Parliament of Turkey, which is mentioned in the "Misak-i Milli". Batumi will be kept under the Georgian administration, the population will be granted autonomy, and Turkey will have the right to use the Batumi port. Nakhchivan will gain the status of autonomous region on condition that Azerbaijan's right to protection is not transferred to a third state. The Straits will be open to the ships of all nations and their security will be guaranteed by the countries bordering the Black Sea in a manner compatible with Turkey's independence, and the parties will not allow the flow of troops and groups to the other side within their borders. The Soviet administration would also not recognize sanctions imposed on Turkey (Tengirşek 1981:223-224).

The Moscow Treaty was submitted to the Turkish Grand National Assembly on July 7, 1921. The Moscow Treaty was profitable for both sides. Russia gains a new friend against the Allied Powers and has strengthened its position and influence among the Muslim countries in the Caucasus and the East. The Soviet state were trying to secure their own security by increasing the power of the Turkey in the Straits, and in the future it has maintained its intention to export its own regime to that country. On the other hand, Turkey gained a major diplomatic victory with this treaty. It protects its national interests at a certain stage and thus ensures the security of the eastern borders. Recognition by a great state has legally increased international credibility and has gained a great deal of force against the Allied Powers. Turkey also began to receive assistance from Russia. The Russians also guaranteed the Turks with weapons and ammunitions, as well as 10 million rubles. (Yerasimov 1979: 230-231).

The Moscow Treaty was indispensable for the Turks. On the other hand, for Soviet Russia, which is under the threat of regular imperialist threat, Turkey, which is in front of the Black Sea and South Caucasus, most vulnerable areas, could play a role as a shield for Russia. On the contrary, Turkey could have been a weapon against Russia. The protection of Turkey against imperialist countries was vital for the security of the Soviet Union.



### 3. THE SOLUTION OF THE NAKHCHIVAN PROBLEM IN THE NEW ERA OF TURKISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

Undoubtedly, the Moscow Treaty was a new stage in Turkish-Soviet relations. It was an agreement that did not forcefully dictate either side. It also did not contain any provisions that contained pressure or exploitation. Instead, it was a document against the exploiters.

Although the Moscow Treaty solved many problems, there were some suspicions. These suspicions arose in Gyumri's case. The Red Army wanted to overthrow the rebellion of Dashnak Armenians, but the occupation of Gyumri by Turkish military units prevented it. Thus, the Gyumri problem and, consequently, the Gyumri Agreement, the general agreement between the Caucasus republics and Turkey, led to the prolongation of the issue despite the Moscow agreement. The Commander of the Red Army, AIHekker, wanted to meet with Garabekir Pasha. Garabekir Pasha first asked the Armenian authorities to declare that they recognize the Moscow Treaty. He offered to contact Ankara directly by saying that Gyumri was occupied by the order of the Ankara government and that he would not be evacuated as long as no new order came from the government. (Karabekir 1994: 906-907).

One month after the Moscow Treaty, the new crisis broke out. Meanwhile, the Turkish delegation arrived in Baku. In Baku, an agreement was signed with Azerbaijan separately. The main purpose here was to leave the Armenians alone. On April 2, the Russian Communist Party Political Bureau proposed the three Caucasian republics to hold a joint conference with Turkey. On April 15, Yusuf Kemal gave a consent for a joint conference at the meeting of the Soviet representative of the Caucasus, B.V.Legirren, Gyumri representative M.Dorakelashvili and O.Orcenekidze. The meeting was proposed to be held in Kars.

Meanwhile, Ankara's representative in Baku, Memduh Shevket Bey, continued the peace negotiations with Azerbaijan separately. Instead of signing separate agreements with Turkey and the three Caucasian republics at a conference to be held on 19 April, discussions with M.D.Huseynov and Behbud Shahtakhtinski, they decided to sign a joint agreement. The Azerbaijani government also demanded that the conference be held in Kars, with the approval of Georgia and Armenia. On April 15, Ankara decided to vacate Gyumri within a week (Karabekir 1994: 892). Thus, April 23, Gyumri was evacuated. With the release of Gyumri, Tali and Seyfi bey came to Sarıkamış on April 24, together with the original copy of the Moscow Treaty.

By the way, the prominent diplomat Behbud bey Shahtakhtinsky played a special role in the successes achieved in Nakhchivan's liberation in the Moscow and Kars conferences. He devoted all his diplomatic efforts to the protection of our territorial integrity, and did not hesitate to put an end to his political career for the liberation of Nakhchivan, especially in the fateful times. Modern Russian historian R. Ivanov writes in his precious book "Nashestvie", devoted to the massacres committed by Bolsheviks in Nakhchivan, that local people did not support the statement of Nakhchivan to be given to Soviet Armenia by Bolsheviks. After the announcement of the decision, Nakhchivan President of the Revolution Committee Behbud Shahtakhtinski spoke sharp and clear about this decision of Nakhchivan's separation and spoke to the crowd gathered in front of Nakhchivan Revolution Committee: "Azerbaijan sold you, if I were in Baku, I would not allow it.... Now trust the Turks. They are your salvation. Hold them firmly" (İvanov :52). In this



difficult history, he preferred the political destiny of Nakhchivan over its ideological principles. B.Shahtakhtinski did not comply with Moscow's fake internationalist adventures.

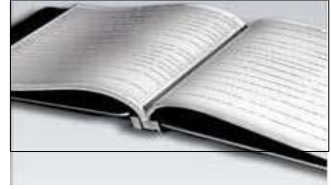
B. Shahtakhtiniski was a flexible diplomat. An important aspect of his political career was the organization of diplomatic activities. In fact, the complicated geopolitical conditions in which Azerbaijan lives, and the importance of protecting its interests have made B shahkentinski a compulsory diplomat, but he did a great job in protecting the political interests of our people. At the same time, the prominent politician was thinking of the legal and political fate of Nakhchivan. He also believed that "the principle of self-determination of nations", declared by Bolsheviks as N. Narimanov. B. Shakhtakhtinski saw that Armenians worked with all efforts in the Center just to separate Nakhchivan . That's why all his diplomatic activity was directed towards the realization of the legal-political status of Nakhchivan. According to, B. Shahtakhtinski later played a major role in the conference and political agreements which was concerning the destiny of Nakhchivan.

Bebud bey Shakhtakhtinsky was a forward-minded diplomat. By using extraordinary powers, he tried to be effective in resolving important issues such as territorial integrity, independence and legal problems of the people from the main problems of Azerbaijan when he was in the Center. This is also apparent in his letter to the Soviet People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. B.Shakhtakhtinsky warned Moscow, "If the political mistakes are made in Azerbaijan and Iran, the situation in the East may deteriorate in the nearest future ... The complexity of the situation in Transcaucasia and generally in the East should be considered. I ask you to discuss and resolve the issues raised by me as soon as possible ". The most important issues raised by him in Moscow were the prevention of forcibly split of Azerbaijani territories. Behbud bey informed the central government that "before the coup, territories belonging to Azerbaijan - Zagatala, Garabagh and Nakhchivan should remain within the country. These territories were part of the unquestioned Azerbaijan in the time of the Musavat government, it organically, and closely linked to it from historical, ethnographic and economic points of view. In spite of this, Russia should not let these lands out of Azerbaijan from the moral and political point of view, and should not allow the existing Soviet administrations to be demolished by the Dashnaks and Georgian Mensheviks at the door of the East "(İbrahimzadə 2007:72).

#### 4. NAKHCHIVAN IN THE CONTEXT OF AZERBAIJAN-RUSSIA RELATIONS

By the way, it was found out that on September 30, 1920, the first military-economic and social treaties between Russia and Azerbaijan were signed and Chicherin from the Russian side and B. Shakhtakhtinski on behalf of Azerbaijan. These agreements include joint military-economic policy between the two countries, joint management of mail-telegraph and foreign trade coordination with the Center, etc. matters. In fact, this contract was the gradual elimination of future attempts of independence of Azerbaijan. For example, one of the agreements envisaged joint activities in foreign trade. The main purpose of the cunning Bolshevik Russia was to prevent the oil, which is a strategic wealth, from being exported alone by Azerbaijan.

In late June 1920, MG Huseynov, the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan, went to Moscow to clarify the mutual relations of Soviet Russia and Soviet Azerbaijan, to form a close alliance between the two countries, as well as coordinate and develop



an action plan on international issues. M.D. Huseynov, who arrived in Moscow on July 26, 1920, was accepted by V. Lenin and G.Chicher in conjunction with the permanent representative of Azerbaijan, B. Shakhtakhtinski. Behbud Bey, who opposed all the threats to be directed from Moscow to Azerbaijan, was aware of the secret plans of Karabakh and Zangazur, as well as the plans of Nakhichevan and its surrounding areas. For this reason, he noticed the events in advance and sent a letter to Soviet People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs G.Chicher. According to the letter, the Armenian issue, which is the biggest threat to Azerbaijan, is being brought to the attention of Chicher and the feelings of a serious concern over the historical fate of Nakhchivan are felt. The letter says that the transfer of all Nakhchivan and Shahtakhti-Iravan railroads to Armenia would enable the dashnaks to use the Baku railroad and it will provide them with weapons and ammunition from Iran, and Armenia will be out of the hands of Russia. At the same time, the Shahtakhti-Iravan and Shahtakhti-Julfa railroads and also with all of transport vehicles giving to Armenia, and will cause to take all South Azerbaijan under control by Dashnaks and also unite them with the British forces in Iran, and deprive us of any relations with the Turkish revolutionary movement. In the letter, revealing the issue of Nakhchivan is based on a very clever logic. Behbud Bey writes to Chicherin that Nakhchivan has great political, economic and strategic significance, because one of the railroad route leads to Iran's Maku Khanate and from there to the Turkish city of Bayezid, and the other line to Tabriz, Iran. So, as an important railway station, Nakhchivan connects us with Turkey and the rich land of Iran. In the benefit of the Dashnaks, Azerbaijan and Russia should not give up on this important unifying point. The population of the Nakhchivan region, after the Turks' march in 1918, temporarily declared the establishment of the Araz Republic (İbrahimzadə 2007:76-77).

It is clear from the content of the letter that the prominent diplomat has directed his entire diplomatic effort and political will to the liberation of Nakhchivan and its surroundings. In fact, Mr. Shahtakhtinsky's serious efforts in this direction did not allow the Bolsheviks of Russia and Azerbaijan to make a full-fledged declaration of the unification of Garabagh, Nakhchivan and Zangazur into Armenia. The most constructive part of Shahtakhtinsky's diplomatic moves was the strong support for Turks here. Behbud bey knew well that this political line prevented the direct occupation of Nakhchivan.

B.Shahtakhtinski was a politician who always demonstrated a clear and transparent position in the context of the rapidly evolving events. Behbud Bey was also known as a clever politician by the Bolsheviks. Thus, when the Gyumri agreement was closed and the Russian Bolshevik government did not recognize it, B. Shahtakhtinski was trying to spread the idea to the Bolshevik leaders of Azerbaijan that the support of the Turks was the salvation of our country. He conveyed the message of the leading leaders of the Turkish National Movement (Erzurum deputy Süleyman Necati, Erzurum Governor Hamid Bey, etc.) to Foreign Affairs Commissar MD Huseynov and informed them that they intend to sign a mutual defense agreement with Russia. Behbud Shahtakhtinski demonstrated sincerity to clarify the political position of the Turks. Because of his sincere relations with the Turks, a lot of false information was sent about him to the Center. Bahadur Valibekov, who was appointed an extraordinary commissioner in Nakhchivan under the auspices of the Armenians, was more famous with his zeal on this matter.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Azerbaijani intellectuals brought up the idea of the Transcaucasian Confederation. This idea was the ideal way of resolving all the incidents between



the peoples of the Caucasus and their survival. This idea was put on the political agenda by the republican leaders, but as always, Armenians did not allow this idea to happen. Behbud bey Shahtakhtinski, in view of Narimanov's principal views, raised the question of the unity of Caucasian peoples in diplomatic circles. But the Bolshevik government of Russia tried to accelerate their occupation by uniting the idea from the idea of aggression into an artificial structure.

B. Shaktakhtinski's historic services during the preparation and signing of the Moscow and Kars treaties have made his name forever in our history of diplomacy. These agreements defined the legal-political status of Nakhchivan and provided historical support by Turkey over the region.

Behbud bey was very involved in the realization of the Moscow Treaty. While in Moscow in the summer of 1920, he came to Nakhchivan, in conjunction with the Turkish Grand National Assembly's delegation and Foreign Minister Sami Bey. The main purpose of the visit was to establish diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Kemal government and sign a friendly agreement. Signing of relevant documents had to be held in Baku on the basis of mutual agreement, but later it was decided to hold negotiations with Chicheriy's proposal in Moscow. His attentiveness to the Government of Turkey on 9 December 1920 pointed out the importance of participation of Azerbaijani and Armenian representatives in these talks. The Russian diplomacy aimed to placing Azerbaijan and Armenia in the negotiations, provoke them against Turkey and implementing their plans in the region (İbrahimzadə 2007:108).

Azerbaijani territorial integrity has been partially preserved with serious efforts by the Turkish delegation in Moscow negotiations. It was determined that Nakhchivan was an autonomous region within Azerbaijan and that its rights were not given to any other state than Azerbaijan, and the boundaries were determined. Thus, Nakhchivan's land-sharing issue became clear. The Turkish delegation could not receive the protection of Turkey on the region of Nakhchivan, but the region was in the hands of the Turks and Nakhchivan was given to the protection of Azerbaijan. The new foreign minister, Yusuf Kemal Bey, emphasized once again that the Turkish army would not be indifferent to any genocide against Nakhchivan Muslims.

In the production of such a result, the labor and service of the representative of Azerbaijan B. Shaktakhtinsky has been very much. On March 1, 1921, he sent a letter to Lenin, giving useful advice on the territorial content and geography of these counties, on the border issues in the South Caucasus, especially in the Nakhchivan region. The letter was sent to the Political Bureau by Lenin's signature on 7 March with the participation of Stalin, Chicher and others and it was decided to organize the Nakhchivan Soviets under Azerbaijan's patronage in the direction of B. Shaktakhtinsky's suggestion. At the end of the discussion - on March 13, 1920, B. Shahtakhtinski sent a telegram to inform the Azerbaijani Committee on Foreign Relations, informing them that Nakhchivan was under detention by Azerbaijan and that will never have granted to Armenia in accordance with the agreement. (Musayev 1998:346)

## **5. TURKEY'S DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES**

By signing the Moscow Treaty, Turkey agreed with cancelation of the provisions of the Gyumri agreement, and including the part about Nakhchivan Territory. In fact, it was provided the sovereignty of Azerbaijan. Shortly after signing the Moscow Treaty, in April 1921, Turkey's





limited troops withdrew from the Nakhchivan district. The issue of Nakhchivan was resolved on March 20, 1921, with the approval of the Central Board of the Russia and the approval of the Parliament of Turkey on 21 July of the same year. This was a very important political-diplomatic movement. It was no coincidence that when Turkish diplomats returned to Ankara, they said to Mustafa Kemal Pasha, "We have done everything what we could do for Nakhchivan", and then he replied that, "It is important for us to keep existence of our gate." Two weeks after the Moscow Treaty, at the beginning of April 1921, the Azerbaijani Soviet Government sent a gift to the East Front commander Kazim Karabekir Pasha and Parliamentary Chairman Mustafa Kamal Pasha as a small memorial for their unprecedented service to the fate of Nakhchivan.

Thus, the autonomous territorial status of Nakhchivan under the auspices of Azerbaijan was found in the Moscow Treaty, signed between the Soviet Union and Turkey. The reflection of the status of Nakhchivan in the first international treaty should be regarded as a fact of great political significance at that time and in the present period of Azerbaijan. As the nationwide leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev stated that, if the Zangazur district, which separated Nakhchivan from Azerbaijan, was not given to Armenia, maybe Nakhchivan's autonomy was not necessary either. Azerbaijan was a country with a single territory. It was not an easy task to gain Nakhchivan's autonomy and to resolve the fate of Nakhchivan in the Moscow Treaty. However, personalities such as Behbud Agha Shahtakhtinski who have protected the national interests of Azerbaijan have done so. This is a historic achievement of Azerbaijan, as well as a historical service of the Turkish state to the state policy of Azerbaijan and the acquisition of Nakhchivan autonomy. (İbrahimzadə 2007: 113-114)

In these diplomatic correspondences, which often light up some of the moments of the Azerbaijani-Turkish relations in the early 20's, some interesting notes draw attention:

- A. Russia's efforts to integrate the Transcaucasian republics into a united front against Turkey;
- B. In most cases, the Azerbaijani leadership continued on the grounds of official Moscow policy and faces opposition to Turkey;
- C. Despite the fact that Turkey has been working to secure some of its interests in the region, was still uncomfortable for Azerbaijani territorial integrity and especially for the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic

To defend the interests of Nakhchivan in the process of preparation, agreement and signing of the Treaty, Tagi Safiyevi, the Chairman of the People's Commissariat of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, was sent to Kars. The next day, Yusuf Kemal set off with four million rubles after meeting with Georgian officials in Tbilisi and after the decision has been made for the Kars Conference. He came to Sarıkamış on April 29. (Karabekir 1994:908).

The most controversial issue in the Kars conference was the coverage of the status of the Batumi and Nakhchivan Autonomy. In special discussions, the Kuvartsxana and Murqul copper fields and the Gulp salt facilities were handed over to Georgians and Armenians by the Russians, but the Turkish side rejected it. As a result, the text of the Kars Treaty was signed by all the representatives on October 13, 1921 (Karabekir 1960: 970-73).



## RESULT

However, it should not be forgotten that these issues have been resolved through the professional principles, the level of superior command, the regular military force of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the situation has been stabilized in Caucasia. But today the Armenians and their supporters are writing scripts with the desire and dream to dissipate this stability. However, by signing the Treaty of Kars, the Armenians promised that would not violate the terms of the contract, including the state status of Nakhchivan. However, later on, Armenia violated the terms of this treaty, with the decision of the Central Executive Committee of the Southern Caucasus on 19 February 1929, 9 villages totally 657 km<sup>2</sup> ((Khachiq, Horadiz, Qurtkulaq (Sharur region), Kreshan (Ordubad region)) divided which belonged to Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. (Hacıyev 2007: 631).

The Armenian state, which is not satisfied with this, wants to continue its allegations against Nakhchivan at every opportunity, without stopping its intentions and to abolish the Moscow and Kars treaties that hindered it.

When the founder of the independent Azerbaijan Republic, Heydar Aliyev was in the Turkish Republic in March 1992, the political agenda of the Moscow and Kars treaties was reminded to the neighboring states of their commitments to Nakhchivan by himself once again.

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