

History

Ajara in the Period of August 1924

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This work discusses the issues of the history of the period following the occupation of Georgia by the Russian Red Army in February-March 1921, as well as the rise of the national liberation movement in Ajara in August 1924 is the basis of new archival documents. In February and March of 1921 the occupation of Georgia by the Soviet Russia was followed by the disguised factual annexation of the country. The practical activity of the newly created Soviet bodies did not correspond with the interests of people. Instead of the democratic freedom and state sovereignty the state and party bodies foisted on Georgia the dictatorial governing of the centre, as well as the restriction the rights of national state system and absolute persecution of so-called “class enemies”. All these were followed by the strong wave of national-liberation movement, which was revealed in mass demonstrations of 1921-1924. The peace-loving Georgian people could not bear the communist dictatorship and started the armed rebellion against the governing authorities. © 2025 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Georgia's occupation, political parties, national liberation movement, uprising 1924, parity committee, emergency commission

The free-spirited people of Georgia could not stand the Communist dictatorship and they took up arms against the authorities.

In the future anti-Soviet uprising, political parties and emigrated Georgian government acknowledged an exceptional role of Ajara totally, where they arrived in the spring and summer of 1921 and embedded numerous representatives of Menshevik Party. There were registered 321 Mensheviks in July and their count raised to 380 by July of 1921 [1]. First of all, their activity in Ajara was caused by the possibility of having easier ways of communicating with the Menshevik government from Batumi. Mensheviks have raised their activity

nearly in every institution, facility, and police. They have used the Batumi Railway Depot as a gathering place and as the headquarters of their organization. Powerful formations of the party were present in most of the stations of the Batumi-Kobuleti railway.

They were involved in active propagandistic and practical work with army units and the populace of Ajara in order to prepare the anti-Soviet rebellion. They also have established the information bureau and illegal printing house in Batumi, where anti-Soviet statements and proclamations were printed [2].

Social democratic organizations operating in Turkish cities near the Adjarian borderline were also actively involved in anti-Soviet activities.

Right from the beginning of the practical fight for national independence, Kemalists from all over Ajara and mostly from Batumi actively joined in. Their agents were gathering signatures conducting an obvious and open anti-Soviet agitation.

The Movement of Kemalists in Ajara was led by the group of 17 people with brothers – Hassan and Ibragim Kuchikibraimoglys in command, who had an active connection with Turkish Consul in Batumi [3].

At the same time, in the mosque of Batumi and at the usual gathering places of local Muslim citizens, the Consul of Turkey was eagerly propagandizing anti-Soviet ideas in favor of Turkish interests. Kemalists were benefiting by the fact that defense of the borderline was not properly organized and they were illegally sneaking in a weapon and ammunition [4].

Social Democrats of Georgia have established a firm connection with the branch – “Political Commission” of political Party authorities – “Socialist Bureau of Foreign Countries”, which was founded in Istanbul by the emigrant government of Georgia. Through the support provided by the “Political Commission, Social Democrats were systematically receiving necessary funds, literature, and directives. Exactly by the order of “Political Commission”, in June of 1921, former leader of the Menshevik Army – Chichiko Khetsia arrived from Trabzon to Batumi and started forming the Underground National Guard. In the purpose of strengthening of anti-Soviet activity, General of the Menshevik Government – Aslan Abashidze was assigned in Ajara.

After forming of the “Parity Committee”, local Adjarian Social Democrats intensified their work for the preparation of rebellion. That was mostly resulted by the arrival of numbers of Party officials from Constantinople. With their directives, the “Parity Committee” brought the activists to raise

anti-Soviet activity to the next level. It was assumed to deploy 300 fighters to overthrow the Soviet government of Batumi only and besides that, the preparation and arrangement of an uprising in Ajara were highly supported [5].

As well as in the rest part of Georgia, the entire wrath of the Emergency Commission of Ajara came upon to the ones who organized the uprising. On August 24 of 1924, two days before the beginning of the rebellion, several organizers were imprisoned. Among them were a member of illegal committee and military organization of the Menshevik Party – Mikha Sabashvili, Major general Solomon Karalashvili, a member of the headquarters of the military organization of Batumi – Akaki Ramishvili, chairman of the Military Committee in Ajara – Vaso Chitiashvili, Biktor Tsenteradze, who had recently arrived from abroad with Valiko Jugheli with a special mission and many others. As well as in the center of Georgia, Soviet Government managed to isolate leaders of the rebellion in Ajara too. They also have succeeded to gain detailed information about the preparation of armed riots.

Days before the beginning of the uprising, local institutions of the Special Committee of Georgia were confidentially informed that the armed riot of anti-Soviet parties was planned to take place either on August 28 or on 29. Immediately after receiving such notice, they began applying special measures. On the same day, August 28, the District Committee of Ajara of Georgian Communist Party and Public Commissioner Council of Ajara issued the resolution imposing a military order in Ajara. The Central Emergency Five of Ajara in Batumi and also Emergency Threes in districts were formed. By order of the Commander of the Transcaucasian Military Forces, additional armed forces were thrown in Batumi. In order to effectively and strategically manage those military units, Batumi was declared to be the new place for the dislocation of the Cavalry Rifle Division Headquarters [6].

Leaders of the rebellion had taken the subject of preparation of revolt very carefully. Only the most reliable bodies, who were in charge of the instant mobilization of people, knew the plan of the uprising and the date of its beginning. Such "Conspiracy" of the initiation time pretty much inflicted the overall process of the rebellion, mainly because it has begun one day earlier of its appointed time in Chiatura, which precipitated its defeat and brutal suppression. The failure of uprising in Chiatura had a dramatic impact on the whole progress of uprising in Georgia.

For the purpose of aversion of the forthcoming mutiny in Ajara, Emergency Commission of Ajara arrested a full staff of the Menshevik Party illegal committee of Batumi the day before armed riot was planned.

On August 28, the Emergency Commission of Ajara was noticed that military organization of Social-Federalists, who avoided imprisonment, came into the possession of the detailed plan of the local uprising and they intended to depart from Batumi to Kobuleti through the railway and gather the necessary forces to initiate and carry an armed attack towards Batumi. By the command of the District Committee of Ajara of Georgian Communist Party, 120 Red Army troops and Communards, who were under command of Datiko Kiladze, deputy chief of Emergency Commission of Ajara were sent to Kobuleti. Late at night, before entering the tunnel near the Green Cape station, the squad stopped the train and arrested the military headquarters of Social-Federalists. Among those arrested were Giga Chikovani – Chairman of the Social-Federalist organization and also a "Parity Committees" military trustee in Kobuleti, Commander of Kobuleti Military District – Giorgi Purtseladze and a member of headquarters of the Military Organization of Social-Federalists – Vladimir Akhvlediani.

On the morning of the 29th of August, in Batumi, Order N-1 by the Central Emergency Five of Ajara about imposing a military order in Ajara

was announced. It prohibited citizens in Batumi and in its surroundings of walking out during night time, as well as that, an ordinance forbidding the right of use of telephone and telegraph was also issued. The right to use communications had been given to the members of Central Emergency Five of Ajara only and was banned for all of the others.

Right after the beginning of the uprising, Central Emergency Five of Ajara particularly fortified near borderline districts – Khulo and Keda. Besides, 597 men armed with machine guns and rifles were sent to the borderline districts of River Acharistskali. 10-15 fighters were sent to every border checkpoint for their reinforcement. Central Emergency Five of Ajara also took action for strengthening the defense of the Black Sea coastline. NAVY Fleet Command had allocated two cruisers: "Nezamozhniy" and "Pilv". Georgian Black Sea coastline was divided into four checkpoints: 1) From Turkish borderline to Kobuleti – with its center in Batumi; 2) From Kobuleti to Anaklia – with its center in Poti; 3) From Anaklia to River Kodori – with its center in Ochamchire; 4) From River Kodori to River Bichvinta – with its center in Sokhumi. From the Black Sea coastline in Ajara, three watchtowers were approved – in Gonio; at Estuary of River Chorokhi and the Black Sea and in Batumi.

The Central Emergency Five of Ajara took every measure for prevention the rebellion. Fighters for freedom and independency of their country were named as bandits and rebels. Intending to defend themselves, they mobilized and armed hard-working Ajarian farmers. There were mobilized 2234 farmers in Ajara By August. Among them were 771 farmers from Kobuleti County, 430 from Chorokhi County, 255 from Acharistskali County, 265 from Keda County and 413 from Khulo County. Moreover, Communist, Komsomol and Nonpartisan workers were mobilized. The Central Emergency Five formed squads with one hundred to one thousand fighters in it from Communards.

They armed them and dispatched them to places to exterminate rioters.

During the armed uprising days of August in Georgia, Emergency Commission of Ajara and The Central Emergency Five of Ajara had taken cruel and vicious steps. On 30th of August, 1924, Emergency Commission used the highest measure of punishment towards 21 active leaders and participants of rebellion: all of them were extrajudicially sentenced to death. This August 30th record of meeting of the Central Emergency Five of Ajara stands out by a ruthless cruelty and cynicism. In the part of record of meeting, where about execution of rioters is stated, there is a hand written word *„rastreliiat‘* (execute by shooting) and in the text, printed word *utverzhdad‘* (Confirm) is corrected by handwriting of chairman of The Central Emergency Five – Takhsim Khimshiashvili, with *sanktsionirovanna rastreliiat‘* (Approved execution by shooting). The same kind of cruelty is present in the August 30th record of meeting as well, where another 3 death sentences of uprising participants are “Approved” and authorized without a trial.

On the same day, August 31, Emergency Commission of Ajara considered the attempt of rebellion to be defeated and issued a statement, in which was noticed that the conspiracy “Parity Committee” was terminated by the imprisonment and punishment of all its leaders. As an attachment, it included a list of people, who were sentenced to the highest measure of punishment – shooting by the decision of The Central Emergency Five of Ajara. These names were listed in the attachment: Giorgi Purtseladze; Mikheil Sabashvili; Vladimer Akhvlediani; Giga Chikovani; Anton Imnadze; Diomide Gegiadze; Apolon Pantsulaia; Aghati Gordeladze; Aleksandre Zoidze; Kira Mkurnalidze; Mikheil Takhaishvili; Viktor Khomeriki; Nikoloz Mujiri and others, 23 in total. Every single one of those mentioned in the list was executed because of involvement in armed riots or for the elimination of the Soviet government officials in Ajara.

Ruthless repressions implemented by the Soviet government institutions failed to completely cease the anti-Soviet demonstrations. The situation aggravated further. In mid-September, Emergency Commission of Georgia (located in Tbilisi) advised the Central Emergency Five of Ajara that new revolts were in process of preparation and it could advance enough to lead to severe consequences in Batumi and Poti. To prevent the expected treat, all forces of the Central Emergency Five went on stand-to. Borderline and coastline security were strengthened especially. More than a thousand Communards were mobilized for the purpose of the prevention of expected riots.

Emergency Commission of Ajara managed to uncover the full personnel of subterranean anti-Soviet forces and their plans. In mid-November, Emergency Commission intercepted a proclamation which was printed on the 15th of October by the Georgian Menshevik Party in Tbilisi and sent to Batumi. After that, Emergency Commission of Ajara practically had gathered all of the indications of conspiracy in its hands and typically, without delaying applied its characteristic brutal repressions.

Among many other records regarding this subject, there are kept two remarkably interesting documents in the Central State Archives of Ajara. These are letters written on September 25th, 1924 by Takhsim Khimshiashvili, head of Public Commissioner Council of Ajara (who also was a Chairman of The Central Emergency Five of Ajara at the same time) and addressed to S. Orjonikidze and M. Kakhiani. It reads: “I have to point out the performance of comrade Datiko Kiladze... It’s so great that Comrade Kiladze was assigned here at the proper time. How nicely and how precisely did he seize the whole crew of the “Parity Committee”, military organization and whole their headquarters with whole their plan and commanders. Exactly the actions, taken at that time were effective enough to confuse them and to ruin their plans, their expectations, and their intentions”.

After the attempted defeat of the uprising, on the meeting that took place on December 12th, the Central Emergency Five of Ajara resolved: "Taking into account the total eradication of Menshevik

riots, Emergency Five of Ajara hereafter considers its objective to be completed". With the same resolution, all of the Emergency Threes in all five counties of Ajara were also liquidated.

ისტორია

აჭარა 1924 წლის აგვისტოს დღეებში

ო. გოგოლიშვილი

ბათუმის შოთა რუსთაველის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ისტორიის, არქეოლოგიისა და ეთნოლოგიის დეპარტამენტი, ბათუმი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის რ. მეტრეველის მიერ)

ნაშრომში, ახალ საარქივო დოკუმენტებზე დაყრდნობით, განხილულია რუსეთის წითელი არმიის მიერ 1921 წლის თებერვალ-მარტში საქართველოს ოკუპაცია და, ასევე, ეროვნულ-განმათავისუფლებელი მოძრაობა აჭარაში 1924 წლის აგვისტოში. საბჭოთა რუსეთის მიერ საქართველოს ოკუპაციას 1921 წლის თებერვალ-მარტში შენიღბული ფორმით ქვეყნის ანექსია მოჰყვა. ახლად შექმნილმა საბჭოურმა ორგანოებმა დაიწყეს ბრძოლა ანტისაბჭოური ძალების წინააღმდეგ. დემოკრატიული თავისუფლებისა და სახელმწიფოებრივი სუვერენიტეტის ნაცვლად, პარტიულმა და საბჭოთა ორგანოებმა საქართველოს თავს მოახვიეს ცენტრის დიქტატორული მმართველობა, ეროვნული სახელმწიფოებრიობის უფლების შეზღუდვა და ე.წ. „კლასობრივი მტრების“ განუკითხავი დევნა. ყოველივე ამას მძლავრი ეროვნულ-განმათავისუფლებელი მოძრაობა მოჰყვა, რაც 1921-1924 წლების მასობრივ გამოსვლებში გამოვლინდა. თავისუფლებისმოყვარე ქართველმა ხალხმა ვერ აიტანა კომუნისტური დიქტატურა და ხელისუფლების წინააღმდეგ დაიწყო საპროტესტო გამოსვლები.

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