

Deyush Musayev: "When liberating Baku, Nuru-Pasha primarily took into account Turkey's interests"

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Day.Az interview with Deyush Musayev, PhD in historical sciences and leading researcher of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Science.



- Azerbaijan marks the 90th anniversary of the arrival of Turkish general Nuru-Pasha in Baku on September 15. This date is often accepted unambiguously in the Azerbaijani society and it would be interesting to know what historians can say about its historical importance?

- Certainly, Nuru-Pasha liberated Azerbaijan. He also put an end to Dashnaks' saturnalia, for at that time in 1918 Azerbaijan did not have a national army, which at the time was in process of formation.

In this situation Turkey offered military support to Azerbaijan and Nuru-Pasha's troops liberated Baku. By the way, in the result, Baku for the first time became the capital of Azerbaijan-not of Shirvanshahs, but of an independent democratic state.

- Was the arrival of Nuru-Pasha's troops adequate to the then-current historical situation or was Baku's liberation unnecessary?

- The historical situation was as follows - the South Caucasus Sejm and the South Caucasus Federation collapsed in May of 1918, which could be expected, as the similarities within this federation were more than conditional. The states, it comprised, including Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, had no common currency, or common army, or borders or anything.

Each of the countries protected its own national interests. Naturally, the parliament of the Caucasus states did not last long. On May 27 of 1918 Georgia left the Federation, which meant its factual collapse. After it on May 28 of 1918 Azerbaijani representatives in the sejm declared independence of the Azerbaijan People's Republic and on June 4 appealed to Turkey for military support.

- At the same time, the relations between the government of the Azerbaijan People's Republic and Nuru-Pasha were reportedly not so good...

- Naturally, when liberating Baku, Nuru-Pasha primarily took into account Turkey's interests and acted by instructions of his government. When by Georgia's demand, Azerbaijani government moved from Tiflis to Ganja, Nuru-Pasha did not recognize it, which led to the crisis. In fact, the Azerbaijani government could collapse, before establishing. Therefore, Mamed Emin Rasolzade took the following step - he dismissed the old government and created a new one, under control of Nuru-Pasha, that is oriented towards Turkey.

Naturally, Turkey's role in the destiny of the Azerbaijani People's Republic in 1918 was great. At the same time, it should be reminded that at that time Turkey, that is the Osman Empire, which was a member of the Triple alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, had in fact lost in the First World War. On October 11 of 1918, when the war ended, this defeat was registered formally, English troops replaced Turkey in the Caucasus and the situation again changed.

- And here Turkey's role started to decline dramatically. Why?

- Turkey had its own interests. At that time Nuru-Pasha tried to create centers of resistance to the 11th Red Army in Azerbaijan but these attempts failed and Turkey, in fact, gave Azerbaijan under complete control of the Soviet Russia, which provided military support to Ankara as a country, defeated in the first world war.

- Was it a forced decision?

- I do not justify Turkey but at that time the Osman empire was fighting with Britain and Greece which was uneasy when at last Mustafa Kemal Ataturk established the secular state in 1923. There was a real threat of Turkey's collapse and its removal from the map of the world.

In this situation, Ataturk preferred to preserve Turkey as a state than to retain the mythical influence over the Caucasus.

England was also not weak, it was a victor country. By the Mudross Treaty they entered the Caucasus, while Turks left it.

- Nevertheless, English troops did not stay in Baku for long...

- In 1920 the situation in the world changed again. Russia won the destructive civil war. Its economy was in depression, but its military strength was real. The new empire - USSR- was being created by the help of this strength, while the West needed the Russian market and though it did not recognize USSR diplomatically and this process was protracted until the late 1920s - early 1930s - it was still playing its game.

If the whole West rendered economic, diplomatic and military support, the Azerbaijan People's Republic could have further existed. You see, the Azerbaijan People's Republic was founded in May of 1918, while the Entente countries recognized it only in January of 1920. Why did they need this two-year interval?

In the result of these games, the 11th Red Army, led by Frunze and other commanders, invaded Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan and helped Turkey in the war with Greeks and English.

- So, do we need to celebrate October 15 as a Day of the City and set a memorial to Nuru-Pasha?

- I think the memorials in Azerbaijan have not yet been set for all honored scientists, commanders, artists, and simply people. So we do not need to hurry with erecting a monument to Nuru Pasha. There are memorials of unknown soldiers or those, who died for the country, in almost each European country. I think, we need to set a memorial to those of died for their country near the monument of 26 Baku commissioners and the newly married could put flowers to it. The Day of October 15 should be held not officially. It is just a holiday.

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