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### **Sumgait detective**

For Lithuanians, word “Sumgait” sounds different, unusual and even timid. If we ask them what it associates with, we have to agree that have heard the stories about anti Armenian riots in 1988<sup>th</sup> in this city of Azerbaijan. But why Azerbaijanis in Sumgait offend Armenians? – We don’t have any specific explanation. Don’t know. We never thought about that.

Majority of Lithuanians, still thinking that “cruel and cunning Azerbaijanis” always offended “peaceful and cultured Armenians”. Offended because of religion, Nagorno-Karabakh...

Most of us haven’t even thought that such attitude can be tendentious.

Nothing strange. Armenians were “feeding with knowledge” Lithuanians almost 20 years. Evaluation of Azerbaijan’s events for the last several years was specially, purposely passed over in silence.

Lithuania just now heard Azerbaijanian version. It comes through our television, libraries, conference halls, universities, headlines. Knocking politely without any harmful and annoying truth.

Lithuania shouldn't reject Azerbaijanis position. We should seriously examine the tragic Azerbaijanis history not only for deciding witch side we must extol, witch to condemn.

Azerbaijani history is like a valuable lesson for us, how the territory and influence can be lost.

Few of us know that in the beginning of twentieth century, Yerevan was Azerbaijanian city. More or less the half of its population was Azerbaijanians. Now there is no any one who speaks Azerbaijani. For example: in the capital of Azerbaijan – Baku, now there are living around 30 thousands of Armenians. And that is besides all misunderstandings and war.

Is this observation tells us about Armenians tolerance?

### **Valuable example of investigative journalism.**

Today portal Slaptai.lt announces a new publication under the topic of Azerbaijan. By the way, our readers already acquainted with the two books about the complex relationship between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. This is the video of Namik Alijev monograph “International law and Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” and dozen of excerpts from the encyclopedia prepared by the National Academy of Azerbaijan “Armenian terrorist organizations crimes against humanity”.

Today Slaptai.lt spotlight historical work “Sumgait: 1988” by Eiruz Mamadov and Ramazan Mamadov. (Published this year in the capital Baku, publisher “NURLAR”)

Does Lithuanians really need to know what was 30 years ago in this Azerbaijan city?

Frankly, this book is an interesting example of investigative journalism that is suitable for everyone who is interested in history, politics and intrigues of secret services. Especially, authors of historical monograph giving the review of the unrests of that time over the Soviet Union. Sumgait tragedy compares with bloody events in Almaty, Ossa, Tbilisi, Vilnius....

### **So what happened on February 1988<sup>th</sup> in Sumgait city?**

Azerbaijanis do not deny that in 1988 on 27-29<sup>th</sup> of February the blood was shed in Sumgait. Azerbaijanis do not dispute the fact that most of the victims are Armenians.

However, the authors of the book “Sumgait: 1988” E. Mamadov and R. Mamadov provides the facts witch suggests us to think that this riots were specially inspired by . . .

Armenian terrorist organizations looking for the possibility to tear off Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan. Ideologists of “Great Armenia – from sea to sea” desperately needed a pretext to justify the claims “that there is no any possibilities for the peaceful Armenians to live in safety place where such violent Azerbaijanis are.”

First of all, to make it easier and see whole 26 years old detective, let see official Sumgait tragedy statistics: 32 – dead, over 400 injured, devastated about 200 apartments, destroyed 50 cultural objects. 32 people dead 26 of them were Armenians. Most of perpetrators were Azerbaijanis. 97 people who was beating and tormenting Armenians, 92 of them were Azerbaijani.

For one of them the death penalty was appointed. Other two people who were recognized as organizers, also Azerbaijanis, escaped from death penalty. 444 people condemned for hooliganism. For various penalties they’ve got from some to several years in prison.

And now let's review carefully indications of witnesses in E. Mamadov and R. Mamadov's book, which suggests us that the Sumgait riots was specially organized by Armenian terrorists organizations and their actions were in agreement with pro-Armenian CPSU – Central committee leadership.

At least three, very important, circumstances allows us to see Armenian intrigues.

### **Records in savings bank**

On the eve of the tragedy, Armenians of Sumgait massively were taking out their saving from savings bank. They took millions of rubbles. It is huge money for such a small city as Sumgait. In 1988<sup>th</sup> there were living about 260 thousands people. Due to official statistics there were 14208 Armenian origins. So on the eve of bloody riots in Sumgait the majority of Armenians took out all their money from the savings bank.

This data is undeniable. Everything is recorder in accounting documents. So it means that Armenians of Sumgait knew or at least had some feelings about upcoming murders?

Extensive indications of witnesses are presented in the historical treatise of E. Mamadov and R. Mamadov letting us to see that the majority of Armenians were well informed about upcoming disorders. But if they knew about upcoming tragedy why they didn't react? The answer for that question according to E.Mamadov and R. Mamamdiv the investigators of the criminal case Nr. 18/55461-88 did not search for.

Specially didn't look for. It seems that the case was in the hands of Russian and Armenian prosecutors, investigators, judges. First few days this crime was investigated by 231 Soviet special services officers. 47 of them were Azerbaijani.

About one-sixth. But soon, Azerbaijani investigators, experts, prosecutors were “quietly” pushed out from the investigation of that case.

### **For whom money transfers go?**

Obviously that Sumgait Armenians, during a several years, massively were transferring money to someone. This transfer wasn't very big. The range was from 10 to 15 rubles. But mostly it was Armenian. Lots of Armenians from Sumgait.

Now, almost three decades have passed and it is clear that 10-15 rubles transfers were sent exactly for Armenian organizations, demanding to attach Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia at any cost, if necessary even in a military way. Now Azerbaijan know that those several rubles transfers were sent for organizations sowing terrorism, war, fear, Armenian organizations such as – “Krunk”, “Asala”, “Dashnakcutiun”.

By that time, friendly and not sowing bad intentions against the neighbors, Azerbaijani, didn't pay attention to the “little things”, transfers. Will you ask the neighbor, to whom and why you sending 10-15 rubles? If sending, then it means for someone like a child, relatives, loved once?

Azerbaijani people which are not holding anger in their breast (although at that time from Armenia to Sumgait under the pressure returned about 40 thousands of Azerbaijani.) didn't paid attention to the fact that half a year before the tragedy in Sumgait city, more often the Armenians relatives from Armenia were coming to visit their family in Sumgait.

These relatives were strange, often they were young, athletic guys, wearing black leather raincoats, by the way, Armenian terrorism organization members liked to carry them also.

In that time no one didn't considerate that some of Sumgait Armenians in 1985-1988 began to visit their suspicious relatives more often. Now official Baku knows where those travelers were traveling. Not visiting relatives in Stavrapol region or Moscow. They were going in one direction – to Stepanakert where passed many

anti-Azerbaijani meetings with appeal to expel all Azerbaijanians from the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

And there is one more important detail. On February 27-29<sup>th</sup> of 1988, suffered exclusively those Armenians who didn't send any money for the organizations seeking to tear off Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan.

### **Pro-Armenian position of Gorbachev.**

Why then it was hard for Azerbaijan to protect the right for Nagorno-Karabakh and prevent Armenian attacks?

In 1985 Gorbachev came to the power, he was openly supporting pro-Armenian position. People of Armenian origin became his advisers. And position of only one Azerbaijani in Central committee, Heydar Aliyev, was rapidly going down. Eventually, Heydar Aliyev was turned out from the Kremlin. It happened in 1987 approximately one year prior to Sumgait events.

Then the Great Armenia "from sea to sea" supporters gained an even greater impact on Gorba. Gorbachev's economic adviser became Armenian A.Aganbekian. During his visit to Paris, he has publicly stated that Nagorno-Karabakh must be connected to Armenia. It's unlikely that such words could be told without Gorbachev's blessing.

Remarkable Gorbachev visit with his wife Raisa to America in 1987. In California Gorbachev's meets with Armenian Diaspora of America which is supporting good connection with terrorist organizations "Dashnakcutiun", "Krunck" and "Asala". Rich Armenian made lots of gifts for Gorbachev's wife.

Gorbachev promised to the rich Armenian lobbyists not to forget the Nagorno-Karabakh question. Also constantly he was meeting with the Armenian intellectuals in Kremlin. And they always were demanding to resolve Nagorno-Karabakh issue in favor of Armenians.

One of such meetings was exactly before events in Sumgait. On that meeting the Armenian intellectuals Zoriya Balayan and Silvia Kaputikyan demanded urgently “to make historical justice” – to return Armenians their Armenian lands. Gorbachev didn’t think even to talk or to discuss that question with Azerbaijani writers, actors, scientists, historians.

Famous soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov also takes a part in Nagorno-Karabakh discussion. First he takes pro-Armenian position but after he comes out from “filthy game” and remained neutral. However, his wife Elena Boner – Alichanian constantly supported Armenians plan to “take away Nagorno-Karabakh”.

Armenian influent politics in 1945 claimed that Nagorno-Karabakh must belong to Armenia. But Stalin didn’t pay an attention to that.

Famous Azerbaijan writer Omar Faik Nemanzade warned even in 1906 that Armenians will appropriate Yerevan, Karabakh and Kars from Azerbaijan.

F. Nemanzade was right. After the Soviet revolution in 1918 Yerevan land was taken out from Azerbaijan Republic. It was given to Armenian emigrants from Turkish Empire.

After that Armenians started to think about Nagorno-Karabakh. The issue of the Nagorno-Karabakh question started to move in Armenians useful direction only after the Sumgait events.

### **Among performers – people of the Armenian nationality**

There is analyzed another one shocking fact in E. Mamedov and R. Mamedov work “Sumgait: 1988”. I mean the polls of the victims of the event. Tens of victims claimed that never saw before that people in Sumgait city. Sumgait started to build in 1935.

And everyone knew each other. It means that indications of victims give chance to suspect that Sumgait Armenians were pursued not by the Azerbaijanians living in Sumgait? Who sent them? Was it possible to make such a visit without knowledge of KGB, without coordination of Moscow?

By the way, how many of suspected and accused had Armenian blood? Figuratively speaking, among those who were destroying Sumgait Armenians, shouldn't be any Armenians.

If to be based on widely quoted indications of witnesses, this Armenian was especially important rebel. He was similar to the leader. His instructions were mandatory for criminals. By ordering to stop to beat the woman – those stopped. Ordered to look for Armenians in the next entrance – they looked for them in other place.

Strange is that, that Armenian in comparison with thus Azerbaijanis, got very light punishment. By accusing more than one murder he has got only several years' imprisonment and Azerbaijani rioter Ahmed Iman ogli Akhmedov killed only one life and soon after the court was shot.

Among other things of the Sumgait case, initially were 47 suspects, men of Armenian nationality. Surprisingly they were released very quickly. Is that means that investigators didn't had any evidence or they were afraid of possibilities to take out the "Armenians footprint" from this case?

Suspicious in bias of investigators and prosecutors aren't excluded. Let one more time remind already mentioned fact: rebels pursued exclusively Armenians who were living peaceful with Azerbaijanis and didn't pay any money to "Karabakh committee", "Krunk", "Asala", "Dashnakcutiun".

So, perhaps E. Grigorian was arrested by mistake? Some one thought that he was Azerbaijani? If we look deeply, we will recognize the fact that the Soviet army, which entered the Sumgait to prevent riots, wasn't in a hurry to stop them. Official documents state that: if the Soviet army would enter at least one hour earlier, we could avoid this bloody event. However, the authors of the book "Sumgait: 1988" believe that delays were specially. Those Soviet troops were controlled by Armenian officers.

Coincidence? The authors do not believe in coincidence. The initiators of the riots needed more blood, more violence. Organizers believed that if they will spark the lightest spark of hostility, Azerbaijani will massively start to revenge.



That is why several thousands of Azerbaijanis refugees were moved exactly to Sumgait. The initiators of that riot were hoping that Azerbaijanis who had run from Armenia to Sumgait will take their chance to revenge Armenians.

But it was big surprise for the organizers of Sumgait riots. Azerbaijanis of Sumgait didn't start to attack Armenians. They started to help abused Armenians. It was tens of such cases. Armenians by themselves were telling how Azerbaijanis were helping them to survive. There could be much more victim if Azerbaijani of Sumgait wouldn't help the situation.

Most of Azerbaijanis in 1988<sup>th</sup> acted very honestly. They answered by friendliness by hiding Armenians in their homes. By risk of their own life they throw away hooligans and bandits by hiding Armenians. Azerbaijanis of Sumgait were similar to Churama Abasova who stopped group of people who wanted to revenge Armenians of Stepanakert.

### **For what blood of Armenians of Sumgait was necessary?**

Someone really needed the Sumgait's riots. We couldn't find a consensus. Official Armenians version is like this: Azerbaijanis tried to intimidate Armenians that they refused their claims for Nagorno-Karabakh lands.

Azerbaijani version is opposite. Authors of the book consider that the Armenian terrorists had a plan for occupation of more lands by creating a negative image of Azerbaijanis, by saying "With this savages it is impossible to live peacefully". Armenian military needed a pretext for the moral right to begin an open war against Azerbaijan.

However, Sumgait events were very cruel. Instigators of Sumgait tragedy hoped to get more impressive number. This could be the reason why in western press it was written that in Sumgait were killed not 32 but much more people. Western press was full of articles where it was written that cruel Azerbaijani killed at least several hundreds of people and in some sources it was even several thousands Armenians.

In this anti Azerbaijanian campaign was one on that time Latvian newspapers. The whole number of that newspaper was devoted for that event after the journalists visited Sumgait. In newspaper “Jurmala” it was also mentioned some cruel facts in maternity hospital of Sumgait.

Can you imagine that Azerbaijani doctor could revenge to the Armenian women in labor. But this is terrible lie! In that days in Sumgait were 38 newborn of Armenian nationality. No any complications or any fatal cases. However, information about offended Armenians women was widely adopted in the world.

### **Sumgait legend**

So, the name Sumgait for Lithuanian shouldn't be bad associated. Especially Sumgait is famous for the legends. This city located on the coast of Caspian Sea, the summer is hot, the rains rare and there is not enough fresh water. People who located in those places knew: if there will be no water – the death will occur.

The people leaving around the Sumgait in their prayers always asking: “Su, Gayit” – it means – Water, return! This words Azerbaijani were repeating so often that there was no doubt how to name the city witch started to build here.

Sumgait has one more legend witch is similar to this. Once upon time a young man lived in this region. His name was Sumy and he was in love with a beauty Dzheyran. Once, Sumy pushed off a huge rock to give the water from the river to flow down. So he helped to all people. However, he died in that rush river. And his girl were waiting for him and always repeating “Sumy, gayit”. But Sumy didn't return. Then Dzheyran lost any desire to live and felt in rush water of river. And the sound “Sumy, gayit” remained to live forever. . .

## **From edition Slaptai.lt**

There is no doubt, the book Sumgait: 1988 of E. Mamadov and R. Mamadov is noteworthy to be read by Lithuanian reader. But however the book is not translated yet to Lithuanian language and not reachable to the wide range of people who is interesting in politics.

But it isn't excluded, as this book will be translated into Lithuanian over time – as well as “International law and Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” by N. Aliyev. It would be good for Lithuania to know wider about realities of a promptly developing and getting great international influence such a country as Azerbaijan.

**Slaptai.lt pictures: covers of the book “Sumgait: 1988”.**

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