
Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Təhlükəsizliyi Xidməti

Security agencies of Azerbaijan SSR

The appointment of an Azerbaijani - national leader Heydar Aliyev - to the post of chairman of the State Security Committee of Azerbaijan for the first time in many decades marked the beginning of a new page in the history of this agency. As a result of the far-sighted and purposeful activity of the genius personality, the first Azerbaijani general in the KGB, greater prominence was given to the training and promotion of national personnel in the security agencies. One of the spheres of Heydar Aliyev's activity in the KGB was directed against the separatist activity of Armenians and pro-Armenian forces. For example, in the 1960s-70s, foreign special services and their ideological centres showed great interest in interethnic relations in the USSR, pursued a separatist policy through the Armenian lobby abroad and the forces supporting them, and made new attempts to annex Nakhchivan and Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

Seeing the revival in the activities of foreign special services, especially the Dashnaksutyun party concerning our republic, the leadership of the Azerbaijani special services increased attention to Nagorno-Karabakh and set important tasks for its employees. As a result of the measures taken, an illegal nationalist group of young people was discovered in Khankendi in 1967. This group made nationalist-separatist calls, carried out propaganda and distributed leaflets for the imminent annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. As a result of successful operations, the group's activities were exposed. However, on 3 July 1967, a riot broke out in Khankendi. The reason for this incident was allegedly that criminals had not been given a fair trial. Relatives who did not agree with the court's decision attacked the convicts and brutally killed them. As a result of the measures taken, 22 active participants in the riot were arrested.

Grigoryan, a Yerevan resident who was later arrested by the Nagorno-Karabakh police for theft, said he had formed an armed group to avenge those arrested in connection with the 3 July events and to carry out terrorist acts against the region's leadership. As a result of the measures taken, 4 Kalashnikov assault rifles, 2 machine guns, Nagano and Mauser pistols, spare parts for them, etc., stolen from one of the military units located in Yerevan, were found.

Heydar Aliyev expressed his opinion about this issue at a meeting of the operational staff of the KGB of the Azerbaijan SSR on 5 March 1969: "Our timely identification and arrest of the organizers and perpetrators of the 3 July 1967 events in Khankendi dealt a severe blow to the activities of other nationalists and significantly weakened their work."

Although the criminal actions of Armenian nationalists in Nagorno-Karabakh were prevented in time, they still carried out separatist actions on ethnic grounds, sometimes accompanied by terrorism. In the current situation, certain steps were taken to strengthen ideological work, propaganda and preventive measures. As a result, there was a need to create analytical departments, divisions and units. For this purpose, in 1969, information-analytical structural units were established in the central office and local bodies of the KGB. The establishment of information-analytical structural units was a logical continuation of the better organization of the practical activities of state security agencies.

At a meeting of the board of the State Security Committee under the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR chaired by Heydar Aliyev on 23 April 1969, the following decision was made: "In order to analyze, classify, seek, collect and present changes in the methods, forms and tactics of the enemy's destructive activities, to establish the Information-Analytical Department of the KGB under the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan USSR." As an independent body subordinate to the chairman of the KGB, the main task of the unit was to analyze, forecast and report the information obtained to the chairman of the committee.

By the 5 July 1978 decision of the Board of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the State Security Committee under the USSR Council of Ministers was renamed the USSR State Security Committee. In accordance with this decision of the Board of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, by the order of the chairman of the State Security Committee of the USSR, Y. V. Andropov, on 13 July 1978, the decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was implemented on the ground. This put an end to the KGB's dependence on the Council of Ministers. The KGB began to carry out the tasks of the Central Committee of the CPSU directly.

In the 1980s, due to the current socio-political situation, the interest of foreign special services in the USSR increased significantly. These forces paid more attention to recruitment in law enforcement and military units, as well as in the Interior Ministry, and tried to destabilize the country and strengthen espionage in this way. The Central Committee and the KGB leadership identified these activities, made certain structural changes or created new structural units in order to prevent possible provocations.

In the late 1980s, the main tasks of the KGB of the Azerbaijan SSR were to prevent the subversive activities

of neighbouring states against Azerbaijan, to study the interests of foreign intelligence in Azerbaijan, to control military facilities, to prevent anti-Soviet propaganda in the ideological sphere, to quell ethnic conflicts, in short, to take full control of the crime situation.

At a meeting with employees of the Ministry of National Security in 1997, National leader Heydar Aliyev rightly stated that "since 1988, very sad, very terrible processes had taken place in the national security bodies of Azerbaijan. All the potential, morality and national spirit created here began to crumble."

According to Heydar Aliyev, ethnic conflicts became widespread in those years. Even in some places (for example, Sumgayit), conflicts were deliberately created by certain forces. As a result of the 28 February 1988 clashes in Sumgayit under the leadership of these forces, 32 people were killed, 439 were injured, 189 apartments and 52 facilities were destroyed, and the Republic of Azerbaijan sustained damage in the amount of 7 million roubles.

During the events in Sumgayit, the employees of the Azerbaijani special services were almost completely isolated, and control over the operation was taken over by employees of the prosecutor's office from Moscow and authorized representatives of the Soviet KGB. Instead of investigating the atrocities committed by Armenian vandals, the pro-Armenian Soviet law enforcement agencies, which took a one-sided approach to the events, considered the Azerbaijanis guilty and as a result, several Azerbaijanis were sentenced to death. In general, Azerbaijanis were the real target of the prosecution. For example, out of the 91 people prosecuted, 86 were Azerbaijanis, 2 Lezgis, 2 Russians and only 1 Armenian.

Armenians, who aggravated the situation day by day and lived in the illusion of a "Greater Armenia", savagely expelled 142,000 Azerbaijanis from their native land, and soon this number exceeded 230,000 and caused them great material damage. Thus, the Armenians seized 31,000 houses, 165 state and collective farms, and thousands of heads of cattle owned by Azerbaijanis. As a result of their atrocities, 225 Azerbaijanis were killed, 1,154 were injured, and thousands were insulted and tortured.

Apparently, these processes were accompanied by acts of genocide committed by Armenians against Azerbaijanis. Based on historical sources, it has been proved that thousands of Azerbaijanis were killed by Armenians in the 20th century alone and expelled from their historical ancestral lands in present-day Armenia. In addition, more than 15,000 Kurds and several thousand Russians were expelled from Armenia in 1988-1991. Thus, Armenia became a monoethnic state.

The separatist activities of the Armenian nationalists became widespread after the events in Sumgayit. Beginning from February 1988, anti-Turkic rallies started in the capital and provinces of Armenia. Persecution of Azerbaijanis in the regions they inhabited was intensified not only by Armenian nationalists, but also by state leaders, and this campaign, carried out under the slogan of "Armenia must be cleansed of Turks", brought ethnic conflicts to a new level.

Subsequent events also proved that the Armenians needed the events in Sumgayit in order to expel Azerbaijanis from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Taking advantage of this, the Armenians persecuted and oppressed thousands of Azerbaijanis and savagely exterminated many of them. On 24 February 1988, the Armenians killed two young Azerbaijanis and wounded 19 others in Asgaran District. Following the events in Sumgayit, 21 people were killed, 280 people were injured, 288 apartments, 12 government offices, 5 law enforcement buildings were destroyed and 6 cars were set on fire during riots in Baku, Nakhchivan, Ganja, Zagatala, Mingachevir, Shamkir, Khachmaz, Sheki and Shamakhi in November-December 1988.

Rallies and demonstrations began in Baku and other parts of Azerbaijan in protest at these atrocities, which angered the Azerbaijani people. In a short time, those rallies and demonstrations turned into a people's movement and a war of national independence.

Moscow tried its best to stifle the people's movement in Azerbaijan. The leadership of the KGB of the Azerbaijan SSR also helped them in this work. While reporting on the situation in Azerbaijan, they also gave slanderous statements about the leaders of the people's movement, accusing those who defended their rights of destabilization, confrontation, separatism and extremism. In mid-January 1990, the chairman of the KGB of the Azerbaijan SSR sent an encrypted telegram to Moscow stating that the republic was in a state of chaos, on the verge of an uprising, and that Azerbaijan could be lost if decisive measures were not taken. This show

once again that at that time, like the heads of state and government of Azerbaijan, its law enforcement entities acted only under the dictate of the empire, did not think much about the situation and fate of the people.

It is interesting that the encrypted telegrams sent to Moscow by the KGB of the Azerbaijan SSR contained information about Heydar Aliyev, who was retired at that time: "As before, Heydar Aliyev's position is strong. People still mention Heydar Aliyev with respect... If Heydar Aliyev nominates himself for the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR from Ordubad district and if favourable conditions arise, they plan to elect him chairman of the Board of the Supreme Soviet." In doing so, the KGB deepened the gap between the government and the people.

The Soviet government and its law enforcement agencies showed their true imperial colours in January 1990. They first blew up the power block of Azerbaijani television and then committed the "20 January" tragedy. Facts show that the ruling circles, which opposed the people's idea of independence, had prepared the "20 January" scenario in advance to stifle the national movement.

On 19 January, the power block of Azerbaijani television was blown up to conceal the "20 January" tragedy. Ageyev, Bobkov, Alpha group leader Karpukhin, the head of the 4th department of the republican KGB, Izmodenov, and others took part in the preparation of the explosion plan. The investigation proved that the explosion was caused by KGB officers and military personnel. As a result of the explosion, the TV studio suffered material damage in the amount of 260,000 manats. Many employees and especially leaders of the Soviet KGB had gathered in Baku. Ethnic Azerbaijanis were fired or sent to other regions under various pretexts. As a result of these bloody actions of the Soviet army on 20 January, 131 people were killed, 744 were wounded, 4 went missing and 400 were arrested. Not only did the supporters of the empire carry out this bloody act in Baku, dozens of people fell victim to Bolshevik terror in the provinces of Azerbaijan.

It should be noted that many nationally-minded Azerbaijani employees of the KGB of the Azerbaijan SSR were dissatisfied with these criminal actions and openly expressed their protests. For example, on 21 January 1990, the morning after the tragic events, some Azerbaijani employees of the KGB held an open party meeting, discussed the deployment of troops in Baku and their crimes and demanded that the perpetrators be held to account. Despite protests by the KGB leaders of the Azerbaijan SSR, some of them managed to put black flags in various parts of the building of the special services and gave up party membership cards as a sign of protest.

The KGB, which operated for about a year after the 20 January events, made appropriate changes in its structure. However, the KGB did not remain unaffected by the socio-political situation in the USSR and Azerbaijan in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Some aspects of the imperial policy hidden from the people were revealed from time to time. The support and sympathy of the Soviet leadership and its law enforcement and security agencies for the Armenians and their indifferent attitude to the events angered the Azerbaijani people, confidence in them was completely lost, and in November 1991, the KGB ceased to exist in Azerbaijan.