

R. A. MEHDIYEV

**THE REALITY OF THE GENOCIDE
OF AZERBAIJAN PEOPLE**

BAKU – 2000

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SCIENTIFIC TRUTH ABOUT THE JANUARY 20th MASSACRE

Preface to «The reality of the genocide of Azerbaijan people» by R. A. Mehdiyev

Until now there has been a lot of articles, books, and photo materials about the 20 January massacre. I too wrote and made various reports about that horrible crime. Nonetheless, time goes by. 10 years have already passed since that event.

This blatant crime committed in Baku and provinces of Azerbaijan on January 20, 1990 according to instructions of the butcher of Azerbaijan people Michael Gorbachov will be stamped in my memory forever.

On January 20, 1990 the Soviet regime perpetrated premeditated carnage against the Azerbaijan nation. It was unprecedented event: the state used arms against its own citizens - unarmed civilians, including children, women, and old people. The population, who stood up against secession of the part of their motherland - Nagorni Karabakh, was brutally punished. The capital of Azerbaijan and other regions were covered with blood.

A few days before perpetration of this horrible crime a special propaganda machine of the State Security Committee (KGB) was put into action and urgent "special measures" were taken: hospitals were vacated, families of Russian officers living in Azerbaijan were evacuated, Russian population of Azerbaijan left the country, artificial "Russian refugees" problem was created. Authorities through mass media deceived the population that no troops would enter Baku. A few hours before the carnage the power-generating block of the Azerbaijan state television was blown up by the Russian militaries. Communications net inside and outside the republic was shut down. And suddenly on the night of January 20 different kinds of Russian troops entered the capital under the direct command of the Force ministers Yazov, Bakatin and Kryuchkov in accordance with Gorbachov's instruction. The crime committed by communistic dictatorship against Azerbaijan in 1990 was similar to those perpetrated against Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Afghanistan in 1979. However, in Azerbaijan that crime differs from the others. The difference is that professional punitive squads, detached to Azerbaijan, included Armenian soldiers mobilized in Stavropol, Krasnodar, Rostov and other provinces of Russia as well as Armenians served in Soviet military units in Azerbaijan and even Armenian cadets. Thus, Russian empire's "rich" historical experience over creation of national conflicts and carnage were taken into consideration again during the perpetration of the 20 January bloody massacre.

Soviet occupation troops also implemented some tactical "innovations" during the Baku carnage. In all directions of attacks accompanied by armored troops power supply was shut down. Confused population was fired upon under the floodlight of the armored vehicles. Masked detachments turned into brutal militaries and machine-gunned children, women, old people, physicians, ambulances, civilians overlooking from their windows and balconies, and even hospitals. Injured were shot to death to cover up traces of the grave crime.

The massacre was continued till the morning. Only the next day a state of emergency was declared. By the time when the decree was announced through a military radio station, the punitive squads had already completed their bloody "mission" and were hastily withdrawn from Baku and thereafter new regular troops entered the capital. The population was prohibited to go into the streets so as to cover traces of the crime; artificial skirmish was feigned to "prove" armed resistance against Russian troops. Stunned shocked civilians, who went into streets to look for perished, injured and missing relatives were shot down.

Unfortunately, some questions concerned with history and sociopolitical roots of the event haven't been completely revealed up to date.

What is more, the world society wasn't truthfully informed about the 20 January massacre. It was misinformed. The course of the events and their causes were distorted. A well-known Azerbaijan scientist, Ph. doctor R. A. Mehdiyev's book "The reality of the genocide of Azerbaijan people" is of a great signifi-

cance for faithful elucidation of the 20th January massacre. Undoubtedly, his work is invaluable contribution to the historiography of the 20 January tragedy. A distinguishing feature of the book is the fact that for the first time the author describes the event on the basis of deep historical - scientific research as well as in the context of the world history. He investigates historical roots of the tragedy, draws important generalizations, step-by-step investigates the historical path led to the carnage well as post - carnage events and processes.

In my opinion, the most important distinction of the work to be submitted to the large sections of the world public is objectivity. He manages to keep away emotions and describe historical roots of the tragedy with composure and from the position of the conscientious scientist.

R. A. Mehdiyev follows to the motto "Let everywhere in the world people know the truth about the 20 January event as it is" and has been realized that goal with dignity.

We should credit him for bringing up the questions 'Why the Baku carnage was so large - scale and blatant in contrast to those committed in Tbilisi (1989) and Vilnius (1991)? Why did the perpetrator of these crimes M. Gorbachov apologized to Georgian and Lithuanian nations but didn't do that in regard to the Azerbaijan people?' The author connects this with the three main factors: religious (Islamic factor), Caucasian and Turkic.

It should be noted that R. Mehdiyev appealed to numerous sources, important documents and literature. Real historical processes have demonstrated that R. A. Mehdiyev isn't mistaken in his research. History of Tsarism's bloody colonial winnings testifies that expanding from Europe towards the East the Russian colonialists in XVI century occupied the Volga Basin Turkic Khanates - Kazan (1552) and Astrakhan (1556) and enlarged their conquests in two directions - to the East and South. Turkic - Altay nations of the monotheistic Siberia and Far East were subjugated with comparative ease. Thus, shortly, after this, the Russians reached the Pacific Ocean coast. Hundreds of peoples, ethnic groups and cultures were uprooted. Orthodoxianization and russification policy reached a «great success» in the shortest term. However, the Islamic - Turkic Unity put serious obstacles in the way of the Russian conquerors. Russia's policy of gaining outlet to warm seas by occupying the Caucasus and Iran remained unresolved. Thus the bloody war of the Russian Empire against Islamic - Turkic peoples was launched.

The Tsar's colonialists took the most inexorable position toward Azerbaijan. They developed ideas to remove Azerbaijanian Turks from the South Caucasus ethnic - political map and Christianize the whole territory.

At the beginning of XIX century the Russian conquerors started lingering wars with Iran and Turkey and launched carnage of the Azerbaijan people on the one hand, and mass settlement of Armenians from Iran and Ottoman Empire to Azerbaijan, on the other hand. As a result of such policy, the demographic situation of two Azerbaijan provinces, Iravan and Nakhchivan Khanates, changed and the whole territory were Christianized at the expense of settled Armenians.

Soon after division of Azerbaijan between Russia and Iran (in 1813 and 1828) the "Armenian province" was created on the Western Azerbaijan territories. Thus, the ground of the modern Armenian State in the South Caucasus was established. Russia succeeded in separation of Azerbaijan from Turkey and turning Armenians into political tool in her anti - Turkey struggle.

Besides, Russia created hearth of ethnic conflicts and confrontations in the South Caucasus. This was beginning of Russia's policy to liquidate Azerbaijan nation, adjacent to two Islamic states - Iran and Turkey - and to Christianize the whole territory.

The Karabakh Khanate together with the Iravan and Nakhchivan Khanates was undergone the Christianization, i. e. Armenianization policy. The Tsarism carried out the bloodiest and dirtiest variant of the "Divide et impera" policy in the South Caucasus: Armenian bandits, armed and supported by Russia - on the one hand, and Russian conquerors, on the other hand, annihilated Azerbaijanians (including Anadolu Turks) under the pretext of struggle against pan - Islamism and pan - Turkism.

With great success imperial butchers were always making use of Armenians' dream to create "Great Armenia" state. Alliances between Russian pro - empire and chauvinists circles and Armenian nationalists dreaming about "Great Armenia" was always at the heart of perpetrating of genocide against Azerbaijan since Russia stepped into the South Caucasus, including 1905-1907 carnage, 1918 March tragedy, all bloody repression of the Soviet period, 20 January tragedy, Khojali massacre and even still remained unsettled Nagorni Karabakh conflict.

I think, R. A. Mehdiyev succeeded in demonstrating the naked truth of the bloody policy on the both historical and modern background, as well as on the basis of concrete facts and strict scientific conclusions.

Thus, for the first time history of the 20 January carnage, its sociopolitical roots (events and processes caused the 20th January tragedy) have been objectively elucidated from the scientific point of view in R. A. Mehdiyev's book " The reality of the genocide of Azerbaijan people ". There is a number of other aspects of the January 20th crime: Azerbaijan leadership's treacherous position at that time, Kremlin's open support to and protection of Armenian separatists of Nagorni Karabakh, information war against the Azerbaijan people, pro - Russian stand of the Western states and US, stimulation of Armenian Diaspora's and chauvinists' activity and other details were skillfully uncovered in this work.

The most valuable and urgent conclusion of the book is "to objectively and professionally inform the world society about Azerbaijan truth and to create unbiased and faithful public opinion regarding processes taking place in the republic, using wide opportunities of mass media, state bodies and public organizations. It is important in order to prevent a recurrence of the "Black January"!"

Thereby, Ph. Doctor R. A. Mehdiyev's work " The reality of the genocide of Azerbaijan people " might be considered as his well - founded charge against initiators of the bloody crime committed against Azerbaijan people and in author's words «per se against the whole humanity». Charges of the International Court of Justice are awaiting them, like the Nuremberg process.

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INTRODUCTION

No power on earth rouses our indignation at the deepest frame of our moral feelings so as cruelty does. We can forgive any other crime, but cruelty."

Arthur Schopenhauer

On January 20, 1990 a criminal military action was perpetrated against the Azeri people. Soviet military units entered Baku and other regions of the republic to punish peaceful civilians, who took to the street as a token of protest against attempts to violate the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, against unfair and biased policy, pursued by the USSR leadership towards the Azeri people. The Soviets were aided by the traitorous policy of the local leaders. As a result of punitive measures taken with incredible cruelty, 137 people were murdered and 612 injured.

Within the past 10 years, inside and outside of the Republic of Azerbaijan a great deal of books, articles and analytical researches was published, where the authors tried to describe events of January 1990, in order to uncover the real reasons of this barbarian action, clear up the role of persons involved in these bloody events, in the center and in republic. Nevertheless, the more we chronologically move away from January 1990 and more actual materials about these events are being assembled, the more questions appear and it becomes more necessary to return back to them in order to disclose the sources of this carnage and learn lessons for future generations.

THE BLOODY TRAGEDY

The illegal deployment of Soviet troops in the capital and some regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan on January 20, 1990, extirpation of peaceful people became an extremely bloody act, perpetrated by a totalitarian regime, which was an outrage against humanity. Investigation of the similar crimes, revelation of their reasons, outcomes, promulgation of their initiators' names haven't a statute of limitations and all these actions ought to be a caution against the recurrence of vandalism and genocide.

It is well known, that in virtue of the decision of the International Tribunal (Nuremberg, 1945-46) - being famous in the history as Nuremberg trial, supreme statesmen and the military of Germany were accused of the organization and realization of a plot against the world and humanity (extirpation of the civilians and maltreatment, plunder of communal ownership and public domain etc.). That is why Nazi criminals of all ranks are still revealed and prosecuted by state bodies and public movements throughout the world. The Nuremberg process is the first international court, which recognized genocide as a very grave felony. Actions of the leadership of USSR and Azerbaijan and of Soviet military contingent, which invaded Azerbaijan in January 1990, have all signs, deplored by the Nuremberg process. That is why all the culprits of the January 20 tragedy must pay for their deeds.

The aggression of the Soviet military units against Azerbaijan and massive inhuman shooting of civilians became not only a symptom of the collapse of the finally rotten Soviet regime, but also evidence of the implementation of the old purposeful policy (left by tsarism) of expulsion of Azeris from their historical residences.

It was a policy, which was thoroughly concealed by the USSR leadership under the guise of internationalism. The public situation in Azerbaijan, requirements of the people didn't serve as a pretext for such cruelty and vandalism. The people required stopping of slaughter and forcible expulsion of Azeris from Armenia, where they lived from time immemorial and not let subordination of the Nagorni Karabakh to Armenia. Moscow reacted to this faithful requirement with an incredible perfidy and frenzy.

It should be noted that by the beginning of the 1990s the Soviet regime fully dissipated its life potential, though M. Gorbachov and his team were intensively seeking means to extend a regime. The policy of "Perestroika" which too quickly failed, became a blatant display of these endeavors. Those, who hold, that Gorbachov was deliberately destroying the USSR with the support of the West, are mistaken. These talks are nothing but gossip.

So - called reformists had a task to preserve USSR within its previous borders, attaching to the Soviet sociopolitical and economic system more attractive features for the West. They had to vitalize a system, removing its odious principles and administration forms. In other words, vest socialism with a "human face". Coming from this main postulate, one can assert that the January 20th tragedy has many reasons and it has deep sources. Perestroika only accelerated their development and brought nearer the final of inevitable tragedy. Thus, what are these reasons in general outline? First, the center's aspiration to keep the Soviet empire and communist system at any price. Second - the consolidation of power and puppet regimes in the national republics. Third - the biased policy of the Soviet leadership with regard to Azeri people, an effort to rehash the boundaries under the cover of demagogic slogans of "Perestroika" and in particular, to violate the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Fourth, Armenian separatism and aggression based on moral, political, financial and military - economic support of the former center. Fifth, traitorous activity of the Azerbaijan's leadership. Sixth, dilettantism and intrigue of those, who took control of the risen people, displaying irresponsibility.

But one shouldn't limit oneself to the list of the above stated sources (which are basically Soviet) and factors led to the January tragedy. We reiterate that it has much deeper historical roots. Black January - it is just a link (hopefully, the last one!) of the chain of criminal actions, which were perpetrated against Azeri people since beginning of the 19th century. The biased, unjust attitude to Azerbaijan is based on far - going geopolitical plans, implemented by the Soviet leadership for many years under the ideological cover of the establishment of "the international fraternity".

While considering events in Alma - Ata (1986), Tbilisi (1989), Vilnius (1991), the following questions arise: why weren't these actions so bloody and massive? Why did Gorbachov regret and apolo-

gize to the Georgian and Lithuanian peoples for events in Tbilisi and Vilnius, but didn't do so in connection with affairs in Azerbaijan?

In our opinion, there were 3 decisive factors in January tragedy. From a historical and logical point of view they are more substantiated, than references to the desires of the center to teach and punish obstinate Azeries.

THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR

First, it is a religious factor. Though USSR leadership tried to justify themselves, they failed to deceive the world community. It is the confession of Islam by Azeries which is one of the main reasons of M. Gorbachov's support to Armenians in their territorial claims. Numerous publications of the Russian press could confirm our point of view. The notorious Zori Balayan used to talk in his interviews and publications about it. Gorbachov appeared on the eve of Baku carnage with provocative statements about the efforts of establishment of Islamic State in Azerbaijan.

The use of the religious factor for provocative and destructive purposes was always a tool of the Soviet system and communist ideology. While occupying the leading party post for a long time, I became a witness of the intention of the CPSU Central Committee to impose upon us an opinion as if Islamic fundamentalism was exported to Azerbaijan from neighboring Iran and that is why the leadership of the republic was accused of inaction.

High - ranking functionaries from the CPSU Central Committee used to expound the case so, that Iran exerted an active influence upon the sociopolitical life of Azerbaijan, where Islam forced out communist principles from the life and consciousness of the population.

Of course, Moscow couldn't endure the "Moslem danger" (nevertheless, today it steadily tries to become close friends to "fundamentalist Iran"). In spite of the real state of affairs, unfounded political accusations against our republic were expressed in resolutions of the secretariat and Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and all-union conferences. Some leaders of the republic were labeled "nationalists". The Central Committee gave shelter to and took care of obedient people and disgraced the suspects.

Actually, the crux of the problem wasn't the imaginary penetration of Islamic fundamentalism into Azerbaijan. The problem was the struggle of the Christian religion with Islam, what was traditional for Russia, and old mistrust to Moslems and non-Russians. It is not accidental, that in the USSR, as it was under the tsarist regime, great power chauvinism, brought up on the ground of orthodoxy and opposing of different religions, used to be glorified. Authorities were cultivating it instead of fighting it. The whole national policy was based on discrimination of the population, confessed Islam, and was to retard social - economic and cultural development of the republics, populated with ethnic Moslems, and not to allow their representatives to supreme authorities. Even if any Moslem was advanced to the prestige post in the central ministries or departments, it wasn't a rule, it was just exception.

In short, religious belonging of Azeries determined Moscow's position to the national movement in Azerbaijan and caused an unprecedented atrocity of its suppression.

THE CAUCASIAN FACTOR

The second factor is caused by the historical interests of Russia in the region - the Caucasian factor.

Catherine the Great continued to pursue expansionist policy of Peter the First in order to move forward to south and gain an access to southern seas. She advanced a plan to create in the Caucasus two more Christian states (except orthodox Georgia), politically oriented to Russia. This plan implied the re-birth of the Albanian State on the territory from the river Arax till Derbend and creation of the Armenian province in the area Irevan. In this case persistent appeal of the Crimean Armenians with a request to create an Armenian state with the capital in Irevan was taken into account. But, after conclusion of the Turkmanchay peace treaty, Russia gave up these intentions and decided to build only an Armenian state on the Azeri territories, annexed to the empire.

Since the beginning of the XIX century the tragic history of Azeri people started.

Fundamental scientific research proved that the territory of modern Armenia historically belonged to Azerbaijan. The truth is that Armenians lived here in small groups, dispersed, but they were alien people and penetrated into this area from the territory of the modern Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

Let's scrutinize this issue.

The motherland of the initial Armenian tribes was the Balkan Peninsula. The Armenian researchers themselves wrote about it. Thus, Armenian scholar Y. A. Manandyan agrees with the opinion of the authoritative historians and holds that initial Armenian tribes lived in the Balkan Peninsula as far back as at the first half of the second millennium B.C. To Asia Minor they came approximately at the half of the 13th century B. C. After long - term wandering and mixing with different tribes they found themselves on the Armenian plateau at the half of the first millennium B. C.

The great historian I. M. Dyakonov writes in his famous work "The pre - history of Armenian people" (Yerevan, 1968) the following: "we can draw only one conclusion, namely, that initial native speakers of Armenian language came to the Armenian plateau as nomadic tribes with personal holdings, who didn't experience class society. They became familiar with plateau nature and social conditions of the early class society by autochthons (at that time autochthons didn't speak Armenian)".

Armenians created their state in the VI century B.C. This state covered some regions of the Armenian plateau, located mainly in the middle stream of Tigris and Euphrates. In 387 A. D. Armenia was divided between Iran and Byzantium. In the XIV century A.D. Armenians managed to create a dwarf state in the south - east of the Mediterranean Sea - Kilikia, ruled by Rubenides. This state existed just a century.

In the XV century the Armenian Church was moved to Etchmiadzin in order to create an Armenian state in the South Caucasus. Since that time, the history of the Armenian people was called the "Etchmiadzin period". When the question is about the Armenian history of the XVI-XX centuries, it is expounded as a history of so - called "Eastern Armenia", which is the actual history of Nakhchivan, Irevan and Zangezour lands.

Armenians restored their statehood in 1918 on the ruins of the Tsarist Empire. With assistance of England in the South Caucasus, on the territory of Irevan Khanate of Azerbaijan arose the Armenian Republic. Further her territory was extended by the strong - willed decision of the Bolshevik Moscow at the expense of Azerbaijan.

Lacking national statehood, the Armenian Church assumed a role of uniting of all Armenians, dispersed all over the world. In other words, it settled to some extent political and state issues.

Monophysite persuasion (the denial of human hypostasis of God) to which sticks Armenian Gregorian Church, was declared heresy as far back as at the Khalkidon Assembly (451 A.D.). At Dvin Assembly (506 A.D.) the Armenian Church was excommunicated from other churches and became autocephalous.

Famous political scientist Dmitry Furmanov holds that just monophysitism promoted the rise and development of the sense of abandonment, declassé persons, the very "suffering" in virtue of which Armenian people opposes themselves almost to the whole world. Armenian political figure Suren Zolyan wrote: "To see everyone as an enemy -to become an enemy for everyone. This is not a path, this is abyss".

For the Russian Empire such state of Armenians was more than sufficient. It isn't accidental that Peter the First called out Armenians as useful fellow citizens to settlement in Russia and assured them of patronage and protection as co - religionists (see Sergey Glinka. "Description of the re - settlement of Azerbaijani Armenians within Russia", 1831 edition).

Objective and subjective conditions: lacking of their own state, indoctrination of ideas of "abandonment" and "suffering" by church pastors in the consciousness of Armenians, forming images of an enemy out of Turks and generally Moslems etc. - were conducive to coinciding the age - old aspirations of Armenian church to establish a national state with colonial interests of the Russian empire. The crux of the political deal was the following: Russia assists re - settlement of Armenians from Turkey and Iran to the South Caucasus and then creates a state for Armenians at the expense of ousting of local population. Armenians, in turn, pledge themselves to be loyal ally of Russia in Caucasus, her outpost in the region. Armenians were befallen a long - expected chance to realize an age - old dream to create a state under the protection of great power.

The "Great re - settlement" of Armenians by tsarist Russia to Caucasus, particularly to Nakhchivan, Irevan and Karabakh Khanates, where Azeris had been leaving for ages, started after conclusion of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmanchay (1828) peace treaties between Russia and Iran. Though this truth can be a "discovery" for many people in the modern Russia and West, but in pre - Revolutionary Russia much was written about it. These processes are described in details in the famous book by M. Shavrov "The new threat to the Russian matter in Trans - Caucasus. The sale of Mugan to non - Russians".

The Russian ambassador to Persia Alexander Griboyedov was zealous in the re - settlement of Armenians to Azerbaijan. In his reports to the tsarist government he wrote: "Moslems (i.e. Azeris - R.M.) worry that Armenians being re - settled "for a while" will remain in Karabakh forever".

Re - settlement of tens of thousands of Armenian families to Azerbaijan (basically, occupation) by the tsarist government and granting them more wider rights and privileges (on the ground of religious community) comparing with the local populations soon led to ousting of Azeris from many regions of the South Caucasus. Afterwards this process became a gradual deportation.

These processes also affected Azeris, living in Georgia. The policy of cleansing of Georgia from Azeris, pursued by the tsarist government, continued till 1917. There are numerous facts about it. People had to resort to various tricks to protect their families from repression and forcible deportation. They used to change their surnames and ethnic belonging. At present, in Georgia there are many people, whose surnames are of Turkic origin (Tatarashvili, Mamedashvili, Aslanisshvili, Amirejibi etc.). Policy of Azeris' extrusion from Georgia was pursued in 1990s by the former president of Georgia - "democrat" Zviad Gamsakhurdia as well.

In the years of the Soviet authorities deportation of Azeri population from the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic became an official state policy. This policy consisted of two constituent parts: first - eviction of Azeris from historical residencies, second - the annexation of the part of Azerbaijani territory to the Armenian SSR. Till May 1920 the territory of the Northern Azerbaijan made up more than 114 thousand square meters. However, as a result of passing part of its territory to Armenia and Russia, now it amounts to 86 600 square meters, i.e. the territory was cut off up to 28 thousand square meters (area of the Armenian Republic - 29, 8 thousand square meters).

The process of Armenian expansion, accompanied by deportation of Azeri population from its historical lands, lasted for the space of almost two centuries. This process is marked by the policy of genocide on ethnic grounds - massacre, arsons, destruction and devastation of localities, national monuments etc. Only in the XX century more than 2 million Azeris experienced genocide policy, pursued by official circles of Armenia and their patrons.

At the end of the XX century Gorbachov together with his surroundings did everything to satisfy territorial claims of Armenians and continue policy of narrowing the territory, where Azeris lived, in order to further oust them. That is why, when the Supreme Council of Armenian SSR adopted a Constitutional Act on "reunification" of Armenian SSR and Nagorni Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (area) of Azerbaijan, on December 1, 1989 Moscow in no way reacted to it.

THE NATIONAL FACTOR

The heart of the third factor, caused the tragedy, consists in a fear of Turks as policy and mode of thinking of the leaders of the Soviet State. It has deep historical roots and is connected, first of all, with centuries - old confrontation of two empires - Ottoman and Russia. The Soviet regime, in its turn, was always afraid of the ethnic closeness between Azeries and Turks. That is why in the 1920s and 1930s many outstanding figures of Azerbaijan were accused of Pan - Turkism and were subjected to repressions. The Soviets did everything to tear contacts and ties between two peoples. To this effect, at the end of 30s the Latin alphabet was replaced with Cyrillic.

In the Soviet years, a secret ban was placed on Azeries making business trips to Turkey.

The Turkic bugaboo was always a constituent part of the Soviet ideology and geo - policy what was promoted by Armenian lobby and pro - Armenian circles in Moscow. To foment suspicions of the USSR leaders, they spread fabrications that Azeries shouldn't be trusted, in all sincerity they are with Turkey.

In the years of so - called Perestroika the professional instigator Zori Balayan spoke at the Headquarters of the USSR and stated Azerbaijan to be the very bridgehead, from which Turkey was preparing to strike southern borders of the country.

January tragedy of 1990 made clear many ulterior sides of the policy of the USSR leadership with regard to Turkic republics. During the Second World War Stalin deported Turkic Karachais, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Meskhet Turks along with Vainakhs, Kalmyks and Germans from the Volga region. In time of Perestroika slaughter of the Meskhet Turks in the Middle Asia was provoked. Let's remember events in Alma - Ata, when there was an intention to impose upon Kazakhs a Russian leader, so - called "Uzbek affairs", what enabled T. Gdlyan to defame, humiliate and use violence against the whole people. M. Gorbachov differed from his precursors in his open actions against the Turkic republics. That time he threw away all legal acts and constitutional provisions. Replacing authoritative leaders of these republics, he essentially beheaded their peoples.

Thus, historical and sociopolitical reasons and deep roots of the unfair, tendentious attitude of the Bolshevik Russia and the USSR leadership to Azerbaijan lie in the fact that all three factors (Moslem, Caucasian and Turk) converged in this republic and caused the imperial policy of Moscow. This is a ground of policy of genocide, deportation of Azeries, tearing territory away from Azerbaijan and giving it to Armenia.

THE GEOPOLITICAL ASPECT OF JANUARY

Considering the sources of the 20 January events, it is impossible not to take into account the position of the Western states either. Let's mark right away, it wasn't in favor of Azerbaijan. Central press of USSR played a great negative role in forming the false image of events in Azerbaijan in the West. Soviet press, ruled by the CPSU CC conducted open ideological indoctrination of the public consciousness with support of Armenian Church and ideologists of the "Dashnaksutyun" Party. They introduced separatism of Karabakh Armenians as a forced act of protest against humiliation and discrimination by the Azeri government during Soviet period.

Emissaries of the «Armenian - AnshluЯ» ideology upholders conducted wide anti - Azerbaijani campaign in the West as well. The fact that just the day after the Sumgait events (February 1988) the Paris TV showed a film dedicated to massacre (clearly staged and realized by special service bodies!) is a witness to the scale of ideological and information war against Azerbaijan.

Formation of a «negative stereotype of Azerbaijanis» by the Soviet and West mass media pursued an ominous object: to prepare the world public opinion to appropriateness and validity of ethnic cleansing policy against Turkic language population in the Nagorni Karabakh Autonomous region of Azerbaijan and Armenia. This was explained as a forced measure of the center. That's why somewhat the wide-ranging tragedy of the Azeri people was accompanied with listless silence in the USSR.

At that time the leading Western countries didn't even try to ascertain the truth, see into backbone of the problem. Broadly speaking, they didn't even need it. On the contrary, they supported M. Gorbachov in all his destructive actions. It was reckoned that because he was supporting Armenian separatism, even though indirectly, the truth is on the Armenian's part. Moreover, the West knew perfectly well, that such interethnic conflicts were destroying the USSR from within. This matches the interests and strategic goals of USSR's adversaries in the Cold War. At that time they weren't geo - politically interested in a separate Azerbaijan.

According to the ex-adviser to the US President on National Security Affairs, Zbignev Bzhezinski, in early 90s US made an error. They didn't include the Caucasian region, Caucasian republics into their sphere of interests ignoring their main strategic importance. He emphasized: «We should stress, strategic change in the US political course and opinion started in 1994. Till that time the US was establishing its important, central strategic ties with Russia only, new independent states were considered of the lowest level from the strategic point of view. That was wrong policy» (see the «Azerbaijan» paper from February 22, 2000).

US geopolitical doctrine of those tragic days for Azerbaijan was quite different.

Margaret Tatwayler, the representative of the US State Department, made a statement on behalf of the US government, saying the US didn't support Azerbaijan and that's why they didn't find it expedient to comment on January events. The State Department openly backed M. Gorbachov, believing that his efforts would lead to closing down military clashes between Armenians and Azeris.

The British Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a statement declaring the situation in Azerbaijan as «the internal affair of the USSR».

The Italian Foreign minister D. Mikels stated the Baku events as USSR's domestic affair. The USSR government, in his words, had to protect its own national interests and to defend itself against radical - nationalists from the People's Front of Azerbaijan.

So, it is evident, that USSR was able to prepare the West to certain perception of the events and prevent imposing any sanctions or condemnations of different states and international organizations in regard with the unconstitutional actions against Azerbaijan.

Being fully assured of impunity, M. Gorbachov sent troops to Azerbaijan in 1990 punishing harmless civilians.

THE NAGORNI KARABAKH PROBLEM AS THE FORERUNNER OF TRAGEDY OF JANUARY

Since the first day of appearance the "Nagorni Karabakh conflict" artificially created by USSR in 1987 was accepted by the Azeri nation as an attempt against Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, outrage on Azeri citizens' constitutional rights. All measures taken by the USSR government and the Soviet Union Communist Party Central Committee, including the bloody Baku events, testify that there was a specific logic of this lunacy. The Nagorni Karabakh conflict is a well-elaborated operation.

The USSR Council of Ministers and the Soviet Union Communist Party Central Committee's special decision from March 1988 on social growth acceleration of the Nagorni Karabakh Autonomous Region was unique in the history of USSR. It testifies about collusion between the center and Armenian leadership. In fact, this resolution laid social and economic foundations to tear Nagorni Karabakh from the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialistic Republic's jurisdiction.

The center's next step towards the Nagorni Karabakh's withdrawal from Azerbaijan's jurisdiction was the USSR Supreme Council Presidium's decree dated January 12, 1989 on establishment of special form of management in the autonomous region. Nagorni Karabakh's administration was entrusted to the Committee of special government chaired by A. I. Volski, representative of the center. Actually, this meant tearing Nagorni Karabakh from Azerbaijan.

Further, the USSR leadership chose the way of open massacre over the nation dared to appear for the sake of territorial integrity protection and declare disagreement with unfaithful national policy.

Invasion into Baku of large contingent of the Soviet army, special destination units and internal troops of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs was accompanied with particular brutality and unseen atrocity.

The Baku slaughter, perpetrated in order to break the nation's will and its aspiration to establish the truth and to abase its dignity and demonstrate power of the Soviet punitive machine, was a real military aggression.

This is one of the bloodiest acts of terrorism, committed by the totalitarian Communist regime in the XX century, horrible crime against the Azeri nation, against humanity and humanism. The people who committed this crime haven't been punished yet. But some time or other guilty persons will answer before the Azeri nation and the history.

Certainly, both the former leadership of the republic as well as Moscow are responsible for the engagement of troops and murder of peaceful population. According to evidences of investigating bodies, the authorities deliberately acted against the nation's will, blindly fulfilling instructions from the center and not realizing what unpredictable results they would cause.

Every day they were passing to Moscow biased information about current situation in the republic and executing relevant instructions received from the center under strict control of emissaries of the center instead of maintaining interests of the nation and republic.

Under the critical circumstances for the republic its leadership displayed full inability and acted as an obedient puppet in conformity with a screenplay, made by the State Security Committee (SSC) and USSR's Head Intelligence Service. Witnesses testify that activities of those bodies was directed to maximal complication of the situation in the republic, arranging provocations and diversion (for example, 13-15 January pogroms in Baku, seizure of the Party Committees, destruction of the engineering structures on the state borders, dropping out of enterprises and organizations from subordination to state bodies etc). All these had one purpose to destabilize the situation and substantiate implementation of "establishment of constitutional order in Azerbaijan".

Pursuant to order of the chairman of the Republican State Security Committee, Vagif Husseinov, on October 7, 1987, the so - called "Crisis group" was established consisting of 12 officers from different committee subdivisions under the head of Vladimir Mirzoyev, chief of the 5th Department. Officially, the group aimed at arrangement of purposeful work on "revealing, preventing and neutralizing inimical actions of opponents I, preparation of preventing information for different departments and USSR SSC". It is impossible not to perceive the stereotyped character of such a formulation usually used by security ser-

vices as a code. Investigative evidences over the "Crisis group" prove, in fact, its activity sphere was far beyond the limits determined by the order.

Provocation, explosions, arsons, murderous assaults are the imperfect list of actions the group was engaged in.

An analysis of investigation returns shows, that the first secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Central Committee A. Vezirov, implicitly executing all instructions from Moscow, was the first - hand organizer and accomplice of the grave crime perpetrated against his nation. The second secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Central Committee V. Polyanitchko, head of the government A. Mutallibov, chief of the State Security Committee V. Husseinov were direct accessories to the crime.

M. Mamedov, secretary of the Party Baku city Committee, is politically responsible for not taking urgent measures to prevent entrance of troops to Baku and not providing population's security. Other members of the CPA Central Committee Bureau and heads of law - enforcement bodies carry moral and political responsibility for such a situation.

Researching the main reasons of the January events, some authors try to put most of the blames of the January events on those who managed demonstrations of many thousands people or stood in opposition to the A. Vezirov's regime, but not on implicit organizers and performers of that wild action. Of course, we can't entirely deny their culpability.

However, we should take up behavior of the so - called «square leaders» in another flatness, their responsibility has quite a different character and motive.

The opposition was in embryo stage, had no clear organizational structure and programme on the eve of the January events.

Representatives of scientific and educational institutions, ideological institutions and bodies, that is people unsophisticated in policy headed the demonstrations. Some of them took part in all-national acts of protest in all sincerity and others - in accordance with considerations of the moment.

So, what kind of role and place took the opposition in perpetration of the January events?

Since mid-88 the wide masses were realizing that Azeri leadership didn't display resoluteness for suppression of encroachment on the republic's territorial integrity and, in fact, took part in carrying out of collusive treacherous plans against citizens of the country, and, moreover, they would not stop at anything to stifle the popular uprising. Under hopeless situation the people stood up for protection of the republic's honor and dignity themselves, against tearing away its territory, against beating and violent eviction of Azerbaijanians, living in Armenia.

Unfortunately, the national liberation movement couldn't remain too long without common leading kernel. That's why, just at that time before the masses appeared impostors, whose role wasn't indifferent in further events. Documents and materials over the opposition groups' and different person's activities during the pre - January tragedy as well as at the night to the 20th of January testify: on the whole, the opposition carries political and moral responsibility for this bloody tragedy. Nevertheless, we should take into account the fact that those groups included instigators, different carpet - baggers, ambitious persons not realizing sharpness of artificial situation and seriousness of Moscow's intentions, challenged people to go into the streets to put up resistance to Soviet troops. They have blood of innocent people on their conscience. After all, there were examples of ruthless annihilation of peaceful population in other republics, to which Moscow was more loyal than to Azerbaijan.

Abulfaz Aliyev, Isa Gambarov, Etibar Mammadov, Neymat Panakhov, Rahim Gaziyeu and others are responsible politicaly and moraly for 20th January tragedy. Having a desire to be the leaders of the national liberation movement they had to realize the possible tragic results of sending unarmed people against troops as well as the responsibility for the people's destinies and lives. Unfortunately, the course of events showed, they weren't able to forecast further development of the situation.

Evaluating degree of responsibility of pro - opposition groups for the January tragedy, we should take into account their goals and programs, level and character of organizational structure, intellectual potential, overall level of political training of peoples embodied in those groups, their world outlook, activity experience at state establishments and life experience on the whole. Alas! Populism, political immaturity, ambitions, unreasonable self-sufficiency, changed into embarrassment led to the fact that people were once again terribly deceived.

IN THE FACE OF THE HISTORICAL REALITY

So, what is the summary conclusion of ten year's events?

First of all, it should be noted that the history of Azerbaijan in XIX-XX centuries demands a thorough knowledge of the past, a profound recognition of the cause and effect relationship of clashes into the tragedy, knowledge of laws of public evolution, and periodicity of stages of people's struggle for liberty.

Azerbaijan has never seen such a wide - ranging people's movement like one which took place at the end of 80s, on the eve of the January tragedy. This was a really massive national movement. Restoration of violated constitutional rights of the people, maintenance of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan made up ideological basis and slogans of the movement. Soon after the January tragedy, when the people lost their hope for faithful settlement of the Nagorni Karabakh conflict as well as their belief in the Central power in the face of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), when it was assured that the Azerbaijanians' genocide was carried out with Moscow's assistance, namely by M. Gorbachov and his team, this movement transferred into the national liberation one. The people realized their historical destination. It was the decree of the fate for them to settle the national problems by themselves.

January 1990 is a burst abscess, testifying about incurable pain covered all sections of the Soviet society. This was a premonition of collapse of the Soviet political and economic system, full failure of rebuilding (Perestroika) policy directed to resuscitation of the socialism under new conditions.

The January events discovered the whole precipice between people and government of Azerbaijan, unmasked treacherous essence of A. Vezirov's, A. Mutallibov's and V. Husseinov's activities. Appeals of A. Vezirov, A. Mutallibov and chair of the republican SSC V. Husseinov to Moscow, made since the end of 1989 till the January tragedy with request to send troops to Azerbaijan for keeping order and protecting the state institutions are confirmation of the above stated opinion.

We should realize that misfortunes in the history of Azeri people were always caused by the political elite's aspiration to arrange society's life and establish an independent state without having clear fixed conception on national priorities.

Very often all-national notions were substituted for false patriotism, subjective reasons and personal ambitions. Graphic demonstration of that are the bloody 1990 January and other dramatic events of the modern history, namely Gandja rebellion of 1993 that nearly led to civil war in the republic, coupe d'etate attempts in October 1994 and March 1995, prepared acts of terrorism against the head of the state etc.

January 1990 revealed jeopardy of a policy pursued by the radical opposition wing led that time by the People's Front as well as amorphous character of the opposition's democratic wing which should carry constructive principles. At present it becomes quite clear, at that time there wasn't any unbroken political force able to head the national movement in the republic.

There wasn't even any national leader, whose government skills, political perspicacity and wisdom could direct the vigor of national movement into the necessary turn and allow to reach goals without victims and bloodshed. Heydar Aliyev possesses all these virtues in full measures. People always perceive him as a skilled and reliable leader. Unfortunately, he was under the union leadership's control and pursued by secret services in Moscow. All his actions were blocked. In addition, A. Vezirov and his surroundings together with Mafia groups in Azerbaijan went all length, including any kind of provocation and insinuation, to bar Heydar Aliyev's returning to the republic.

In that way, populism and irresponsibility of self - styled leaders, political inexperience of persons, promoted to historical proscenia by circumstances, played an ominous role in the upcoming tragedy. Their inconsequence and flirt with authorities and secret services predetermined tragic fate of the national movement as well as its destiny on the whole.

The most ambitious part of the arising opposition, without calculating the force of their influence, spurned competent representatives of the scientific and creative intelligentsia and political elite from the movement at the key moment. That was the fatal error adversely affecting further political destiny of opposition.

Substitution of democratic values with Bolshevistic slogans and methods of struggle, duplicity and intrigue, intolerance and recurrences of totalitarian mentality, intellectual poverty and lack of modern ideas matching the time are the moral and political environment of arising of the opposition. That is typical for the irreconcilable opposition of today's political life. Impulse of possessing at any price the power over the people, obtained at the beginning of the national movement, still defined activity of the radical opposition. It doesn't want to accept that not all methods of struggle formed in the 1980s and early 1990s were justified by real processes taking place in the country today. Confrontational methods are anachronism and they evidence about lack of political foresight and immaturity, lack of information about real interests of the people under conditions of creating independent, democratic state, when stability has been established, when the law, parliament and press are regulating state's activity.

THE HISTORICAL LESSONS OF JANUARY

The January tragedy went down in our memories as a mournful event, but at the same time as a peak of selflessness and heroism of the Azeri people. Though it suffered irreplaceable losses at the end of the century, the Azeri nation can be proud that in those days of ordeal it showed exclusive will, firmness, courage and staunchness of the national spirit. It proved to the world that it could go all length to ascertain justice and protect its dignity. Our people morally rose higher and added new glorious pages to its heroic history.

The January tragedy became a turning point on the way to obtaining independence of Azerbaijan. Passing it the people realized with the past life, semi - colonial subsistence was done away with forever.

The national - liberation movement turned into a political reality and found an irreversible character.

Deep comprehension and research of different aspects of the January tragedy is of a great significance for development of state-making processes. This tragedy should be known and kept in mind in details in order to be able to get over the thorny path of establishing and developing of the independent and sovereign Azerbaijan. Everybody should realize the truth that state policy must meet the interests of the nation and rest on its support. Only under such conditions we will avoid new victims.

Historical experience of those tragic days shows: stability in the country, consolidation of people, unity of citizens under a common national idea are necessary for prevention of provocations and incitements directed against independence and establishment of a legal democratic state. Political struggle must be conducted in conformity with constitutional requirements within the framework of legal regulations.

The end of 80-s and beginning of 90-s demonstrated that historical forgetfulness is fraught with serious consequences, creates insuperable bars to resolution of a matter of life and death. The lessons of Azerbaijan's history should be taken into account in order not to repeat errors that often causes tragedy. This will more effectively bring up the rising generation in the spirit of patriotism and citizenship, endow them with capability to take into account real demands and reckon with peculiarities of the concrete political moment.

Another important lesson elicited from the January tragedy is the fact that we are assured of the fact that the world society is uninformed about Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, we yet have not been able to create quite a powerful organized Diaspora abroad to form a strong lobby, national communities which can stand up our interests in CIS, Eastern and Western countries. This is All - national task to be settled and is still actual. Using the wide possibilities of mass media, state bodies and public organizations, we have to operatively, and the most important, professionally spread information about Azerbaijan throughout the world telling the truth about our republic, forming objective and unprejudiced public opinion about processes taking place here. This is a great importance so as to avoid a repetition of "Black January".

**Speech of Heydar Aliyev at the meeting in the
Permanent Representation of the Azerbaijan Republic
in Moscow, on January 21,1990 dedicated to the
tragic events of January 20,1990**

Dear Comrades, Ladies and gentlemen, as you know I was the leader of the Party organization of Azerbaijan for many years. I was elected a member of the CPSU Central Committee and acted as the first Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. It is over two years since I retired, I had a serious heart attack that caused my retirement. It is the first time since December, 1982 when I left Azerbaijan that I came to the Permanent Representation of the Azerbaijan Republic in Moscow and the tragedy in Azerbaijan made me come here. I learned about it in the morning and could not remain indifferent to the event happened in Azerbaijan. First of all I come here, to the Representation, that is just a small island of Azerbaijan in Moscow, to express my condolences to the Azerbaijani people in connection with the tragic event entailing horrible consequences, deaths of my compatriots. Secondly, I would like to express my attitude toward this matter. I am requesting the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan in Moscow Zohrab Ibrahimov to pass my words of deep sorrow and my sincere condolences to the people of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately it is all I can do currently.

As to the events happened in Azerbaijan I consider them illegal, hostile to democracy, totally contradicting the principles of humanism and the establishment of the jural society. There are certain reasons why this situation developed in Azerbaijan. I would not like to go into details; it would take too much time. The notorious ethnic conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia has been going on for two years already. This conflict has arisen in connection with the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh and around it. Two years is quite a long time for the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia and for the top party and political leaders of the country to settle this matter, to stop the internal war, ethnic conflicts and to allow all people irrespective of their nationality to live a free life in our common Federation of the Soviet Socialist Republics.

However, in my opinion necessary measures in this respect have not been taken.

If necessary actions had been initiated at the beginning of the troubles in Nagorni Karabakh we would not now observe the escalation of the tension and losses on both sides during the past two years and that military assault undertaken over the night from 19 to 20 January 1990 which brought heavy losses.

It is, first of all, the fault of the former first secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party Abdurahman Vezirov.

Being the leader of the Republic he made practically nothing to stabilize the situation in Azerbaijan. On the contrary, by his attitude and manner of work and political maneuvers, he opposed himself to people and could not inspire trust, creating a gap between himself and people. People were indignant.

Demands were made at the meetings held for the past few months in Baku and other towns and regions of the Republic for the party leaders of Azerbaijan to resign, especially and primarily concerning Vezirov. It seems strange that this problem had not been solved. Only yesterday, after military troops were brought into the city and massacre carried out Vezirov ran away from Azerbaijan. It has been a serious mistake. The fatal mistake was to appoint this man who was inappropriate for the position of the first secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party.

I would like to speak in detail about that tragic event that happened over the night of the 20th of January and is still going on. I think that there were opportunities for the political arrangement of the situation in Azerbaijan. The leaders of Azerbaijan and top political leaders of the country have not used all reserves. The incident on the border could have been prevented. People expressed their demands in connection with frontier line three months ago. But nobody wished to meet them, to explain them the situation, to take precautionary measures.

I would like to say again: there still were possibilities to calm people down then. If 2-3 months ago the problem of the party leader in Azerbaijan were settled, it would not have been necessary to bring military troops into the city. I still think that political regulation was possible but the possibilities were not used and as a result regular troops of the Soviet Army and Ministry of Defense were brought to Baku over

the night of the 20th of January. Tragic consequences of this action are well known. I regard this decision as a political mistake. They were not aware of the actual situation in the Republic, of the peculiarities of the psychology of Azerbaijan people, they were not in contact with different circles of the society and thus could not foresee the consequences.

Such consequences should have been foreseen and preventive measures should have been taken. By the way, there has been information that among victims there were many soldiers. Why should Russian fellows sent by the wrong decision of the top party leaders have suppressed the so - called revolt in Azerbaijan? Should so many troops have been brought to Azerbaijan? I am well informed how many troops had been stationed in Azerbaijan. There have been dislocated quite many troops; the Fourth Army, the Caspian Military Navy, landing forces, air - defense troops, troops of the Ministry of Defense. Was there any real need to bring additional troops there? If necessary, the troops already having been existed there could have been used. The leaders of Azerbaijan who took such a decision, in the first place A.Vezirov, ran away from Azerbaijan. They should bear responsibility. Those who misinformed the country's top political leaders should also bear responsibility. I think that top political leaders of the country did not have access to the objective information in good time. The country leaders were misled and as a result such decision was taken.

Everyone involved in the tragedy should be punished.

DECREE
OF THE PRESIDENT OF AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC

**ABOUT OBSERVING THE FOURTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGEDY
OF JANUARY 20**

At the day of January 20, 1990, which went down in history of our nation as Bloody January, Azerbaijan sacrificed on the way to the liberty and independence. Since that day, which remained in the history as bloody, passed four years.

Unfortunately during these four years there was not done proper political and legal appraisal to the event, which took place on January 20, on the governmental level.

In connection with that the National Office of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan Republic issued Decree. However, there were not shown the true reasons and initiators in the Decree of January 19, 1992.

I consider it as the holy duty of every citizen of Azerbaijan to honor the memory of our sons and daughters, innocent victims. In connection with the fourth anniversary of the tragedy of January 20 I decree:

1. To create the State Commission on the preparing and holding of measures in connection with fourth anniversary of tragedy of January 20. The Commission is to prepare during three days the proposals on the carrying out of measures and submit to the President of Republic of Azerbaijan to consideration.

2. To recommend the Milli Mejlis of Republic of Azerbaijan to give the full political and legal appraisal to events, which took place on January 20. With this aim to consider the issue on the carrying out of special sessions of Milli Mejlis.

3. To the Cabinet of Ministers to solve the questions connecting with this decree.

Heydar Aliyev
The President of Republic of Azerbaijan

Baku city, January 5, 1994

**THE DECISION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF THE AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC**

**"ON TRAGIC EVENTS TAKEN PLACE IN BAKU
ON JANUARY 20, 1990"**

Over the night from 19 to 20-th January, 1990 without preliminary declaration of state of emergency military units of former Soviet Union were entered Baku city and some regions of Azerbaijan, reprisals were inflicted toward the peace population, hundreds people were killed, wounded, missing. The invasion into Baku of a large contingent of Soviet Army units, interior troops and special destination detachments was accompanied by particular cruelty and unprecedented atrocities.

Before declaration of the state of emergency 82 men were cruelly killed and 20 men were fatally wounded by military forces. After the declaration of the state of emergency on January 20 and the following days another 21 men were killed. In the districts, where the state of emergency was not introduced, 8 men were killed in Neftchala on January, 25 and in Lenkoran on January 26.

In total as a result of illegal entering of troops into Baku city and regions of the republic 133 men were killed, 744 men - wounded, 841 men - illegally arrested. The soldiers sacked and burnt 200 houses and apartments, 80 automobiles, including ambulance cars, the state and personal properties was destroyed. Women, children and old men, as well as ambulance and police employees also were among the killed persons. The USSR Constitution, Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR, the sovereign rights of the Azerbaijan Republic were brutally violated.

The purpose of this beforehand elaborated and prepared act of aggression was suppression of struggle of the Azerbaijani people for democracy and national freedom, humiliation and insult of the dignity of the people. Policy of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, biased and prejudiced line of the Center, and personally of Mikhail Gorbachov, directed against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in a period preceded January 20, became the reason of anger of broad masses.

Activity of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and its first secretary Abdurahman Vezirov also raised harsh discontent of the people. In the republic the judgement was generated, that the leadership of Azerbaijan, concerting with the Center on Nagorno - Karabakh problem, realized clandestine treacherous plans against its people.

By their inept and inefficient activities, leaders of Azerbaijan have created insuperable discrepancy between the people and authorities. Just in this period during several months at the mass-meetings in Baku, other cities and regions of the republic the demands on resignation of the Azerbaijani leadership were put forward.

The leadership of the Azerbaijani SSR has not taken advantage of available possibilities for settling by political means the opposition created in the society. The work of ruling circles with opposition was characterized by political games and intrigues, and was ineffective. The Azerbaijani leadership has appeared to be helpless in solution of many important issues, that has led to the deep authority crisis in the republic.

Analysis of the measures implemented by party and state agencies and contradictory processes taken place in Baku on the eve of the 20th of January shows that the January tragedy was the result of prepared military operation. The irrefutable evidence of that are encoded telegrams signed by leaders of the republic Abdurahman Vezirov and Ayaz Mutallibov, which were sending to Moscow from the end of 1989 right up to the January events. These encoded telegrams contained appeals for sending to Baku additional units of interior troops and forces of the Soviet Army. In this connection the various preparatory measures for billeting and security of military subdivisions were taken in Baku, beds in the hospitals were quickly freed several days before the events, the preparation for receptions of great amount of injured men was carried out, members of families of the servicemen of the Soviet Army urgently were evacuated from Baku. Thus, all conditions for realization of military aggression and entering of troops were created.

Entering of troops into Baku pursued the purposes of preservation of communist regime and suppression of national-liberation movement. Suggestions about introduction of the state of emergency put forward on meeting of the bureau of Azerbaijan Communist Party's Central Committee on January 14, 1990, were caused by fear to lose the power. On January 15, 1990 under conditions of lack of quorum, when the chairwoman of Presidium of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan SSR Elmira Gafarova was on her official trip in Moscow, illegal meeting of Presidium of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan SSR was held, and the decision on consent for introduction of the state of emergency in Azerbaijan was accepted under pressure of the first Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Abdurahman Vezirov. It once more confirms that the January tragedy was a beforehand planned criminal act.

The illegal declaration of the state of emergency in Baku, invasion of the armed forces into the city and savage punishment of peaceful population with use of armored vehicles and weapons under conditions of full lack of any resistance of the population were the crime against the Azerbaijani people. These retaliatory measures were consciously planned and brutally realized.

The basic purpose of this action was suppression of the national movement in Azerbaijan, prevention of the collapse of the existing regime and destruction of forces struggling for independence.

This aggression against the Azerbaijani people was implemented stage by stage: the provocations resulted in pogroms were carried out; under the pretext of disarmament of the population, on the eve of the tragedy, arms were seized even from the police employees etc.

The next stage of military operation became an explosion of the power block of the Azerbaijani television and full stopping of broadcasting in the republic on January, 19. Since the day of the tragedy the activity of other mass media was suspended and the people was deprived of their rights to get information.

For realization of this planned criminal action, the Soviet defense minister Dmitrii Yazov, interior minister Vadim Bakatin and other former soviet high rank military officials arrived in Baku.

Acceptance of the Decree of Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council "On introduction of the state of emergency in Baku" in violation of item 14, clause 119 of the USSR Constitution and clause 71 of the Constitution of Azerbaijani SSR, its publication after introduction of the state of emergency and after the blood of hundreds of peaceful inhabitants of Baku city was shed, confirms that this military and political action was barefaced aggression and crime against the Azerbaijani people committed by the leadership of CPSU. Soviet state and personally by Mikhail Gorbachev.

In these tragic days for Azerbaijanis the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party Abdurahman Vezirov, who betrayed his own people on January 19, was at the building of KGB (Committee of State Security) with KGB chairman Vagif Huseynov instead of being on January 19 and 20 on his working place. After that he secretly arrived at the Defense Ministry in Baku and over the night from 19 to 20-th January together with Dmitrii Yazov and Vadim Bakatin supervised the military operation here. And finally, on January, 21 he secretly flew on a military plane to Moscow with the only purpose to secure his own safety.

Former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Abdurahman Vezirov, who tried to keep power by any means, was the direct organizer and participant of this grave crime. The second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Viktor Polyanichko, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijani SSR Ayaz Motalibov, chairman of the Committee of the State Security of the Azerbaijani SSR Vagif Huseynov were also guilty because they held the posts and had the appropriate powers.

During the entering of the military units of the Soviet empire into Baku city the chairwoman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR, Elmira Gafarova, the first secretary of Baku City Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Muslim Mamedov didn't take any concrete measures and didn't secure protection of citizens, and they as the persons held top state posts, couldn't cope with the duties, assigned to them.

This grave crime committed as a result of traitorous policy of the communist leadership of the Azerbaijani SSR, didn't break the will of freedom - loving Azerbaijani people, but caused even more indignation. The hatred of the people against Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the existing regime reached its extreme bounds, the members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union discarded their Party - membership cards in a mass order and left ranks of the party.

The tragedy of January, 20 which brought sorrow and suffering to the Azerbaijani people and evoked response from all over the world, anger and indignation of the progressive forces. The radio stations of many countries broadcasted full information about January tragedy and damned imperial forces.

In contrary to the norms, adopted in the civilized states, the political leadership of Azerbaijan didn't resigned, but they took position of silence in this situation. In those tragic days, when the people sacrificed their martyrs, they didn't express their official attitude to this tragedy. Fearing anger of the people they didn't participate in the ceremony of funeral and didn't express their condolences to the morning people. In these situation the statement of Elmira Gafarova gave hope and faith to the people. However the leadership of Azerbaijan pursuing the political line of the Center didn't support this statement in their further activity.

Most of political and state leaders of the republic didn't participate at extreme session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR held on demand of the people and with the initiative of a deputy group on January 22, 1990. Absence of the leadership of the republic at the session which convened clue to January tragedy, showed their indifference to the destiny of the people and their involvement in perpetration of this crime.

Despite of it the session tried to evaluate the January events and has accepted series of documents. The appeals to the USSR Supreme Council, Supreme Councils of the Soviet Republics, parliaments of all world countries, Organization of United Nations, as well as to all nations and peoples living in the Azerbaijani SSR were adopted. At the same meeting the question on legal evaluation of events was raised and investigation commission is created.

The decisions of the session held in such extreme circumstances were not implemented by political leadership of Azerbaijan. The state of emergency in Baku city was not canceled inspite of the decision of the session. It is obvious from the materials of the Supreme Council that the Center agreed to cancel the state of emergency in Baku in 1,5 months after its introduction. However the leadership of the republic refused to cancel the state of emergency, fearing that it could allegedly lead to the stand off in the society. At the session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijan SSR held on February 9, 1991 chairwoman of the Presidium Elmira Gafarova answered to interpellation of the deputies: «When this decision was discussed at the union session on March 5 we have met Comrade Gorbachev. I have raised this question there. He answered us that beginning from tomorrow he would take off the state of emergency. I said: «Give us time». Later I called up Ayaz Mutallibov when I returned Baku, we discussed this question. I believe that we could not cancel the state of emergency in Baku because civil war could have flared up". The state of emergency was canceled only on August 30, 1991 on the eve of Ayaz Mutallibov's being elected President. Thus, the leadership retaining the power by value of blood understood that they could rule the republic only through the mechanism of the state of emergency and tried to prolong it as long as it is possible.

The third session of the Supreme Council of USSR, held in March, 1990 instead of political evaluation of the January events in Baku accepted a rather peculiar resolution: "On situation in the Azerbaijani SSR and Armenian SSR and measures on normalization of situation in this region ". The Supreme Council of USSR taking into consideration the conclusion of the investigation commission of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR, gave instruction to the USSR Prosecutor Office, KGB and USSR Internal Ministry to investigate the crimes perpetrated on January, 20. On December 20, 1990 USSR Military Prosecutor Office had not considered actions of military servicemen during the January events in Baku as crime and had stopped the investigation. Thus, the Supreme Council of USSR, essentially, refused to give political and legal evaluation of the tragedy of the 20-th January. The political leadership of Azerbaijan didn't express its attitude to this unfair decision and two - faced position of the Center concerning the January tragedy. In fact the Supreme Council of the republic as the supreme body of power, according to the existing practice was the tacit executor of the instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Azerbaijan. Thus, the Supreme Council in its activity after January 22, 1990 could not undertake independently any decisive steps for disclosure of this grave crime.

Over the night from 24 to 25-th of January, 1990 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan held the plenum devoted to the organizational issues. Under the pressure of the participants of the Plenum, the political situation in the republic also was included in the agenda. A commission chaired by Afrand Dashdamirov was created to investigate the circumstances of the introduction of the state of emergency on January 19-20, 1990 in Baku. This commission was charged to study all issues connected with introduction of the state of emergency and to report at the next plenum. In spite of the fact that the question about existing situation was included in the agenda of the Plenum, the supreme body of communists of the republic didn't gave the political evaluation of the tragedy and didn't made any announcement on this issue. Such an attitude of the Central Committee to the tragedy continued also in its further activity. On March 31, 1991 a report about the work of the commission chaired by Afrand Dashdamirov was done at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and the

decision about continuation of work was taken. Afterwards the commission without accepting any decision stopped its activity. As a result, the Central Committee completely evaded from political and legal evaluation of bloody January events.

The preliminary information of the commission of the Central Committee determined that the role of the former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Abdurahman Vezirov in decision on introduction of the state of emergency was not established. The primary party organization of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan on January 22, 1990 excluded Abdurahman Vezirov from CPSU and raised the question demanding him to account for the crimes committed against the Azerbaijani people. However Plenum of the Central Committee showed the unscrupulousness and was indifferent to the decision of the primary party organization, and only rebuked Abdurahman Vezirov and excluded him from the Central Committee. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, its bureau and first secretary of the CC Ayaz Mutallibov, who took over the political leadership in the republic in this severe period, didn't give any political evaluation of the events, so they systematically and sequentially carried out the line of concealment of the essence of the crime and its organizers.

Ayaz Mutallibov, one of the initiators of the tragedy of the 20th January, once again betrayed the people, as a result of which on March 9, 1991 the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR under his pressure took the decision about participation of the Azerbaijani SSR in referendum on conservation of USSR, the Soviet empire that implemented so grave crime against the Azerbaijani people. This political line of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and its first secretary Ayaz Mutallibov had influence on the activity of the investigation commission. On February 11, 1990 commission issued its first statement. This statement did not exceed frameworks of decisions took by the extreme session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR on January 22, 1990. The tragic situation in Azerbaijan in that period required from the investigation commission political evaluation of the tragedy of the 20th January, identification of organizers and accomplices of the crime and submission of these materials to the Supreme Council. All opportunities for that were available.

There was direct evidence of the crime and its consequences: the society was aware that the organizers of the crime are political leaders of the Soviet Union and the Azerbaijan SSR. However the investigation commission delaying the decision and taking it only in two years after the tragedy - just only after liquidation of Communist Party of the Soviet Union and collapse of the Soviet state - submitted its conclusion to the National Council of the Supreme Council. The conclusion of the Commission despite of gravity of the crime, had superficial character and in fact consisted of well - known judgments and conclusions. The evaluation of the tragedy in this document did not meet the degree of its significance. The document considered guilty the leadership and the government of the Soviet state which didn't exist any more, but there was attempt to pass by in silence the responsibility of the Azerbaijani leadership. There is no need to prove that it did not require two years to draw such conclusions. Despite of indicated shortages in the work and in the conclusion of the commission, actual materials and some inferences, contained in the submitted summary, gave the National Council the opportunity to give comprehensive political evaluation of the tragedy of the 20th January. However the National Council instead of evaluating the January events issued the resolution on January 19, 1992, which approved the conclusion of the investigation commission and admitted it as satisfactory.

Thus, the tragedy of the 20th January didn't get political and legal evaluation in the decision of the supreme legislative body of the Azerbaijan Republic. It is necessary to note, that the National Front of Azerbaijan repeatedly demanded the political evaluation of the tragedy during the period of the communist regime in the republic. Being in power for more than a year (former President of the Azerbaijan Republic Abulfaz Elchibey, former Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijan Republic Isa Gambarov) it did not use its opportunities to give political evaluation of the tragedy. Thus except the decision of the extreme session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR of January 22, 1990 the evaluation of the events of the Bloody January has not reflected in any decision, statement and other official documents at the state level. In spite of the fact that the actual materials selected by the investigation commission enabled to investigate this crime the law - enforcement agencies didn't take any concrete practical steps. During 4 years after these events, the grave crime committed against the people by the leadership of the former USSR and Azerbaijan, remained undisclosed.

In the Decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic Heydar Aliyev of January 5, 1994 "On commemoration of the fourth anniversary of the tragedy of the 20th January" it is noted that so far the legal evaluation of the tragic events in Baku on January 20, 1990 has not given, and holding of special meeting of the National Assembly is recommended. Materials available for the Supreme Council, Ad-

ministration of the President, Prosecutor Office of the Azerbaijan Republic, Ministry of National Security, Interior Ministry, Central Archival Office, as well as the conclusion of the investigation commission were used by drafting committee created during consideration of this issue at the National Assembly of the Azerbaijan Republic. The National Assembly of the Azerbaijan Republic, taking into consideration the recommendations of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic about political and legal evaluation of the events of the 20th January and taking into account judgements and arguments expressed during the discussion of the issue, as well as detected facts, decrees

1. To consider the entering of the Soviet Armed Forces on January 20, 1990 into Baku city and some regions of the republic in order to suppress increasing national - liberation movement in Azerbaijan, to humiliate national dignity, to destroy faith and will of the people who stood up for creation of the democratic sovereign state, to demonstrate strength of the Soviet military machine to any people who embarks on this path and as a result to annihilate ruthlessly unarmed people who went into the streets to protect the truth and justice, as armed aggression and crime committed by totalitarian communist regime against the Azerbaijani people.

2. To note that the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Soviet state and government, and personally Mikhail Gorbachyev, encroaching on the sovereignty of Azerbaijan and organizing the tragedy of 20th January for suppression of national movement with the purpose to realize their old imperial claims covered by notorious communist ideology, have committed grave crime against the Azerbaijani people.

3. Responsibility for the military aggression carried out against the people has to be taken by the leadership of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. To note, that Abdurahman Vezirov as the direct organizer and participant of the aggression, Ayaz Mutallibov, Viktor Polyanichko, Vagif Huseynov as the direct accomplices of the crime who gave a permission for entering the soviet troops into Azerbaijan and used them against the people with purpose to suppress the national movement, didn't provide the safety of the citizens for the sake of holding their position and thus are betrayals of the Azerbaijani people.

4. To note that the Chairwoman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan SSR Elmira Gafarova, the first secretary of the Baku City Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Muslim Mamedov, being high - ranking officials, have political responsibility for not taking any concrete measures in connection with entering military units into Baku city and for not providing security of the citizens.

5. To note that the commission created according to the decision of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (the chairman Afrand Dashdamirov), purposely concealed from the people the essence of the crime and real organizers of the January tragedy.

6. To note that the investigation commission of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijan Republic (chairman - Mitat Abbasov, deputy chairman - Tamerlan Karayev) did some work for investigation of the tragedy of the 20th January. However with the purpose to cringe before the leadership of the republic it has delayed consideration of the issue and in the name of political situation it passed over in silence the fault of some persons.

To consider the conclusions of the Commission concerning the evaluation of the January events insufficient.

7. To note that the National Council later known as the National Assembly of the Azerbaijan Republic didn't express its attitude to the tragedy of the 20th of January which took place in the life of the Azerbaijani people, but only accepted the activity of the investigation commission as satisfactory.

8. To consider the activity of the former leaders of the law - enforcement agencies of the republic connected with investigation of this crime within four years after the events of January 20, 1990 as unsatisfactory.

To note that the activity of the law - enforcement agencies directed at defining the degree of fault of persons, who put obstacles in identification of the real organizers of the Bloody January which led to the death and injury of hundreds people in Baku and some regions of Azerbaijan, and at disclosure of the essence of this tragedy within last four years was unsatisfactory.

To charge the General Prosecutor of the Azerbaijan Republic to ensure completion of this issue in the shortest possible time and bring to trial guilty persons according to the law.

9. Taking into account great political importance of the January tragedy in history of the Azerbaijani people, as well as with the purpose to perpetuate memory of persons perished for freedom and independence of Azerbaijan, to create memorial complex in Baku city.

Baku, March 29, 1994

THE DECREE OF THE PRESIDENT
OF THE AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC

**ABOUT THE 10-th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
TRAGEDY OF JANUARY, 20**

On January 20, 1990 the cruel crime was committed against the Azerbaijani people. In Baku and some regions of the Republic the Soviet military units were illegally entered with the purpose of punishment of the peaceful population who went on streets in a sign of protest against attempts of violation of a territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, unfair and prejudiced policy which was carried out under the guidance of the former USSR against the Azerbaijani people, unable activity of local authorities. As a result of retaliatory measures executed with unprecedented cruelty, hundreds of innocent citizens of Azerbaijan were wounded and killed. Thus, against the Azerbaijani people the act of a mass terror was performed.

On the eve of events of January 20, the policy carried out by the leadership of the Communist party of the Soviet Union contradicting with the interests of the people, biased and prejudiced line realized by a center against the sovereignty and a territorial integrity of Azerbaijan caused boundless anger of the population of the Republic. Collusion of that time's leadership of Azerbaijan with a center on Nagorno-Karabakh problem became the reason of the sharp protests in the Republic.

Since 1987 artificially created so - called Nagorno - Karabakh problem from the first days was perceived by the Azerbaijan people as an attempt directed against the territorial integrity of the Republic, violation of the Constitutional rights of the citizens. Though the inviolability of our boundaries repeatedly and officially was confirmed by the State structures at various levels, stage by stage center started to carry out the policy pursuing to secede the Nagorno - Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from Azerbaijan.

In March, 1988 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, by accepting the special decision about acceleration of social-economic development of Nagorno - Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, in fact laid the basis of separation of Nagorno - Karabakh from the subordination of the Azerbaijan SSR. With this decision, without having any objective basis and adopted as a result of the self - thought reasons, Nagorno - Karabakh was submitted exclusive rights and large money allocations. The solution of many issues of the area was entrusted directly to Central ministries and structures. In the decision of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR dated June 17, 1988 it was said, that the measures realized by this decision of the center, "create favorable conditions for acceleration of development of productive forces, satisfying economic and moral needs of both Armenian and Azerbaijan population, as well as other nationalities of autonomous oblast".

The next step of the center aimed at separation of Nagorno - Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from subordination of Azerbaijan was the Decree issued on January 12, 1989 by the Supreme Council of the USSR about introduction in Autonomous area of the special form of control. The leadership of Nagorno - Karabakh was entrusted to the Special Control Committee chaired by the representative of the center A.Volski. It actually meant a separation of Nagorno - Karabakh from a composition of the Azerbaijani SSR.

The leadership of the USSR in official documents tried to create such image, that they had the same attitude both to Azerbaijan, and to Armenia, realizing measures on normalization of situation in the region. At that time the prejudiced attitude of the center to Azerbaijan, to Azerbaijanies was evident. Till 1988 Azerbaijanies were subjected to ideological aggression realized in the purposeful form in central mass media of the USSR and various mass - media of Armenia. The basic purpose of the given campaign was creation of a negative image of Azerbaijan. It was possible to consider it as a preparatory stage of mass operation of ethnic cleansing started in 1988 in the Armenian SSR, and also in Nagorno - Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. During banishing with unprecedented cruelty of Azerbaijanies living in Armenia from the native places many of our compatriots, including old men, children and women were killed. While official State structures, law - enforcement forces and mass media of the USSR paid extremely large attention to Nagorno - Karabakh problem, big tragedy of the Azerbaijani people was accompanied by full silence. The indifferent position of the Azerbaijani leadership to this problem became the real crime against our compatriots.

As a result of such a position of the leadership of Azerbaijan, the Supreme Council of the Armenian SSR was dare to accept on December 1, 1989 the decision to join Nagorno - Karabakh to the Armenian SSR. And on January 15, 1990, several days before events of January 20 the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR "About introduction of the state of emergency in Nagorno - Karabakh Autonomous Area and some other regions" as a matter of fact put an end to the hopes of Azerbaijanis to return back to their homes in Nagorno - Karabakh. As it is obvious from the title of the Decree, the issue of belonging of the autonomous area and "some other regions" already became doubtful.

The realization by the center of a prejudiced policy against Azerbaijan, explicit demonstration by the leadership of the Republic of absolute indifference to destiny of the people created feelings of anger and protest of the broad national masses. All of them clearly realized, that the leadership of Azerbaijan exhibited feebleness and indecision in suppression of encroachments on destiny of the republic and people, and occasionally even implemented secret treacherous plans against the people, striking a bargain with the center to preserve their own offices. In such a situation the people had to take on all responsibility and to express mass protest with the hope to prevent a realization of these treacherous plans.

Leadership of the USSR choose the path of open punishment of the people, who dared to struggle for restoring of the justice in the Republic. Capture of Baku on January 20, 1990 without declaration of the state of emergency by a large contingent of the Soviet army, special assignment units and internal forces was accompanied by special cruelty and unprecedented atrocities.

Tragedy of January 20, made with the purpose to break a faith and will of the people dared to fight for their rights, to humiliate its national dignity and to demonstrate the force of the Soviet military machine, was military aggression and crime of the totalitarian communist regime against the Azerbaijani people.

While the crime and its results were vivid, the leadership of the Republic by all means tried to veil the essence of the tragedy. The fact that the majority of the political and State leaders of the Republic was not on the session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR, convened upon demand of the people and initiative of the Parliament members, on January 22, 1990 in connection with the January tragedy once again confirmed their indifference to destiny of the people and their complicity to some extent in the committing of the crime. The leadership of the Republic even didn't consider it necessary to participate at the funeral ceremony of martyrs.

Popular Front of Azerbaijan which repeatedly demanded to give the political assessment to January 20 events, also did not use its opportunities during the years when it was in power. So, inspite of the fact that a lot of time has passed after the event, the terrible crime committed by the leadership of USSR and Azerbaijan against the people is still not revealed.

Yet in the period of the Soviet rule in Azerbaijan concrete facts and proves, collected by the vast masses of people in connection with the January 20 tragedy and passed to the State Investigation Commission, were intentionally removed and taken from Azerbaijan. At that period law - enforcement forces of Azerbaijan did not take appropriate measures for investigation, on the contrary some secret documents connected with January 20 tragedy as well as important archive documents were partly or absolutely eradicated.

Despite the fact that events taken place in other regions of the USSR including Tbilisi and Baltic countries were discussed on the level of Soviet leadership and Congress of peoples' deputies, the January 20 tragedy intentionally distorted and were destined to oblivion.

Only in 1994 serious steps were made to give the right assessment of January 20 events. The Decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic of January 20, 1994 recommended Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan to give full political and legal assessment to January 20 events.

By devoting to the given problem a special session, Milli Majlis of the Azerbaijan Republic at the meetings continued for several days revealed the true originators and reasons of January events. The decision of Milli Majlis dated March 29, 1994 gave a political and legal assessment to tragic events of January 20, 1990.

The tragedy of January 20, being a crime against the Azerbaijan people, in fact was a terrible act, one of the most bloody acts of a terror realized by totalitarianism in the history of XX century directed against mankind, humanism, humanity. The people who have committed this crime, until now have not bore punishments. Our people are sure, that the guilty persons will bear responsibility before the history, mankind, and also before the Azerbaijan people.

In spite of the fact that the Azerbaijani people on January 20 were subjected to military, political, and moral aggression, nevertheless they demonstrated to the world faith to historical traditions of heroism, determination to endure ordeal in the name of freedom and independence of the native Land, even at

the expense of their lives. The sons and daughters of our Motherland, who became martyrs in the name of freedom and independence of Azerbaijan during bloody January 1990 events, have added a vivid page in the heroic annals of our nation by their self - sacrifice. And today Azerbaijan people is proud of its daughters and sons, who are ready to sacrifice their lives in the name of preservation of its national dignity.

On the eve of the 10-th anniversary of tragedy of January 20, remembering our compatriots, heroically sacrificing their lives in the name of freedom of Azerbaijan, with deep grief I order;

1. Taking into account an exceptional meaning of bloody January tragedy in the history of Azerbaijan as the top of heroism and selflessness to hold in all cities, regions and villages of the Azerbaijan Republic large - scale special ceremonies devoted to the 10-th anniversary of the tragedy.

2. To the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sports, State Committee on Problems of the Women of the Azerbaijan Republic to hold mass events, conferences and lectures devoted to the tragedy of January 20 so that to grow up the young generation in the spirit of ideas of patriotism, independence, devotion to national - moral values.

3. To Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and Ministry of Education to ensure alongside with realization of fundamental scientific researches reflecting various stages of struggle of our people for freedom and independence over the history, objective presentation of the tragedy of January 20 from a scientific point of view, and to carry out special scientific sessions, conferences, and preparation of various articles devoted to this event.

4. To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijan Republic with the purpose to bring to a public of the various countries the authentic essence of the tragedy and in connection with its 10-th anniversary to prepare and to realize the program of measures describing bloody January as the act of aggression and terror, launched by Soviet totalitarian regime against the Azerbaijan people.

5. To the Ministry of Press and Information of the Azerbaijan Republic, State TV Committee, editorials of the newspapers and magazines to ensure issuing and featuring materials in the connection with the 10-th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20.

6. To Industrial Unit "Azerkinovideo" to develop a documentary chronicle devoted to events of January 20.

7. To Cabinet of Ministers to settle the problems resulting from the present Decree.

Heydar Aliyev
the President of the Azerbaijan Republic

Baku, December 16, 1999