

INFORMATION ON ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, "DASHNAKTSUTIUN"

The stormy 1905-1906 years in the Caucasus were marked by bloodshed, a result of age-old hatred between Armenians and Tatars.

In this conflict, Dashnaktsutiun demonstrated its power, confronting disorganized Tatar groups with well-trained, well-organized and disciplined troops.

At this stage of Dashnaktsutiun revolutionary movement, a number of people occupying administrative positions, namely General Alikhanov, Baku Governor Prince Nakashidze, Elizavetpol Vice-Governor Andreev, district chiefs: Boguslavsky, Shmerling, Neshansky and Pavlov, police chief Sakharov, police officers Javadov and Shumakhov, colonel of frontier troops Bykov and many others, were assassinated by the party's terrorists. Aside of this, Dashnaktsutiun partially accomplished another task - separation of Armenians and Tatars on the territory of Transcaucasia and liberation of lands inhabited by the latter, to make them available for the Armenian migrants from Turkey and, in part, Persia.

The group of "Young Dashnakzans" seceded and afterwards (in 1908) merged with the social revolutionary party, putting an end to its existence as an independent party.

In 1906, after the end of Armenian-Tatar massacres, dashnakzakan zinvores, who were left unpaid, started to act as plain robbers and extortionists, still under the name of Dashnaktsutiun...

Presently, the activities of Dashnaktsutiun in Russia and the Caucasus retain sole revolutionary character with the final aim to overthrow the existing social order and to establish the new Armenian Democratic Republic, federated with Russia, using all means, including terror, to reach this ultimate goal.

The locations of some Dashnaktsutiun's Central Committees have been determined. Despite that there are no documents regarding location of the others, the towns they operate in are known. In the Caucasus these towns include Baku - "Vosnokapad", Tiflis - "Big City", "Medz Garak", Batum - "Navgankist", Kars - "Dzharapert", Erivan - "Mirkastan", Alexandropol - "Kar" and Shusha - "Aparazh", in a total of seven. In Persia - Teheran and Tebriz. In Armenian Turkey and Asia Minor their list includes Erzerum and Van. All those 13 or 14 (possibly more) central committees operate under supervision, but not administration, of a higher-ranked organization - "Eastern Bureau", located in Tiflis.

Each Central Committee operates in a high extent of autonomy, not exceeding, of course, the limits of guidelines, and is similar to an assembly of our provincial offices with a court in full charge, i.e. including death sentences. It also publishes the party leaflet. The group of Central Committees is managed by an "executive body", exercising the rights similar to the governor's. The body consists of 5-6 members, however, the number of these bodies, established only in the last year, remains unknown. One is, most certainly, located in Tiflis, to govern the Transcaucasioan region. In all probability, there is a Central Committee of Dashnaktsutiun in Baku, in charge of the Central Caucasus, the province of Baku and the eastern part of Elizavetpol, and another in Kars or Erivan to govern a part of already liberated Armenia. (Central Committees: Kars, Erivan, Nakhichevan, Shusha).

Aside of major bodies of the party, there are accessory ones, primarily of special purpose, which, depending on their importance and in accordance to the party's views, operate under administration of one or another major body. The list of accessory bodies includes: "Professional and rural unions", "Red Cross", "Discipular organization", "Inter-party body", "Body of

investigation", "Body of press" "Cultural-enlightenment Society", "Patorik", "Auxiliary members", "Committees of self-defence", "Organization of Deli", "Terrorist operative committee", "Organization of terror" and two "Student Organizations".

The professional unions are maintained by the low-ranked members of the party and are initially recruited into professional khumbs, depending on an occupation; here they receive political and revolutionary training, followed by their enlistment into a relevant union, with the special purpose of economic struggle; however, not on cooperative principles but rather on principles of open struggle and political-revolutionary enlightenment; the cooperation can only be used casually. Each corps follows the regulations, established by "The Bureau" and its tactics are supervised by a Central Committee. In khumbs, the regulations are taught using relevant propaganda materials. The khumbs in the first category include: chemists, clerks, hairdressers, winegrowers, ploughmen, silkworm breeders, loaders, blacksmiths, metalworkers etc. depending on an occupation. The second category includes: Red Cross, Terror, Deli, self-defence and zinvores (soldiers).

The khumb of Red Cross, although operating under supervision of a Sub-Committee, is managed by a Committee or Central Committee. Sub-Committees are only in charge for education and training. The task of the Red Cross is to gather funds, by various means, for prisoners or other victims as well as the exiled, provide the inmates with food, money and revolutionary literature, lodge applications in their cases and assume all measures that might prove useful in release of the inmates, by means of bribery, moral influence on the administration staff or court, as well as escape from prisons, including frontal assault with armed force. The latter actions involve coordination with other bodies. Another body with its own infrastructure and some degree of autonomy is the "Discipular organization". The organization operates under supervision of a Central Committee. Concerning its structure, the organization forms its own khumbs - propagandists, squad members and preparatory members. Representatives of khumbs (khumbanets) comprise the staff of a sub-committee. The assembly of sub-committees elects 4-6- members of a Committee (entikitite); the assembly of delegates, in turn, elects one representative to the "Kontroniko-Committee", a Central Committee and an "Executive Administrative Body"; the latter supervises editorial staff of the magazine. All communications with local bodies are direct. The aim of the "Discipular organization" is to assist, by any means, the achievement of the "Dashnaktsutium" party's aims, and to prepare future intelligent and well-trained administrators for the party.

More intelligent organizations, submitting only to the "executive body", are "International organization" and "Body of investigation". They both have appeared recently. The first, playing an important role in revolutionary affairs is in charge for eliminating every emerged discontent among revolutionists...

...There are own printing offices, editorial offices, book shops, libraries and publishing houses.

Completely aside stand two organizations of Dashnaktsutium: organizations of Russian and European students, both involved in recruitment and propaganda of national-revolutionary views among the Armenian students, and pan-revolutionary and cosmopolitan views among other students. The links with various organizations are secured only by representatives of Districts Assembly and Joint Meeting.

Also independent from the organization are so called "accessory members", the list of which may include anyone who shares the views of Dashnaktsutium, supports the party financially and provides feasible aid in propaganda or some other field. These members can be sometimes

invited to the meetings of organizations, depending on their abilities and may be given various assignments, although occupations may range from workers or robbers to millionaires and people occupying important government positions, as, e.g., prominent French depute and leader, Zhores.

Aside of all mentioned primary and accessory bodies and organizations, which can be considered "civil", there is also another organization, managed by the "Council of Union" only, and influencing the state of public opinion in another field, namely religious, this is the spiritual party "Patorik" by Echmiadzi Synod. After anathema of Russian Tsar House and all Russians in 1903, Patorik influences the congregation via the Catholicos by "kondaks", i.e. church sermons that encourage Armenians not only to ignore regulations of the government but act against them.

The list of military groups includes "Committees of Self-defence", "Organization of terror", "Preparatory terrorist committee", "Executive operating committee" and "Deli".

"Self-defence" is a government police, which has been founded during the latest unrests in the Caucasus. Any volunteer, of the Armenian population, can be recruited into the militia with the condition to bring own weapon. Khumbs of militiaperson are gathered periodically for training under supervision of dashnaks and are trained to become skilled with the use of arms. Militia has its own sub-committees and committees, which stay in connection with a Central committee. The highest authority organization, the "Central committee of self-defence" operates under supervision of the "Executive body". Self-defence comes forward during public unrests and mass conflicts.

Tasks of other armed organizations include open and conspired actions of the party, primarily assassinations. The assembly assigns three persons in charge for all terrorist activities of the party. These three persons are called "Preparatory terrorist committee". They submit to the "Council of Union" only, and directly administrate and maintain executive functions: "operative committees" and "organization of terror"; the latter is unique and its responsibilities include, mainly, assassinations of highest-ranked members of the organization itself, in case the «executive body» or other high authorities accuse them. "Terrorist operative committees" are located at one of the central committees and stay under their direct administration. The highest authority in administration and organization of terror, as mentioned, belongs to the "preparatory committee". An "Operative committee" has its sub-committees and terrorist khumbs, formed of other khumbs. An "Operative committee", in accord to the orders of a Central Committee, executes terrorist sentences only among low-ranked administration staff and local population. Assignments of more serious nature are performed by orders of the "executive body". Responsibilities of "operative committees" include preparation and obtaining both explosive substances and weapons. However, with this purpose, the party established own plants and works. As a supplementary to the terrorist "operative committee", the "central committee" also manages the organization of "Deli", or scouts. Its special assignment is to determine, primarily using help of police staff, the ranks at Security Departments and Police Departments and, to a broader extent, all people, whose activities harm Dashnaktsutiun and maintain surveillance of these persons. There is no more evidence about this organization or its staff.

In pursue of the goal of restoration of the great Armenia, and viewing an armed rebellion as a means to achieve this goal, Dashnaktsutiun did not hold the view that militia alone can be of much assistance to secure independence and, in a marked contrast to all pan-revolutionary programs, including its own, established a regular army. The launch of zinvore's recruitment into the army was set 16 years ago on the first meeting of 1892 year. Recruitments and armament at the party's expenses were conducted continuously, however, the management was in hands of mostly non-experienced people and therefore, as the consequences shown, the army turned out poorly trained and undistinguished, at best, in terms of political loyalty and discipline. During

revolutionary unrests in Russia, Dashnaktsutiun, with no particularly meticulous mobilization of its army, increased the size of its army to 100,000 troops. Since, as specified in the revolutionary program, every soldier (zinvore) had to be given a certain amount of payment, namely 30 rubles a month, during a campaign, the party's expenses, according to intelligence data, comprised roughly 10 million rubles.

The restoration of Armenia did not happen because the attempts were quickly suppressed in Russia; the Russian army, generally, remained loyal to the government and the reaction grew quickly. At the same time, Armenians could not hold their secret hatred towards Muslims in the Caucasus and the region became a center of severe civil confrontations. Seemingly, a great number of Muslims were killed, a part of the territories was cleared of their presence and another part was demarcated. Had the party not spent such huge amounts of money on the maintenance of its army, which nearly exhausted the revolutionary budget, the result of this confrontation could be obscure. Delays in payments for zinvores resulted in the emergence of brigand groups among the latter, which started to rob and kill not only people of other nationalities but also Armenians themselves. As a result of this, the authority of Dashnaktsutiun started to collapse quickly. At the same time, higher ranks of the military realized that in these conditions open rebellion would be crushed and Armenians would find themselves in the gripes between Russia and Turkey. Unwilling to allow that, some military commanders decided to break the regulations of the third meeting on the open offensive on Russia, and once again cover under the mask of loyalty, expressed in gathering the remaining loyal zinvores into the "Green Guard", which was put at the disposal of the Russian government for the elimination of robbers and brigand groups. In order to gain more authority they announced military dictatorship and attempted to seize the power. The organization reacted to this by calling the fourth meeting in the beginning of 1907. The delegates immediately responded with the formation of the "Organization of terror", unleashing terror and sentencing to death both leaders of military dictatorship and those commanders and zinvores who would not comply with the conventions of the meeting. However, in the meantime, they issued an order to locate and eliminate robbers and brigands in the field courtesy to all organizations. The whole 1907 year was marked with a long ubiquitous line of assassinations of Armenians by decrees of the party. The rebellion was suppressed. The elimination of robbers and brigands is ongoing. Along with the announcement of terror, a reformation of the military forces was launched in order to meet new standards. The only zinvores left in the ranks of the army were quite disciplined soldiers, predominantly, those who had served in the army before. Zinvores had to work and, if wealthy, obtain weapons at their own expenses. The armament of zinvores is quite modern; the party has a number of arsenals, the central one being located in Erivani. Zinvores receive salaries only during a campaign or war. Shortly before the meeting, a military school was founded in Bulgaria. The number of its graduates in 1907 was 53 officers. The following disciplines are taught in the school: espionage, military reconnaissance, surgery, strategy of management, tactics, field service, division service, artillery, mining, military history, geography, history of Armenia, revolution, military organization, explosive substances, pedagogy, gunnery, geometry, grease-paint and military discipline.

Officer ranks are also prepared in military schools in America. Military forces operate under the administration of the "High Military Council" of 7 members, predominantly officers, who had already been in battles of the regular army. The General Staff by the "High Council" consists of 3 members. The lower step of management consists of "military councils", operating on the territories governed by Central Committees. The latter consist of the council of company commanders. A company is an autonomous tactical and economic unit. The lowest hierarchy ranks include company commander, the council of platoon commanders, then a platoon commander and

a squad commander; the latter trains 10 zinvores, which, in turn, are recruited volunteers who passed the schools of "khumbs".

Prosperity and normal functioning of the Armenian government are largely dependent on relevant legislations. Legislations or regulations and instructions are elaborated in strict accordance to guidelines issued by congresses and, partially, districts.

Presently, after the recent open assault, the party's course is changed back to conspiracy in internal establishments, but regarding propaganda, especially mediated by the press, its operations are entirely open and large-scale. Alongside, the activities of all Dashnaks and strictness of discipline have been enhanced as well as the repressions towards government officials in Russia and Turkey, which has already been marked by multiple assassinations. Party's press is under strict censorship.

Maintenance of government mechanism and armament, propaganda and, generally, achievement of aims, require funds. Hence, Dashnaksutiun has developed its own financial system. First of all, every person who joined the organization and accessory members pay..., at the least, from their own salaries or income. Next, the party receives income from donations made at lectures, charity performances, lotteries, benefit nights, bazaars etc. and taxation of 2 percents for all Armenian people, for the expenses of its own courts, as compared to the governments' courts, with their circumlocution and bribery, and also for protection from Muslims and all kinds of oppression, exploitation and plain robbery.

The attitude towards population has been changed in accordance to the political situation, in a quasi conciliatory way, and propaganda is conducted in the same spirit, marked by constant hypocrisy. The hypocrisy of the internal operations can be clearly seen in that all propaganda for Armenians bears national slant while for others it is pan-socialistic, i.e. cosmopolitan, and the process is accompanied by the destruction of fundamental governmental and moral principles: faith, Tsar, patria and family.

The same hypocrisy, or simply provocation, is generally characteristic for all actions of Dashnaksutiun.

Thus, for instance, after the a few members of the "organization of terror" were arrested in Tiflis in 1908, a few prominent members of the "executive body" and "eastern body" issued a proclamation calling the Armenian people for revolutionary struggle against the government, pointing out at repressive measures assumed by the government, expressed in mass arrests and exiles of Armenian intelligentsia, thus deceptively presenting these actions of the government as being derived of its intention to return to the former policy of forced russification of Armenians, by means of schools shutdown and restriction of the rights of Catholicos, similar to 1903 year when the leaders of "Dashnaksutiun", providing false popular explanation of the law on assignation of church property to the government, caused outbursts of Armenians' hatred towards everything Russian. In this case, in accord to its constantly provocative politics, Dashnaksutiun intends to make the arrests of its members a whole-national matter, and avoiding the recognition of this incident as an action of the government against the revolutionary party, independent on nationality of its members who struggle to overthrow the existing social order, tries to give these arrests a false and misleading meaning as an infringement of originality of the Armenian nation, its cultural development and faith.

I certify this to be a true copy:

Secretary of the Special Department of Governor
Chancellery of His Imperial Majesty in the Caucasus
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