

REVIEW OF
ARMENIAN STUDIES
A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations

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Facts and Comments

Alev KILIÇ

Formation of Armenia on the Political Map of the
Caucasus and Karabakh Issue (1918-1921)

Jamil HASANLI

Contributions of the Turkish Eastern Army Under General
Kazım Karabekir's Command to Turkish National Resistance
and Peace-Making with the Caucasian Republics at
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The 1915 Events in the Light of the Russian
Archives and International Court Decisions

Mehmet PERİNÇEK

Evolving Armenian Image in Russian Literature

Gülsün YILMAZ GÖKKİS

BOOK REVIEW



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Çankaya/ANKARA
Tel: 0 (312) 438 50 23-24
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Dr. Pulat TACAR

Contributors

ALEV KILIÇ graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University in 1968. The next year, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Ministry) of Turkey. Kılıç served as Ambassador to F.R. of Yugoslavia between 1996 and 1998 and Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg between 1998 and 2001. In 2001-2004, he served as the Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry for Economic Affairs. He served as Ambassador to Switzerland (2004-2009) and Ambassador to Mexican United States (2009-2011). He retired from the Ministry in 2011. Ambassador (R) Kılıç has been the Director of Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) since 2013.



PROF. DR. JAMIL HASANLI graduated from the Department of History of Baku State University in 1975. He completed his doctoral studies in 1984. He worked as a visiting professor at Baku State University between 1993-2011, and at the East China Normal University (Shanghai/China) between 2016-2017. He served as the advisor to the President of Azerbaijan in 1993 and as a deputy in the National Assembly of Azerbaijan between 2000-2010. In 2011, Prof. Hasanli conducted research on history and public policy at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Washington DC, USA). Prof. Hasanli is also an Honorary Member of the Turkish Historical Society. He has 30 published books in Azerbaijan, Russia, the US, and Turkey. Some of his published books are as follows: *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet -American Crisis over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946* (2006); *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War, 1945-1953* (2011); *Tarafsızlıktan Soğuk Savaş'a Doğru Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri (1939-1953)* (2011); *Stalin ve Doğu Türkistan'da Müslüman Harekatı (1931-1949)*; and *The Sovietization of Azerbaijan: The South Caucasus in the Triangle of Russia, Turkey, and Iran, 1920-1922* (2017).



ALİ BİLGE CANKOREL entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in 1971. Throughout his career, he worked in many of the departments of the Ministry such as the departments of Cyprus, Maritime Law, Multilateral Economic Relations, Protocol and also served as the Special Counsellor to the Minister. Additionally, he served in other critical positions such as the Director of the European Union Department at The State Planning Organization and Special Representative for the Minister, the Prime Minister, and the President. He served in Turkey's embassies at Ottawa and Beijing and served as the First Secretary, Counsellor, Minister Counsellor at Turkey's Permanent Mission to the UN Office at Geneva. At the later stages of his career at the Ministry, he served as Turkey's ambassador to Afghanistan and Ukraine and also served in capacity of an ambassador at the Baku Representation of OSCE. Upon concluding his career at the Ministry, Cankorel served as a Visiting Lecturer at Ankara University, Middle East Technical University, and Boğaziçi University. He is also the author of the books titled *Bir Dönem Biterken, Bir Diplomatın Seyir Defteri* (2014) and *Afghanistan and Beyond, Diplomacy under Siege* (2017), and numerous articles concerning international relations.



DR. MEHMET PERİNÇEK graduated from the Law Faculty of Istanbul University. Dr. Perinçek has been working as a research and teaching assistant at Istanbul University, the Institute of Atatürk and History of the Turkish Revolution since 2004. Besides his work at Istanbul University, he has worked as a guest research assistant at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO(U)) between 2005-2006, as a guest research assistant at the Institute of Asian and African Countries of Moscow State University between 2010-2011 and as an invited professor between 2017-2019 at the same institution. Dr. Perinçek has been conducting research on Turkish-Soviet relations and the Armenian Question at Russian state archives for 20 years. He has many articles and books on these subjects. In addition to his wide range of publications, he has published books in Russian, English, German, Persian, and Azerbaijani languages and has edited many significant books. Besides his work about Turkish-Soviet relations and the Armenian Question, Perinçek conducts research Turkish foreign policy.



RES. ASST. GÜLSÜN YILMAZ GÖKKİS graduated from the Department of Western Languages and Literature of Ankara University's Faculty of Languages, History and Geography with a major in Russian Language and Literature in 2009. In 2013, she defended her master's degree dissertation titled "Türk, Rus ve Ermeni Edebiyatlarında Ermeni İmgesi" (En. "Armenian Image in Turkish, Russian, and Armenian Literature") in the Armenian Language and Culture Program of Ankara University's Graduate School of Social Sciences. She is currently pursuing her doctoral studies within the same program of the graduate school. Yılmaz Gökkis has been serving as a Research Assistant at the Armenian Language and Culture Program of the Graduate School of Social Sciences since 2013.



DR. PULAT TACAR graduated from Ankara University's Faculty of Political Science in 1954. He served as Turkey's ambassador to Indonesia between 1981-1984, to the European Community between 1984-1987, and to UNESCO between 1989-1995. He is the author of four books: *Kültürel Haklar, Dünyadaki Uygulamalar ve Türkiye İçin Bir Model Önerisi* (1996), *Şiyesetin Finansmanı* (2000), *50. Yılında UNESCO: Mozart gibi Beyhude mi?* (1999), and *Terör ve Demokrasi* (1999) – for which he earned a Yunus Nadi Social Sciences award.



As always, the first article in the 38th issue of our journal is “**Facts and Comments**”. This article covers Turkey-Armenia relations as well as domestic and international developments concerning Armenia between July-December 2018. Deriving strength from street protests and the masses who gathered there, and the resounding electoral victories, Armenia’s new Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan put into action his campaign promise to fight wide spread corruption and to reckon with the legacy of the previous two administrations. In terms of foreign relations, Pashinyan has attempted to establish balance in Armenia’s relations with Russia and Western countries. Meanwhile, relations with Turkey has also been on the agenda, which has raised expectations in some circles that Turkey-Armenia relations could perhaps enter a new phase.

In his article titled “**Formation of Armenia on the Political Map of the Caucasus And Karabakh Issue (1918-1921)**”, Jamil Hasanli seeks to narrate the developments proceeding the 1917 revolutions that shaped the formation of Armenia in the political map of the Caucasus region, especially in terms of its implications for Azerbaijan and its Nagorno-Karabakh region. The interactions between various Soviet and local officials reveal that conflicting agendas were constantly at play concerning the future of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, and the Soviet authorities sought to bolster Armenia and raise barriers between Azerbaijan and Turkey while attempting to avoid antagonizing Azerbaijanis and the other Muslims of the region. At the end, according to Hasanli, all these conflicting agendas during those times set the stage for the future Nagorno-Karabakh tragedy.

In his article titled “**Contributions of the Turkish Eastern Army Under General Kazim Karabekir’s Command to Turkish National Resistance and Peace-Making with the Caucasian Republics at World War-I and the Following Turkish War of Liberation**”, Ali Bilge Cankorel focuses on the military operations and correspondences of Turkish General Kazım Karabekir and the operations of the military units under his command at the Eastern Front during and after the First World War. Cankorel emphasizes that Karabekir and his troops played an indispensable role in retaking lost Turkish territories, establishing Turkish control in the east of Turkey and mitigating the violence that was being perpetrated against the Muslims of the region. Karabekir’s accomplishments in the field and the protection he and his troops provided were among the key elements that helped Mustafa Kemal Atatürk push through with the Turkish National Resistance against foreign occupation and in the shaping of Turkey’s borders with the Caucasus republics.

In his article titled “**The 1915 Events in the Light of the Russian Archives and International Court Decisions**”, Mehmet Perinçek uses archival documents of Russia’s Tsarist period to provide evidence and context to better understand the historical process that led to the Ottoman Empire’s decision to relocate its Armenian subjects during the First World War. Using archival documents, Perinçek highlights the fact that large sections of the Ottoman Armenians led by the Dashnaktsutyun pursuing chauvinist policies collaborated with Russia that was in an all-out war with the Ottoman Empire, that the Dashnaktsutyun had resorted to massive violence against the Muslim population to change the demographic balance in the region according to its own chauvinist interest. Additionally, Perinçek goes over a number of key international and national court decisions to highlight the problematic nature of the genocide discourse concerning the Armenian relocation and resettlement.

In her article titled “**Evolving Armenian Image in Russian Literature**”, Gülsün Yılmaz Gökkiş analyses several important works of Russian literature from the A.S. Pushkin, A.S. Griboyedov, A.P. Chekhov, N.A. Teffi, O.E. Mandelshtam, and A.G. Bitov to demonstrate how the portrayal of Armenians transformed during the years between 1821-1969. Yılmaz Gökkiş demonstrates that prior to the Sovietization of the Caucasus region and its peoples, the Armenians were being portrayed negatively to the point of being denigrated. In the Soviet era, however, a noticeable change occurred. As Yılmaz Gökkiş points out, Armenians began to be portrayed much more positively to the point of being admired.

Lastly, Pulat Tacar, in his book review titled “**Some Notes on Hans-Lukas Kieser’s Biography on Talaat Pasha and Dr. Yücel Güçlü’s Criticisms on the Book**”, shares his comments and thoughts on Hans-Lukas Kieser’s book titled *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* and the review of the book authored by Yücel Güçlü published in the *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. Tacar highlights the problematic nature of academically dubious works concerning the Turkish-Armenian controversy being published by prestigious Western publishing houses. Additionally, using his own as well as Güçlü’s analysis, Tacar demonstrates that Kieser’s biography concerning Talat Pasha reflects Kieser’s personal bias against Talat Pasha and contains substantial errors of Talat Pasha’s character and deeds.

Have a nice reading and best regards,

Editor

EDITORIAL / BAŞYAZI

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FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

Alev KILIÇ*

Abstract: *This article covers the relations of Turkey and Armenia as well as the internal and international developments of Armenia between July and December of 2018.*

During this period, Armenia's new Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has put into action his campaign promises to fight wide spread corruption and to reckon with the previous two administrations. He has been able to sustain his command based on the support of the masses of the street. His party and followers achieved a crushing victory at the municipal elections for the capital city Yerevan. Thus encouraged, with a view to obtaining the legislative backing which he totally lacked, he brought about the dissolution of the parliament for snap elections, resulting again with another crushing victory. On the foreign relations side, Pashinyan continued with his efforts to establish some balance in Armenia's foreign policy between Russia and the West. While being meticulous not to antagonize Russia, he has managed to realize high level contacts with the West. Relations with Turkey has also been a topic of prominence, conjuring expectations that a new atmosphere could be in the offing.

Keywords: *Nikol Pashinyan, Armen Sargsyan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Yerevan, Armenia, Snap Parliamentary Elections in Armenia, Vladimir Putin, Russia, CSTO*

* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5180-2896>
Ambassador (R), Director of the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), akilic@avim.org.tr

Öz: Bu incelemede, Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkilerinde ve Ermenistan'ın iç ve dış dinamiklerinde 2018 yılının Temmuz'dan Aralık ayına kadar süredeki gelişmeler ele alınmaktadır.

Dönem içinde, sokaktan aldığı desteği ve güçlü konumunu sürdüren Ermenistan'ın yeni Başbakanı Nikol Paşinyan, seçim kampanyasında verdiği, yaygın yolsuzlukla mücadele ve önceki iki yönetimden hesap sorma sözünü uygulamaya koymuştur. Partisi ve yandaşları, Erivan Belediye seçimlerinde ezici bir üstünlük elde etmiş, bunun verdiği moralle, parlamentonun feshini sağlayarak, yasama gücüne de kavuşmayı hedefleyen erken genel seçimi ilan etmiştir. Bu seçimlerde de mutlak bir üstünlük elde edilmiştir. Paşinyan, dış ilişkilerde Rusya ile Batı arasında bir denge politikası gayretlerini sürdürmüş, bir yandan Rusya'yı karşısına almamaya özen gösterirken, diğer yandan Batılı ülkeler ile üst düzey yoğun temas trafiği gerçekleştirebilmiştir. Türkiye ile ilişkiler de ön sıralarda gündeme gelmiş ve yeni bir havanın oluşabileceği yorumlarına kapı açılmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Nikol Paşinyan, Armen Sarkisyan, Dağlık Karabağ, Erivan, Ermenistan, Ermenistan Erken Parlamento Seçimi, Vladimir Putin, Rusya, KGAÖ

1. Domestic Developments in Armenia

Having announced his Cabinet, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan started to put into action his campaign promises to fight the wide spread and prevalent corruption, holding the two previous administrations as the main culprits. His immediate target was his predecessor Sargsyan and his close circle. On 2 July 2018, the brother of Sargsyan together with his son and daughter were detained with charges of corruption.¹ On 4 July, his other brother and his son were detained on charges of assault causing bodily harm in a 2007 incident.

More was to follow. Official investigation started against the former President Robert Kocharian, former Minister of Defense Mikael Harutunyan and the Secretary-General of the Russian-initiated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) General Yuri Khachaturov, on charges of overturning Armenia's constitutional order in connection with the death of ten protesters and wounding of many others in 2008 where military force was used to suppress the demonstrations, which Pashinyan was also participating.

Kocharian was arrested on 27 July.² Harutunyan could not be apprehended as he was in Russia. As regards to General Khachaturov, he was detained, and a notification was forwarded to CSTO member countries that he was recalled from his post as Secretary General and a new candidate would be announced for the post.³

There was immediate reaction from Russia to these developments. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative expressed in a press interview astonishment for the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' "unprofessionalism" in the procedure for recalling the CSTO Secretary General. The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov personally took initiative by calling his Armenian counterpart and expressing his "concern". He said that the recent events contradict the declarations of the new Armenian leadership that it was not planning to persecute its predecessors on political grounds. He also said that, Moscow, as an ally of Yerevan, has always had an interest in the stability of the Armenian state and therefore what is happening there must be of concern to Russia. He further expressed his hope for a "constructive" response. In a clear reference to General Khachaturov's prosecution, Lavrov also cautioned that Armenia was putting "the normal work" of CSTO at risk." Lavrov's comments were the first Russian rebuke of Pashinyan voiced in the press since he came to power.⁴

1 "Sarkisian's Brother Questioned Over Son's Alleged Crime, Released," *Azatutyun*, July 5, 2018, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/29345186.html>

2 "Ex-Armenian President Robert Kocharian arrested," *Deutsche Welle*, July 28, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/ex-armenian-president-robert-kocharian-arrested/a-44860220>

3 "Ex-Armenian President Robert Kocharian arrested."

4 "Lavrov about Kocharyan detention: Russia concerned over things in Armenia," *Arka News Agency*, August 1, 2018, http://arka.am/en/news/politics/lavrov_about_kocharyan_detention_russia_concerned_over_things_in_armenia/

Reacting to the Russian statements, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, in written comments, said the criminal proceedings are part of the new government's efforts to establish the rule of law and combat corruption, that these processes are not connected with Armenia's foreign policy and should not be misinterpreted. He also reaffirmed the foreign policy priorities of Armenia which are aimed at further strengthening Russian-Armenian allied relations and increasing the effectiveness of cooperation within the CSTO and Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) frameworks. Pashinyan downplayed the Russian criticism on August 10. He said Moscow should adapt to the new political realities of Armenia. He also said that there were no unresolvable issues in the relations, that he is confident that those issues will be resolved in the interest of allied relations.

It did not take long for Russia's intervention to show its effects. General Khachaturov was released on bail on 27 July whereupon he left the country for Moscow.⁵ On August 13, Kocharyan was released from detention by the decision of Court of Appeal, following the political appeal by 38 deputies of the National Assembly who signed a guarantee on behalf of Kocharyan to change the measure of restraint. As for Harutunyan, who was in Russia, Russia cancelled Armenia's red notice for fugitive ex- minister of defense on its territory and refused to extradite him.⁶

The apparent frictions and tension were no doubt an indication and precaution for Pashinyan to build a stable and solid basis for his government. As a counter move, he called on his constituency for a popular meeting on 17 August in Yerevan on the occasion of the one hundredth day of his government coming to power through the "velvet revolution", which would enable him to judge to what extent he maintained the popular support.⁷ The demonstration organized on 17 August was an ardent event that reflected the people's continuing support for him and strengthened his confidence. In his speech, Pashinyan highlighted that he will continue his fight against corruption with determination, expressed without giving names that he will pursue the lawsuits against former president Robert Kocharyan, refuted the rumors of Kocharyan's arrest, and the tension in the relations with Russia, which is known to be against the requests for the arrest of the period's Yerevan garrison commander and later Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary General Khachaturov and Minister of Defense Harutyunyan.⁸

5 "Yuri Khachaturov 'released on bail'," *Tert*, July 28, 2018, <https://www.tert.am/en/news/2018/07/28/yuri-khachaturov/2753466>

6 "Russia cancels Armenia's red notice for fugitive ex-defense minister on its territory," *ArmenPress*, September 7, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/946361.html>

7 "Pashinian Supporters Rally In Yerevan On 100th Day In Office," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, August 17, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/pashinian-supporters-rally-in-yerevan-on-100th-day-in-office/29439667.html>

8 "PM Nikol Pashinyan's Speech Dedicated to 100 Days in Office," *ArmenPress*, August 17, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/944242.html>

In his interview published in a Russian television station on 31 August (which took place on his birthday that President of Russia Vladimir Putin had celebrated on the phone), Kocharyan blamed the new government in Armenia of “being incompetent” and using “uncurbed populism”, expressed his view of establishing political opposition by forming a new party or coalition.⁹ Kocharyan’s statements criticizing the government and blaming it for its opposition to Russia continued throughout the month. On 11 September, a secret telephone conversation that was leaked to social media that took place between intelligence agencies, which reflected the pressure placed on the Armenian judiciary regarding the arrests, strengthened Kocharyan’s hand.¹⁰

Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov, who publicly criticized the developments in Armenia in the previous period, stated in his speech published in the Russian media on 3 September that the situation in Armenia was not tranquil and that tensions were mounting in Armenia. In response to these statements, Pashinyan explained on the same day that there is no issue in the relations with Russia, that the relations are continuing on their natural course, that in fact, discussions were being made for him to visit Russia again to meet with Putin.

President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian, on the occasion of the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh administration’s 27th Anniversary celebrations, visited this occupied region on 2 September. On 17 September, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan visited the region as well.

On 21 September, the hundredth year of Armenia’s first independence was commemorated with ceremonies. The first three presidents who were invited did not attend the ceremonies.

The capital Yerevan’s 23 September mayor and city council elections was the most important internal development of the month in respect of it displaying to what extent Pashinyan’s support in the street would echo to the ballot box to determine Pashinyan’s future strategy according to the results. The participation level of the election was % 43,7 (in the previous election, this level was % 41). The “My Step” bloc formed by Pashinyan received 80% of the votes and obtained 57 out of the 65 seats in the city council.¹¹ The rest of the council members were divided by the two parties allied with Pashinyan. This result meant an absolute advantage, a victory for Pashinyan, virtually giving him a blank check for his actions in the future.

9 Ani Mejlumyan, “From Arrest to the Campaign Trail: Kocharyan Says He Will Participate in next Elections,” *Eurasianet*, August 31, 2018, <https://eurasianet.org/from-arrest-to-the-campaign-trail-kocharyan-says-he-will-participate-in-next-elections>

10 Ani Mejlumyan, “Leaked Phone Calls Scandal Poses New Challenge for Pashinyan,” *Eurasianet*, September 11, 2018, <https://eurasianet.org/leaked-phone-calls-scandal-poses-new-challenge-for-pashinyan>

11 “Yerevan City Council Declared as Elected: My Step Bloc Gets 57 Seats,” *ArmenPress*, September 30, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/949135.html>

In this wave of victory, without wasting time, Pashinyan declared the necessity for early parliamentary elections as soon as possible. For the rest of the period, the early election period became the current issue of the country.¹²

Pashinyan called for the early general elections to be held in 2018, as early as possible, using all means. According to the Armenian constitution, for an early election in the case of the prime minister's resignation, if a new prime minister is not elected in two weeks, the parliament is dissolved, and early elections are initiated. However, Pashinyan hesitated in giving his immediate resignation. The parliament majority was still in the hands of the former administration's party. An even more disconcerting development was that two coalition party partners looked unfavorably at such an early election and opted for Spring 2019.

Following this development, Pashinyan blamed the governing coalition partner the Dashnaksutyun (the Dashnak Party / the Armenian Revolutionary Federation - ARF) and the Prosperous Armenia party of forming a front against him to prevent the early elections. Thereby on 3 October, he dismissed six ministers of these parties from government.¹³ On the same day, he assigned three new ministers. The new names of the cabinet were as follows:

- Felix Tsolakian, Minister of Emergency Situations
- Hakop Arshakian, Minister of Transportation, Communication and Information
- Garegin Baghramian, Minister of Energy

In its statement, the Dashnak Party explained that they were not against the early election but only disapproved of moving ahead hastily and criticized Pashinyan for aiming to hold all the power and gravitating towards a one-man regime.

Pashinyan ultimately resigned on 16 October. As a result of the absence of any other candidates besides Pashinyan in the second election on 1 November and no votes being cast in favor of Pashinyan in accordance with a scenario which is understood to have been previously agreed upon; a new prime minister was not elected and the parliament was constitutionally dissolved. The Central Election Commission suggested 9 December as the election date and with the confirmation by the President, 9 December was decided as the date for the early elections.¹⁴

12 "Republican Party Hasn't Agreed: Nikol Pashinyan," *Lragir*, October 1, 2018, <https://www.lragir.am/en/2018/10/01/69511>

13 "Pashinyan Announces about Dismissing Ministers and Governors Representing ARF and Prosperous Armenia Party," *ArmenPress*, October 2, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/949465.html>

14 "Armenia PM Nikol Pashinyan Resigns in Order to Hold Early Vote," *Al Jazeera*, October 16, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/armenia-pm-nikol-pashinyan-resigns-order-hold-early-vote-181016161017415.html>

Therefore, the early elections became the determining agenda for the rest of the period under examination.

A striking news report of the UN published during the period regarding Armenia's population is that, as of 1 October, Armenia's population is 2,969,200. According to the statistics of the previous year, the population decreased by 10,400. Therefore, the population of Armenia has dropped below its red line of 3 million.¹⁵ The main reason of this situation is the declining birth rate and increasing emigration.

Pashinyan held a long march, 9 hours and 25 minutes, in Yerevan before the official start of campaigning for the 9 December parliamentary elections, dubbed as “atonement rally”, where he acknowledged possible mistakes made by his government without specifying those mistakes. He then took vacation as Prime Minister to campaign for his bloc, My Step (*Im Kayl*).¹⁶

On 21 November, the outgoing National Assembly approved the state budget for 2019. The projected total is 3,4 billion US dollars. Military spending is projected to increase by 25%, soaring to 633 million US dollars.¹⁷

On 30 November, OSCE/ODIHR, monitoring the upcoming elections, voiced concern about “intolerant, inflammatory rhetoric” ahead of the elections.¹⁸

The parliamentary elections were duly held on 9 December. The Central Electoral Commission certified the vote results on 18 December. Accordingly, the turnout was merely 48,63%. Only three parties, passing the threshold of 5%, qualified for the National Assembly. Pashinyan's My Step alliance won a landslide victory with 70.43% with 884,456 votes. The Prosperous Armenian Party, whose chairman has repeatedly expressed support to Pashinyan and his velvet revolution has come a distant second with 8.27% (103,824) votes. The third was the Luminous Armenia Party getting 6,37% (80,024) votes. The previous ruling party commanding a majority, the Republican Party, garnering only 4.70% with 59,059 votes, could not make it to the National Assembly. Such was the fate also of the Dashnak Party (ARF-Armenian Revolutionary Federation), garnering 3,89% with 48,811 votes.¹⁹

15 “Armenian Population down by 10,000 in First Half-year, UN Report Shows,” *Panorama*, October 17, 2018, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2018/10/17/Armenian-population-UN/2019516>

16 “Armenian PM Holds ‘Atonement’ Rally,” *Azatutyun*, November 25, 2018, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/29619735.html>

17 “Armenian parliament approves 2019 state budget,” *JamNews*, November 24, 2018, <https://jam-news.net/armenian-parliament-approves-2019-state-budget/>

18 “OSCE/ODIHR - ‘inflammatory rhetoric’ ahead of Armenia elections,” *PanArmenian*, November 30, 2018, <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/262921/>

19 “Pashinian Alliance Scores ‘Revolutionary Majority’ In Landslide Armenian Win,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, December 10, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/armenian-elections-pashinian-my-step-sarkisian-hhk/29645721.html>

The new national assembly/parliament has 132 MP's, whereas there were 105 lawmakers in the previous legislature. The reason is that My Step Alliance has received more than 70% of the votes. The election law stipulates that the opposition cannot have less than one third of the parliamentary seats. So, the other two parties that have made it to the parliament receives additional seats to have a one third presence in the National Assembly. My Step Alliance got 84 seats. The four parliamentary seats allocated to national minorities are also added to the Alliance. Thus, the seat distribution is 88, 26 and 18 respectively.

The Dashnak Party, which has branches in Armenian communities around the world and assumes the leading voice of radical and fanatic views in the diaspora, put a sullen face on its electoral performance. Having been cast out of the parliament after 20 years of presence, the party has acknowledged that “this is a defeat, however not for those who voted for us”. The party has made the following reflective observations in this defeat²⁰:

- The voter today gave his/her vote to an individual and not to an ideology or program,
- A significant portion of the voting population is focused on a figure of an ‘internal enemy’ and shockingly do not care about the external and domestic threats facing Armenia,
- The approaches by the Dashnaks are understood by a minority,
- The Nagorno Karabagh issue as a political agenda is not being properly understood,
- A National Assembly is being developed that does not have a succinct ideological or national character.

The other disgruntled extremist party, the Daredevils of Sassoun (*Sasna Tserer*), named after an armed group that seized a police station in Yerevan in July 2016, declared that “this parliament will not be able to fully serve its (five year) term is obvious to us”, the new parliament dominated by Pashinyan’s allies will have to be dissolved because it will fail to cope with challenges facing the country”. The party chairman who made these pronouncements was at the head of the three dozen gunmen which raided the police station, laying down their weapons after a two-week standoff with security forces which left three police officers dead. Despite standing trial on serious charges, they were set free shortly after Pashinyan came to power.

Pashinyan was congratulated by a number of world leaders upon his election victory. One conspicuous missing is the Russian President Putin. On 10

20 “ARF Announcement on Elections,” *Asbarez*, December 10, 2018, <http://asbarez.com/176634/arf-announcement-on-elections/>

December, Catholicos of Cilicia in Antelias/Lebanon, Aram I, chose to send a letter, not to Pashinyan, but to President Sarkissian, welcoming the elections of the new National Assembly. Not once was a reference made to Pashinyan. The Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, Karekin II, also issued a message where he extended his “congratulations and best wishes to the ‘My Step’ alliance, ‘Prosperous Armenia’ and ‘Bright Armenia’ parties”. On 15 December, clashes broke out in Etchmiadzin between the members of “New Armenia, New Catholicos” movement who were demanding resignation of Karekin II and the latter’s supporters.²¹

2. External Developments

Armenia was the only CSTO member country that participated the NATO Summit held in Brussels on 11 July within the framework of countries that have contributed to the NATO led mission Resolute Support in Afghanistan, alongside with two other south Caucasian states, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The final communique adopted at the Summit, supporting the territorial integrity of the states in the South Caucasus was no doubt embarrassing for Armenia. In the words of the Russia supported ex-President Kocharyan, “For example, I did not understand why Armenia should take part in the NATO summit at this level... when the relations between NATO and Russia are at level zero.”²²

Armenia also took part in the US led military exercise “Nobel Partner 2018” in Georgia, close to Tbilisi, with four officers.²³ The spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense who officially announced the participation of Armenia made it a point to underline that it was a NATO exercise and Armenian officers were taking part upon the invitation of Georgia. The spokesman also reminded that Armenian armed forces had participated at the same exercise in 2017 with a 40-member field hospital. However, it was reported by the Armenian press at the time that the administration of President Sarkisian had decided to take part in the exercise but at the last moment, presumably under Russian pressure, had decided against. The Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time criticized those exercises organized by the US and NATO so frequently in the region, saying they put the security in the region into jeopardy.

21 “Catholicos Aram I of Great House of Cilicia sends letter to Armenian President welcoming snap parliamentary elections,” *ArmenPress*, December 10, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/957675.html>

22 “Prime Minister, Deputy PM, Ministers: Armenia gears up for NATO Summit,” *PanArmenian*, July 09, 2018, http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/257620/Prime_Minister_Deputy_PM_Ministers_Armenia_gears_up_for_NATO_Summit

23 “Multinational Exercise “Noble Partner 2018” Starts on August 1st,” *Official Website of the Ministry of Defense of Georgia*, June 7, 2018, <https://mod.gov.ge/en/news/read/6623/multinational-exercise-noble-partner-2018-starts-on-august-1st>

The new Armenian Minister for Diaspora Mkhitar Hayrapetyan made his first official visit abroad to Cyprus on 26 July. The Armenian minister took up the means of cooperation between the diaspora communities of Armenia and Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus with his counterpart, the presidential commissar for humanitarian issues and overseas Cypriots. He then attended the third trilateral meeting of Armenia, Cyprus, and Greece on diaspora relations and cooperation. The Armenian minister then moved on to the US to meet with the Armenian community representatives in Los Angeles to ask for assistance and support for the new government.²⁴

The Italian President Sergio Mattarella paid an official visit to Armenia on 30 July. The visit was widely covered in the press. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, accompanying the President, also had talks with his Armenian counterpart. He indicated that the visit of the president availed the proper opportunity to discuss the steps that could be taken to deepen the relations based on a history and cultural partnership of millennia. The Armenian minister underlined the importance of the very first visit of an Italian president in the history of bilateral relations.²⁵

China's interest in Armenia also appears to be on the rise. It was announced in the Armenian press on 2 August that within the framework of a technical assistance agreement with China, an Armenian-Chinese school with Chinese curriculum would open in Yerevan as early as September.²⁶

It is possible to define the period's determinant feature regarding external relations as on the one hand maintaining cooperation with Russia without overshadowing or casting doubt on the close relations, and on the other hand, conveying the message to the Western countries that Armenia is willing to expand its horizons and establish new relations and is expecting attention and support. In this context, in light of the discomfort in Russia created by some of the practices of Armenia's new administration and personally reflected to the press by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Armenia's relations with Russia, which are always overbearing, have gained importance beyond the usual level.

Pashinyan met with Putin in Moscow on 8 September. This third meeting between the two leaders in four months, in Putin's words, predicted a mutual assessment regarding current and future subjects. Putin stated that Russia maintains its primary place in Armenia's economic relations, that the volume of bilateral trade, which is constantly growing, has increased by %22 in the first half of the year, that relations with Armenia are developing in every area.

24 "Armenia diaspora minister on three-day official visit," *Cyprus Mail*, July 24, 2018,

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2018/07/24/armenia-diaspora-minister-on-three-day-official-visit/>

25 "Italy's President to pay a two-day state visit to Armenia," *Public Radio of Armenia*, July 04, 2018,

<http://old.armradio.am/en/2018/07/04/italys-president-to-pay-a-two-day-state-visit-to-armenia/>

26 "Armenian-Chinese school to open in Yerevan on September 1," *Arka News Agency*, August 02, 2018,

http://arka.am/en/news/society/armenian_chinese_school_to_open_in_yerevan_on_september_1/

In a press statement prior to his visit to Moscow, Pashinyan stated “our relations should be at a much higher level. They should be more strategic, much more concerted and much more fraternal” and after the meeting he stated “we have discussed very important subjects. I would like to say that we have established trust”.²⁷

Among the subjects that create discomfort for Russia, the attempt to arrest the Armenian General who was serving as the Secretary-General of the CSTO had struck a sour note on the prestige of the organization that Russia values and the distress created by the process of assigning a new secretary general was reflected to the press in detail.

The Armenian Minister of Defense’s statement that his country was ending the practice of its borders with Turkey and Iran being secured by Russian soldiers and his critical approach towards the Russian military bases was corrected by Pashinyan after the meeting. He expressed that this practice will proceed as it is very beneficial for Armenia and that the Russian military bases in the country serve Armenia’s security interests.

It was striking that Pashinyan had accepted supporting Russia militarily regarding Syria, which was a matter that even the previous government had been cautious to stay out of. The Ministry of Defense officials felt the need to make an explanation regarding this subject on 11 September. They stated that the support did not have a military aspect and completely aimed for humanitarian aid, that it was made upon the request of the Syrian government, that together with being in cooperation with Russia in some areas, the Armenian personnel would act under the Armenian flag.²⁸

A development of the period that raised interest were the official visits of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to the three South Caucasian republics, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. This was considered as a historical first for Germany. Historically, Germany’s interest towards the region is not new and it was updated with this visit.

Merkel arrived in Armenia in 24 August. In her meetings with Pashinyan and President Sarkissian, she promised support to Armenia in the implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that Armenia had signed with the EU. She also congratulated Armenia for the exemplary balance it had obtained in its relations with the EU and Russia. She expressed her country’s support for a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. In addition, she emphasized that Germany is ready to assume a more active role in this process (Russia soon responded to this offer. The Russian Ministry

27 “Meeting with Prime Minister Of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan,” *President of Russia*, September 8, 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58491>

28 “Newspaper: Armenia PM Ended up in Russia’s Trap,” *News.am*, October 9, 2018, <https://news.am/eng/news/475005.html>

of Foreign Affairs spokesperson stated that the issue needed to be resolved by the respective countries and that there is a current structure for a resolution). In her visit to the Tsitsernakabert monument, Merkel described the “atrocities the Ottoman Empire committed against the Armenians on 1915-17” as a “heinous crimes” without using the genocide word. Hereby, she reminded of the decision that was approved by the German parliament in 2016.²⁹ After her visit to the region, in her statement to a German military unit in Lithuania in 15 September, Merkel stated that many countries that have gained their independence with the collapse of the Soviet Union but are not EU or NATO members are exposed to the domestic conflicts triggered by Russia and mentioned Armenia along with Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan within this context.

The Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Taro Kono, in the framework of his visit to three South Caucasus republics, made a three-day visit to Armenia that began in 2 September. Minister Kono stated his satisfaction with the democratic transformation in Armenia and that they are ready to lend support in this process. This was the first visit of a Japanese minister to Armenia.³⁰

Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze visited Armenia on 10 September. This was a response to Pashinyan’s visit to Georgia on 30 May. In the meeting, multilateral cooperation and trade opportunities were discussed between the two neighbors. President Sarkissian stated that the two countries were entering a period of brotherhood and partnership.³¹

France’s interest towards the region continued with a focus on warm relations with Armenia and a pace which displayed that it was not falling behind Germany. Pashinyan went to Paris on 14 September for a two-day official visit and met with French President Emmanuel Macron for the second time since coming to office. The French Speaking Countries Summit (“the Francophonie” - *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*) meeting was one of the main subjects. It would be held in Yerevan one month later, providing an opportunity for Macron’s visit to Armenia. Pashinyan also met with the French Armenian diaspora representatives in Paris. Pashinyan expressed that France’s Armenians being organized under one roof could provide a model for the entire Armenian diaspora around the world, that the Armenians should unite on a common goal, that this goal is Armenia and (Azerbaijan’s occupied) Nagorno-Karabakh region.³² On 26 September, this time President Sarkissian went to

29 “Merkel Concludes Visit to Caucasus; During Armenia Visit Calls Ottoman-Era Killings Of Armenians ‘Heinous Crimes’,” *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, August 30, 2018, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/08/30/merkel-concludes-visit-to-caucasus-during-armenia-visit-calls-ottoman-era-killings-of-armenians-heinous-crimes/>

30 “My Visit Will Serve as a Milestone for Stronger Relations between Japan and Armenia” – Foreign Minister Taro Kono,” *Armenpress*, September 3, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/945811.html>

31 “Georgian, Armenian Prime Ministers Meet in Yerevan,” *Georgia Today*, September 10, 2018, <http://georgiatoday.ge/news/12207/Georgian,-Armenian-Prime-Ministers-Meet-in-Yerevan>

32 “Pashinyan, Macron Meet in Paris; Both Agree to Expand France-Armenia Relations,” *Hetq*, September 14, 2018, <https://hetq.am/en/article/92997>

France for a business visit and met with French businessmen and company representatives. During 7-12 October, Armenia arranged the French speaking countries week, to which it became a member on 2008. During 11-12 October, it arranged the 17th Summit of the Francophonie.³³ Regarding participation to the Summit, the two prominent names were French President Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Macron also visited the Tsitsernakabert monument and repeated his statements supporting the Armenian narrative and claims concerning 1915.

On 26 September in New York, where the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan paid a visit on the occasion of the UN General Meetings, the two ministers met with the Minsk Group co-presidents and then with each other. This was the second meeting of the two ministers.³⁴ In the statement made by the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was expressed that a beneficial exchange of opinions had taken place regarding the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, that the sides have come to terms on maintaining this dialogue, including the scope of the visit the co-presidents would soon make to the region. Pashinyan, who spoke at the UN General Assembly one day earlier, repeated his statement that a resolution will not be achieved until Azerbaijan does not meet with the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh authorities.

A striking development in the Armenia-Azerbaijan relations was the meeting of the two countries' leaders in Dushanbe on the occasion of the Commonwealth of Independent States summit. Despite that Pashinyan and President of Azerbaijan Aliyev had been introduced for the first time by Putin in Sochi on the occasion of the FIFA World Cup, their first bilateral meeting took place in Tajikistan.³⁵ In the message published on social media by Pashinyan after the meeting, it was stated that the two leaders came to an agreement on three subjects:³⁶

- Assigning the Ministers of Defense in taking concrete precautions for decreasing the tension at the Nagorno-Karabakh line of contact,
- Preventing of ceasefire violations on the borders of Armenia-Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh,
- Establishing a communication system.

33 "Francophonie Summit Offers an Opportunity for the New Armenia to Shine on the World Stage," *The Armenian Weekly*, September 28, 2018, <https://armenianweekly.com/2018/09/27/the-worlds-leading-francophonie-summit-will-be-held-in-yerevan-heres-why-you-should-care/>

34 "Minsk Group Co-Chairs Meet Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan on Margins of UN General Assembly in New York," *OSCE*, September 27, 2018, <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/397700>

35 Armine Avetisyan, "Pashinyan and Aliyev Vow to Reduce Tensions after Meeting in Tajikistan," *OC Media*, October 3, 2018, <http://oc-media.org/pashinyan-and-aliyev-vow-to-reduce-tensions-after-meeting-in-tajikistan/>

36 Avetisyan, "Pashinyan and Aliyev Vow to Reduce Tensions after Meeting in Tajikistan."

Pashinyan expressed that, after this agreement and giving the necessary instruction to the armed forces, he has had the most comfortable and peaceful night since becoming the Prime Minister.

However, Pashinyan did not rest there. No doubt aware that it would provoke Azerbaijan, he repeated that a third party, an “independent” Nagorno-Karabakh administration, should have a voice in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. He even went a step further in his meeting with US National Security Advisor John Bolton and stated that the Armenian diaspora should have a voice in the resolution of the problem since it is a “Pan-Armenian” subject that only concerns the people of Armenia, the people of “independent” Nagorno-Karabakh, and all Armenian people.³⁷ Reactions to this came not long after. In the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ statement in 25 October, it was expressed that Pashinyan’s explanations were, in essence, laying mines on the path towards the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue through the meetings in the current structure. Following his meeting with OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger, on 2 November Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov stated that it is only possible to change the parties of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue with the consent of the two opposing parties, Armenia and Azerbaijan.³⁸

Between 20-21 October, Pashinyan made an official two-day visit to Lebanon and met with the Prime Minister, the Parliament Chairperson and the President of the country. The Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri expressed that they appreciated the role of the Lebanese Armenian community in the country’s development and their contributions to the improvement in the Lebanon-Armenia relations. Pashinyan also met with the notables of the Armenian community and stated that he especially expected investments on communication and advanced technology from them.³⁹ Pashinyan also joined a religious rite attended by Lebanese officials and met with the Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I on this opportunity (Aram’s statements supporting the former administration were publicly known, so a visit to Antelias was not in Pashinyan’s agenda). Pashinyan’s visit to Lebanon coincided with a period in which a conflict had occurred between the Orthodox Assyrians and the Armenians regarding representation in the formation of the new government. The Assyrian Patriarch complained at the infringement of the proportionate representation principle in the Lebanese cabinet and the Assyrians not being able to obtain ministry positions. Thereupon, it was speculated that it was being

37 “Bolton, or Anyone For That Matter, Cannot Speak on My Behalf,’ Says Pashinyan,” *Asbarez*, October 29, 2018, <http://asbarez.com/175935/bolton-or-anyone-for-that-matter-cannot-speak-on-my-behalf-says-pashinyan/>

38 “Lavrov: OSCE MG Co-chairs Working Actively to Solve Karabakh Conflict,” *AzerNews*, November 3, 2017, <https://www.azernews.az/karabakh/121636.html>

39 “Acting Armenian Premier Talks Bilateral Relations with Lebanese Leaders during Visit,” *The Daily Star Newspaper*, October 21, 2018, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2018/Oct-20/467008-armenian-premier-talks-bilateral-relations-with-lebanese-leaders-during-visit.ashx>

considered to give the Assyrians one of the two ministries assigned to the Armenians.⁴⁰ Following this development, the Dashnak Party initiated an extensive campaign towards the protection of the Armenians' rights, where Catholicos Aram I and the Armenian Minister of Tourism were at the forefront.

Another related development regarding Catholicos Aram I, who does not abstain from exploiting his position as a religious functionary at the expense of Turkey and the Turks and supports fanatical Armenian views, was his meeting with Armenian President Sarkissian who joined the celebration ceremony of his 50th anniversary of being a religious functionary organized in Geneva on 25 October. In response to Sarkissian who expressed:

“For fifty years, you have been faithfully serving our Apostolic church, our home country and the entire Armenian people. You have much to do, for Armenia, [the occupied] Nagorno-Karabakh and the diaspora need your active efforts not only in Antelias, but in the other centers of the Armenian Apostolic Church and the diplomatic and political resolutions of the Armenian issues.”

Aram I stated that he will continue his service to Armenia and the Armenians with the same commitment and more effort and that the first thought of religious functionaries should be Armenia.

A development regarding the Armenian Apostolic Church was it taking pro-Russian steps by getting involved in the initiatives against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which was trying to separate from the Russian Orthodox Church and gain its independence.

In Armenia, which is known to be under Russia's absolute supervision in the South Caucasus, the possibility of the Pashinyan administration being in search of something new has naturally caught the interest of the US along with other Western countries. In the message he sent to Pashinyan on 21 September, US President Donald Trump praised the mass protests that brought him to power and stated “A peaceful, popular movement ushered in a new era in Armenia, and we look forward to working with you to help you execute the will of your people to combat corruption and to establish representative, accountable governance, rule of law buttressed by an independent judiciary, and political and economic competition.”⁴¹

American Ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills, whose duty term ended, stated during a farewell meeting he organized in 15 October that he was optimistic that Armenia will attain a stable democracy after the last dramatic governmental change. Likewise, he stated that the American people want this

40 “Pashinyan Meets Catholicos Aram I,” *News.am*, October 21, 2018, <https://news.am/eng/news/476949.html>

41 “Trump Congratulates Armenia on 27 Years of Independence from USSR,” *The Armenian Weekly*, September 22, 2018, <https://armenianweekly.com/2018/09/22/trump-congratulates-armenia-on-27-years-of-independence-from-ussr/>

as well. Mills also made the following statements regarding Nagorno-Karabakh that led to criticism and reactions: “It is unsettling that so few of the Armenians agree to make concessions to Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh. The sad truth is that resolution will require returning some of the occupied lands.”⁴²

US Deputy Secretary of State George Kent went to Armenia on 15 October and had talks with Pashinyan. Kent expressed that the US government “is interested in Armenia having successes in developing democracy, economic progress, as well as in other priority directions of the country, and is ready to assist the Armenian government in the process of implementing reforms.” In the press meeting organized in Yerevan on 16 October, he explained that the US is anticipating “strategic meetings” with Armenia in order to assess how the bilateral relations can be improved further and that the “USA-Armenia Task Force Strategic Meetings” can be made in Washington probably on 2019 February after the snap elections.⁴³

Beyond doubt, the next most striking development of the period was US National Security Advisor Bolton’s visit to three Caucasian republics following his visit to Moscow, respectively to Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.⁴⁴ Before his visit, Bolton expressed that the South Caucasus is of great strategic importance and that the states of the region wish to hold a view on their relations with Iran, Russia and Turkey. Bolton, who had met with Pashinyan in Yerevan on 25 October, conveyed the kind regards of US President Trump. Bolton explained that they approached various subjects, put emphasis especially on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, that they expect that the Armenian Prime Minister would take “firm action” towards an amenable peace with Azerbaijan after the early elections, which he was predicted to win with a stronger hand. Regarding this subject, he also stated “the safest way for Armenia to decrease external pressures is to provide the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict”. Bolton expressed that the US is ready to permit American weapons being sold to Armenia, and that in this way, Russia’s “excessive influence” over Armenia could be decreased. Another message that Bolton conveyed to Armenia, which shares borders with Iran, is that the US is very determined on its sanctions towards Iran. Likewise, it is understood that a military support to be given to Syria would be met with a negative reception.

In the Armenian government statement regarding the meeting, it was expressed that both sides emphasized the importance of “consistent” efforts for a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and had agreed that an

42 “PM Pashinyan Receives U.S. Ambassador Richard Mills,” *ArmenPress*, October 8, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/950165.html>

43 “United States Attaches Importance to Further Enhancement of Mutually Beneficial Partnership with Armenia: PM Holds Meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State,” *ArmenPress*, October 15, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/950894.html>

44 “Pashinyan Describes Bolton Meeting ‘Major Diplomatic Achievement’,” *ArmenPress*, November 1, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/953041.html>

“atmosphere for the negotiation process” should be created. With a confident and cheerful air, Pashinyan stated during his parliament speech regarding the meeting “I’ve met with Bolton, there wasn’t even the slightest nuance during this meeting which can cause disturbance in Armenia and among Armenian people. I consider this meeting to be a major diplomatic achievement for us, I will say in the future as to what is the reason that I am saying so.” Regarding the meeting, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan added the following: “The meeting with Bolton has been very successful. He has understood the logic of our relations with the US, the Russian Federation and Iran, our stance regarding Nagorno-Karabakh and our relations with Turkey.”⁴⁵

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a statement on Bolton’s declarations in his visit to Armenia, criticizing his words against Russia and his expressions that may be interpreted as interfering in Armenia’s internal affairs.

President Sarkissian paid an official visit to Germany on 27-28 November.⁴⁶ He met with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and praised the bilateral ties. He also met with Chancellor Merkel. Merkel spoke of her fond memories of her August visit to Yerevan. Sarkissian on his part said Armenia views Germany as an important political and economic partner and a friendly country. He also had a working lunch with a group of German diplomats and parliamentarians. Photographs released by the presidential press service showed him sitting next to Cem Özdemir, a German MP of Turkish descent.⁴⁷

On 29 November, an exhibition “Armenian genocide and Scandinavian response” was inaugurated at the Swedish Parliament.

Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan visited Brussels on 4 December for a working visit and met with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs. They discussed issues on EU-Armenia cooperation. He also met with the Belgian Foreign Minister. On this occasion, the two ministers signed an agreement on the remunerated work of family members of diplomatic missions and consular officers.⁴⁸

President Sarkissian received on 6 December an Italian parliamentary delegation on an OSCE observation mission to monitor the elections and communicated the message that Armenia, a member of the Eurasian Economic

45 “Pashinyan Describes Bolton Meeting ‘Major Diplomatic Achievement’.”

46 “President Armen Sarkissian’s official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany,” *The President of the Republic of Armenia*, November 27, 2018, <http://www.president.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2018/11/27/President-Armen-Sarkissian-official-visit-to-the-Federal-Republic-of-Germany/>

47 “Armenian President Visits ‘Friendly’ Germany,” *Azatutyun*, November 29, 2018, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/29628212.html>.

48 “Zohrab Mnatsakanyan Met With The Deputy Prime Minister And Foreign Minister Of Belgium,” *Armencom*, December 4, 2018, <https://www.armencom.be/fr/actualite/presse/1727-zohrab-mnatsakanyan-met-with-the-deputy-prime-minister-and-foreign-minister-of-belgium>

Union, can become a bridge between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union, opening up new opportunities for businessmen and investors.⁴⁹

Pashinyan travelled to St. Petersburg on a working visit on 6 December to take part in the regular session of the Supreme Council of the Eurasian Economic Union, where EEU 2019 presidency passed to Armenia. On this occasion he reiterated that membership to the EEU was one of the priorities of his government.⁵⁰

3. Latest Developments in Turkey-Armenia Relations

18 representatives of non-Muslim communities of Turkey signed a joint declaration on 31 July confirming the freedom of religion in Turkey. The declaration stated the following⁵¹:

“As religious representatives and foundation directors of the ancient communities of different religions and belief groups that have been living in our country for centuries, we live our beliefs freely and we freely worship according to our traditions. Statements claiming or implying that there is repression are completely false. The various problems and times of victimization in the past have reached solutions over time. We are in continual communication with our state institutions, who meet the issues we wish to advance with good intentions and a desire for solutions. We are making this joint statement consciously out of responsibility to correctly inform public opinion.”

The 18 signatories were the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Armenian Acting Patriarch, Chief Rabbi, Syriac Ancient Community Deputy Patriarch, the Spiritual Leader of the Armenian Catholics, Chaldean Community Deputy Patriarch, Syriac Catholic General Deputy Patriarch, Gedikpasha Armenian Protestant Church and Denomination Foundation Spiritual President, RUMVADER President, VADIP and Yedikule Soup Pergich Armenian Hospital Foundation President, Turkish Jewish Society and Turkish Chief Rabbinate Foundation President, Beyoglu Syriac Lady Mary Church Foundation President, Soup Agop Armenian Catholic Hospital Foundation President, Istanbul Syriac Catholic Foundation President, Chaldean Catholic Foundation President, Bulgarian Exarchate Orthodox Church Foundation President, Georgian Catholic Church Foundation President, and Haskoy Haraite Jewish Foundation President.

49 “President Sarkissian optimistic towards future of Armenian-Italian relations,” *ArmenPress*, December 6, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/957153.html>

50 “Pashinyan attends opening ceremony of new building of Armenia’s Consulate General in St. Petersburg,” *ArmenPress*, December 6, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/957161.html>

51 “Turkey’s minority leaders sign joint declaration denying ‘pressure’ on communities,” *Daily Sabah*, July 31, 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/minorities/2018/07/31/turkeys-minority-leaders-sign-joint-declaration-denying-pressure-on-communities>

This Declaration is significant since it also reflects the feelings and well-being of the Turkish Armenian community.

Al-Jazeera TV broadcast in early August an interview with Pashinyan, given on 28 July. Pashinyan's remarks to a question on relations with Turkey are as follows:

“Armenia is ready to establish diplomatic Relations with Turkey without any precondition. Turkey closed the border between Armenia and Turkey. From the Armenian side, it can be considered open. For us, international recognition of the Armenian genocide is very important and Armenia is one of the active fighters against genocides. The issue of genocide for our country is not so much an issue of Armenian-Turkish Relations as a matter of the global struggle against genocide”.⁵²

The above cited interview has once again reflected the distorted mindset of the Armenian administration in its outlook to Turkey and relations with Turkey. It has been discouraging as it reveals the continuation of the falsification of facts and reality on the one hand and the assumption that deception, on a level of childish naivety, is possible.

Upon the American authorities' request for a judiciary extradition, it was published in the Armenian media that American citizen of Turkish origin Kemal Öksüz had been arrested in Armenia on 29 August.⁵³ He was stated to be working with a lobby group in Texas, having ties with the Azerbaijan government and SOCAR (State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic), and is apparently associated with the Fethullah Terrorist Organization (FETÖ). Afterwards, he was arrested to be extradited to the US. No explanation has been made as to why he was in Armenia and what he was doing there.

In the Armenian press on 15 September, the news report of the arrest of a 16-year-old Turkish teen crossing the border illegally⁵⁴ was published, explaining that the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had called on Pashinyan requesting that the boy be released. It soon became evident that such a call did not take place and the boy's release was achieved through police contacts.

On 9 September in the Akdamar (Akhtamar) Church of Van, the news of a religious rite being performed after a three-year gap was published in the Armenian press in detail.⁵⁵

52 “Ready to talk Nagorno-Karabakh peace: Armenia PM Nikol Pashinyan,” *Al-Jazeera*, July 27, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2018/07/ready-negotiate-ilham-aliyev-armenia-pm-nikol-pashinyan-180726072935944.html>

53 “Turkish White-Collar Fugitive wanted by United States Apprehended by Yerevan Police,” *ArmenPress*, August 30, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/945456.html>

54 “Turkey demands release of 16-year-old boy held in Armenia,” *Tert.am*, September 15, 2018, <https://www.tert.am/en/news/2018/09/15/armenia-turkey/2792102>

55 “Üç Yıl Aradan Sonra Akdamar Kilisesi'nde Ayin Gerçekleştirildi,” *HaberTürk*, October 9, 2018, <https://www.haberturk.com/uc-yil-aradan-sonra-akdamar-da-ayin-yapildi-2135764>

Turkish President Erdoğan, who visited Azerbaijan on 15 September for joining the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Caucasus Islamic Army liberating Baku, expressed his messages regarding Nagorno-Karabakh's occupation and why the borders are closed. In the news reports of the Armenian press, President Erdoğan stated:

“finding a resolution in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh is essential for the normalization of the relations with Armenia... As long as the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh continues, Turkey will not open its border with Armenia... Those who have invaded 20 percent of Azerbaijan land and do not permit one million Azeris to return to their lands should not expect Turkey to open its borders... Those who were in Khojali 26 years ago, who do not answer for the massacre in Nagorno-Karabakh, who declare the murderers to be heroes do not have a history lesson to give to Turkey.”⁵⁶

The Deputy Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly, who joined the Meeting of Speakers of Eurasian Countries' Parliaments (MSEAP) organized in Antalya during the first week of October, initiated an abrupt battle of words against the Speaker of the Azerbaijani National Assembly's statements regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

In the joint statement made by the three ministers during the sixth Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia trilateral Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting organized in Istanbul on 29 October, the following points were emphasized: the importance of creating a permanent peaceful resolution in Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region and its perimeter, in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions on the basis of the universally recognized principles and rules of international law, especially the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, the non-violation of states' internationally recognized borders.⁵⁷

In the joint statement published at the end of the sixth Turkey-Azerbaijan-Iran trilateral Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting organized in Istanbul on 30 October, a call was made for a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue on the basis of the principle of territorial integrity.⁵⁸ In the statement made in response to this call, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson expressed that the Co-Chairs of OSCE Minsk Group, which were established to support the resolution of the issue, are the only formation that has international authority in this issue and that it is this structure that assesses the

56 “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Yukarı Karabağ Açıklaması,” *NTV*, September 15, 2018, <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-yukari-karabag-aciklamasi.rQJhrrgAIUeSrb3fnP8nVA>

57 “Türkiye-Azerbaycan-İran Üçlü Dışişleri Bakanları Toplantısı,” *Sabah*, 30 October 2018, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/dunya/2018/10/30/cin-yasaga-ragmen-ozon-tabakasini-incekten-kimyasal-kullaniyor>

58 “Tahran İle Ankara, Azerbaycan'ın Toprak Bütünlüğü Çerçevesinde Karabağ'da Çözümü Destekliyor,” *Sputnik Türkiye*, October 30, 2018, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/dunya/201810301035917594-tahran-ankara-azerbaycan-toprak-butunlugu-cercevesinde-karabag-cozumunu/>

principles through which this issue can be resolved. Additionally, the Ministry stated that acting in a selective manner in the determination of these principles would not in any way contribute to a peaceful resolution.

In a news report published in the Armenian media on 24 October, it was stated in an interview Armenian President Sarkissian made with a Swiss television channel that he was ready for a dialogue with Turkish President Erdoğan. Sarkissian explained that, according to the Christian faith, it is possible to forgive, but that recognition is required first, that recognition would have a historical dimension because the “Armenian Genocide” is the “first genocide of the 20th century”. Describing how he would approach a hypothetical meeting with the Turkish President, the Armenian President stated:

“I would first of all tell Erdogan: ‘Good morning Mr. President.’ I believe we have something to discuss. You are the President of Turkey, and I am the President of Armenia. My family, my ancestors are from Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis. My old family has a story. Why shouldn’t we speak about the relations between Turkey and Armenia, why shouldn’t we speak about our personal stories? We should speak about not only history, but also the future – the future of our children and grandchildren, about our two peoples...”⁵⁹

The future of the relations between Sarkissian, who is known for keeping a foot in both camps and is dubbed as having Teflon coating and Pashinyan, following his expected victorious emergence from the elections, is a subject of speculation in Armenia.

Regarding the relations with Turkey, Pashinyan made a speech that was far from being convincing or persuasive and was a repetition of his discourse in the recent past. Pashinyan spoke at the Armenian national assembly’s extraordinary session on 1 November, stating that Armenia is ready to establish relations with Turkey without preconditions. According to Pashinyan, there is no need to make a connection between this approach and the process of the “Armenian Genocide’s” international recognition and that this is a national and international security issue for Yerevan, which allegedly aims to prevent new genocides.⁶⁰ This approach of Pashinyan was also reflected onto Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan’s speech at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva on 13 September. He differed from the previous years as no statements were made that directly targeted Turkey. It focused on the seriousness of the crime of genocide and ways of preventing its repetition.

According to Pashinyan, the border is open on the Armenian side. According to him, Turkey tying the opening of the border to the resolution of the Nagorno-

59 “‘Forgiveness Comes After Recognition’: Armenian President’s Message To Turkish Counterpart,” *ArmenPress*, October 24, 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/952038.html>

60 “Paşinyan: Türkiye İle Önkoşulsuz Normalleşmeye Hazırız,” *Ermeni Haber Ajansı*, November 1, 2018, <https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2018/11/01/Paşinyan-Türkiye/140589>

Karabakh issue for the benefit of Azerbaijan is a weak policy. He further stated that it is not possible to ensure requests through threats and that such an approach would increase the solidarity between Armenia and an independent Nagorno-Karabakh. As he had stated to US National Security Advisor Bolton, Armenia, which has four neighbors, has two exits. Out of these, Georgia is semi-closed. The Iran route may close due to the US embargo. So, Armenia is an island.

In response to this assessment of Pashinyan that lacks depth and realism, it is possible to guess that Bolton expressed realistic recommendations on the reasons and solutions to Armenia's isolation.

A development in the period which indirectly concerns Turkey are the statements of the Armenian Deputy Minister of Culture Nazeni Gharibyan during his visit to Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government on the occasion of attending the Duhok international film festival. Deputy Minister Gharibyan emphasized that Armenians and Kurds have been two people who have been very close to each other for centuries, and stated that Kurds have been living in Armenia for a hundred years since the 1915 "Armenian Genocide", and alleged that his grandfather had survived the "genocide" due to his closeness to the Kurds.

During the plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) in Yerevan on 27 November, Honorary Medals issued by Armenian side were refused to be received by the heads of three delegations, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey.

At a press conference at the G-20 summit in Argentina on 3 December, a journalist addressed Turkish President Erdogan, asking about the rights of minorities in Turkey, adding also that he was one of the descendants of the families that suffered the "Armenian genocide". President Erdogan's response was swift and unambiguous. He said,

"Turkey cannot be blamed of having committed genocide against the Armenians. On the question of genocide, please let's leave the discussion to historians and let's listen to what the historians have to say. This is not a part of our history. I can very confidently say that we are ready to take part in any discussion."

He further added,

"Do you know how many Armenians live in my country right now? Hundreds of thousands. About 30.000 of them are citizens and the rest are undocumented. They have fled Armenia only to settle in Turkey."⁶¹

61 "We will not allow any organization in northern Syria that poses threat to the security of our country and region," *Official Website of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, December 2, 2018, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/99916/-we-will-not-allow-any-organization-in-northern-syria-that-poses-threat-to-the-security-of-our-country-and-region->

Before the arrival of President Erdogan to Argentina, the Armenian community held a demonstration in front of the Turkish Embassy on 26 November. Not surprisingly, among the instigators of the demonstration were the Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church for Argentina and Chile as well as representatives of the Armenian Institutions of the Argentine Republic (IARA).

Immediately after his election victory, on 10 December, Pashinyan again reiterated at a press conference that Armenia reaffirms readiness to establish relations with Turkey without preconditions. This well-worn statement does not augur any new perspectives as it is construed to mean that Armenian hostile narrative cannot be countered.

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FORMATION OF ARMENIA ON THE POLITICAL MAP OF THE CAUCASUS AND KARABAKH ISSUE (1918-1921)

(ERMENİSTAN'IN KAFKASYA'NIN SİYASİ HARİTASINDA OLUŞUMU
VE KARABAĞ MESELESİ (1918-1921))

Prof. Dr. Jamil HASANLI*

***Abstract:** A new revolutionary era in Russia started in February 1917 for all the peoples of the former Russian empire ruled by the Romanov dynasty. Along with the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy in Russia, the revolution of February 1917 was a blow to the Russian empire, spawning national liberation movements in that "prison of nations." The overthrow of the monarchy sped up the political processes taking place in the South Caucasus.*

One of the first steps of the Provisional Government that was formed after the revolution was the creation of a special institution to govern the South Caucasus. On March 9, the Special Transcaucasian Committee (OZAKOM) was created to govern the region. When the revolution of October 1917 occurred, it raised the hopes of the nations that had been subjects of the Russian empire. These hopes for independence were for the most part nourished by the declarations made by the Bolsheviks in the early days of their coming to power. A peace decree and a Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia were to provide a guarantee that the nations of the former empire would be free to secede and create independent republics. However, quite soon it became clear that these documents were merely propaganda.

When the Russian Soviet of People's Commissars appointed Stepan Georgevich Shaumian as the Envoy Extraordinary for the Caucasus to fight against the autonomy of Azerbaijan, he was commissioned to carry out the decree of 29 December 1917, on the autonomy of "Turkish Armenia," which

* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6844-1812>

had been prepared by Joseph Stalin. The decree recognized the full independence and sovereignty of the Armenian nation in "Turkish Armenia," which had been occupied by the Russian army. Other items were the creation of militias to protect the population of "Turkish Armenia" and their property once the Russian army withdrew from the territory; the unimpeded repatriation of Armenians who had emigrated from "Turkish Armenia"; and the creation of a provisional administration of a democratically elected Armenian national deputies' council.

Keywords: Nagorno-Karabakh, South Caucasus, Nakhichevan, Sharur-Daralayaz, Zangezur, Baku, Moscow, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Allied Powers, Soviet Russia, Turkey, Musavat government, Caucasian Bureau

Öz: Şubat 1917 yılında Romanov Hanedanlığı tarafından yönetilen eski Rus İmparatorluğunun tüm halkları için yeni bir devrimci dönem başlamıştır. Rusya'da Çarlık yönetiminin devrilmesiyle beraber Şubat 1917 devrimi ulusal bağımsızlık hareketleri doğurmuş ve böylece "halkların hapisanesi" olan Rus İmparatorluğu darbe almıştır. Çarlık yönetiminin devrilmesi Güney Kafkasya'daki siyasi süreçlerin hızlanmasına sebep olmuştur.

Devrim sonrasında Geçici Hükümetin ilk adımlarından bir tanesi Güney Kafkasya'nın yönetilmesi için özel bir kurum kurması olmuştur. 9 Mart'ta Özel Transkafkasya Komitesi (OZAKOM) bölgeyi yönetmek için kurulmuştur. Ekim 1917 devriminin gerçekleşmesi ise Rus İmparatorluğunun tebaası olan ulusların umutlarını arttırmıştır. Bu umutlar çoğunlukla Bolşeviklerin iktidara gelmelerinin ilk günlerinde yaptıkları beyanatlardan beslenmiştir. Bir barış fermanı ve Rusya'nın Halklarının Hakları Beyannamesi'nin yayınlanmasıyla uluslara eski imparatorluktan ayrılıp bağımsız cumhuriyetler kurmaları için garanti verilmesi öngörülmüştü. Ancak kısa bir süre sonra bu belgelerin propagandadan ibaret olduğu anlaşılmıştır.

Rus Halk Komiserleri Sovyeti, Stepan Georgevich Shaumian'ı Azerbaycan'ın özerkliğine karşı mücadele etmesi amacıyla Kafkasya için Olağanüstü Elçi olarak atadığında, kendisine ayrıca Josef Stalin tarafından hazırlanmış, "Türk Ermenistan'ın" özerkliği üzerine olan 29 Aralık 1917 fermanını yürürlüğe koyma görevi de verilmiştir. Bu ferman, Rus ordusunun işgali altında olan "Türk Ermenistan'daki" Ermeni ulusunun tam bağımsızlığını ve egemenliğini tanımaktaydı. Fermana yer alan diğer hususlar şu şekildedir: Rus ordusunun bölgeden çekilmesinden sonra milislerin kurulmasıyla "Türk Ermenistan" nüfusunun ve mal ve mülklerinin korunması; "Türk Ermenistan'ından" göç eden Ermenilerin engellenmeden geri dönmeleri ve demokratik yollarla seçilmiş bir Ermeni ulusal milletvekilleri konseyinden oluşan geçişi bir yönetimin kurulması.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dağlık Karabağ, Güney Kafkasya, Nahcivan, Şerur Dereleyez, Zangezur, Bakü, Moskova, Ermenistan, Azerbaycan, Gürcistan, Müttefik Güçleri (İtilaf Devletleri), Sovyet Rusya, Türkiye, Musavat hükümeti, Kafkasya Bürosu

The peoples of the Transcaucasia gained the chance to decide their own fate, but they did it disastrously. In Autumn 1917, armed Armenian forces entered Karabagh from the side of Armenia and destroyed twelve Moslem villages. The defenselessness of Azerbaijani Karabagh residents clearly manifested itself in terms of the disturbing atrocities committed by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF/Dashnaksutyun, Dashnaks) in the eastern part of Azerbaijan and Baku environs. Under the pretext of establishing Soviet power, the detachments of Amazasp killed 8,000 in Shemakha and 4,000 peaceful civilians in Quba.¹ It was the declaration of independence of Azerbaijan on 28 May 1918 that saved the Turkic-Moslem population in the greater portion of the South Caucasus from these attempts at annihilation. On 26 May, Georgia declared its independence, and two days later Azerbaijan and Armenia followed suit.

The Batum talks launched by the previous governments of the South Caucasus were restarted by the new national republics. So, there arose necessity of border delimitation between the newly established states, and the Armenian Republic found itself in the most complex situation. Prior to the conclusion of the agreement, Armenian representatives appealed to the Azerbaijani government and found understanding in the matter of their future capital. On 29 May, chair of the Council of Ministers, Fatali Khan Khoyski, told those at a meeting of the Azerbaijani National Council that the issue had been discussed with members of the Armenian National Council. He said that a political center was needed for Armenians to create the Armenian Federation. The town of Alexandropol was captured by the Turks, and now Erivan might act as the capital, so Erivan should be conceded to the Armenians.² In the meanwhile, talks were held in Batum between delegations of Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding delimitation of borders. It was agreed that Azerbaijan had no objection against the formation of the Armenian state within the bounds of “Alexandropol province”; in turn, Armenians gave up their claims on a part of the Elizavetpol province (mountainous part of Karabagh).³ As a result of the Batumi conference, Turkey signed an agreement on “peace and friendship” with Georgia and Armenia on 4 June and thus recognized their independence. According to the agreement signed with Georgia, the transfer of Kars, Batumi, and Ardahan as well as Akhaltsich and Akhalkalak to Turkey was confirmed. However, Turkey softened the requests on June 11 and agreed to give Abastuman and Askur back to Georgia.⁴ Armenia accepted the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk by signing the June Agreement; Echmiadzin and

1 Decision of the Extraordinary Investigation Commission. July 28, 1919, State Archive of the Azerbaijan Republic (SAAR), rec.gr. 1061, inv. 1, f. 108, sheet 7.

2 Minutes № 3 of the meeting of Azerbaijani National Council. May 29, 1918, SAAR, rec.gr. 970, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 51.

3 Zurab Avalov. *Независимость Грузии в международной политике* (The Independence of Georgia in International Politics), 1918-1921. Paris, 1924, p. 57.

4 *Документы и материалы по внешней политике Закавказья и Грузии* (Documents and Materials on Foreign Policy of the Caucasus and Georgia) (Tiflis, 1919), pp. 343–349.

Alexandropol were given to Turkey; and Turkey was allowed to use the Alexandropol–Julfa railway as well. The Armenian border would now be located near Erivan. Only 6 kilometers of railway were left at the disposal of Armenia. According to the Batum Agreement, the Armenian Republic was a state of the South Caucasus with a territory of 10,000 square kilometers.⁵

This question arose on 8 October 1918 in Tiflis during talks between the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan Mahammad Yusif Jafarov and Arshak Jamalyan, an Armenian diplomat. The latter reported back to the Armenian Foreign Ministry: “Today, Mr. Jafarov came to see me.... We touched upon the Karabagh issue. He mentioned the well-wishing attitude of Azerbaijanis to Armenians during the Batum conference, saying that they conceded us Erivan in return for Karabagh.”⁶ Again, primary developments broke out in Karabagh and around it. In late summer 1918, the Armenian army headed by Andranik Ozanyan invaded neighboring Zangezur. By the end of October, 115 villages were pillaged, 7,700 Moslems were killed, 2,500 were wounded, and 50,000 were ousted from their homes. The same atrocities were committed in the mountainous part of Karabagh.⁷ In late September, the Ottoman-Azerbaijani troops assumed the offensive against the Dashnaks and seized Shusha on October 1 without a blow. As a result, Dashnak detachments had to retreat deep into mountainous parts of Karabagh.

In November 1918, the First World War was over. Germany and its allies sustained defeat, and Turkish troops abandoned Transcaucasia. The Dashnaks continued staging provocations in an attempt to expand Armenian territory. The military operations ceased after categorical protests of the British. In early January 1919, a commander of the Allied (Entente) forces in the region, Major-General William M. Thomson, sent a representative of the Azerbaijan government Khosrov-bey Sultanov to Karabagh and Zangezur as a governor-general of the region. A council composed of three Armenians, three Azerbaijanis, and one Englishman, a member of the Allied mission was subordinated to Kh. Sultanov and his Armenian assistant. However, Dashnak leaders of Karabagh rejected this compromise project. Major-General Thomson told Armenian protesters “some Armenians are much disappointed that the British occupation is not an opportunity for revenge. They are reluctant to accept it that (the) peace conference is going to decide and not military forces.”⁸

5 See: Richard Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918* (Berkeley, 1967), pp. 190–194.

6 Letter from Arshak Jamalyan to MFA of Armenia. October 8, 1918, Archive of Political Documents of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan (APDPARA), rec.gr. 276, inv. 9, f. 65, sheet 18.

7 For more detailed information about destabilizing actions of Armenia in Karabakh in 1918–1920 years see: Jamil Hasanli, *Foreign Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, The Difficult Road to Western Integration, 1918–1920* (London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016) ; Ismail Musayev, *Azərbaycanın Naxçıvan və Zəngəzur bölgələrində siyasi vəziyyət və xarici dövlətlərin siyasəti (1917–1921-ci illər)* (Baku: Bakı Dövlət Universiteti, 1996).

8 Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Moslem Community* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 143.

In early December 1918, Thomson sent a telegram to leaders of Armenians residing in Javanshir uyezd/uezd (administrative unit) of Karabagh demanding a stop to their banditry and pillage. He ordered as follows: “To notify all Armenians: sit still in their homes. Should they disobey, they would be subjected to punishment for bloodshed and atrocities.”⁹

Their allies’ tough stance on the issue forced the Armenians, albeit with insignificant amendments, to admit the power of the Azerbaijani governor-general and look for an acceptable form of collaboration. The VII Congress of the representatives of Armenian peasants from a mountainous part of Karabagh decided on 15 August 1919 to be subordinated to the Azerbaijani government and peacefully coexist with the Azerbaijani population.¹⁰ On the instruction of the Azerbaijani government, on 9 September 1919, Ali Mardan bey Topchibashov, chair of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, submitted a document that said, “representatives of the Armenian population of Karabagh made a decision to obey the Azerbaijani government.”¹¹ In this way, Armenian attempts at the Paris Peace Conference to take Karabagh away from Azerbaijan were a failure, but only for a short time.

On 28 April 1920, Soviet troops occupied Baku. Russian troops entered Karabakh a month after they had occupied Baku; Azerbaijan lost its independence; some time later this happened to Georgia and Armenia as well. In this way, in two years, Russia, now Soviet Russia, regained its grip on the Transcaucasus. Soviet power detached bits and pieces of Azerbaijan’s territory. In the first years of Soviet power, when the Soviet central government (the Center) transferred primordial Azerbaijani lands to Armenia, Chairman of the Azerbaijan Revolutionary Committee (Az.RC) Nariman Narimanov, unable to reconcile himself to this unjust transfer of Azerbaijani lands, wrote to Vladimir Lenin to complain that the lands which had, beyond a doubt, been part of Azerbaijan under the Musavat government had become disputed areas under Soviet power. He warned that the common people were aware of all this and were discontented.¹²

On 19 June, Nariman Narimanov, Polikarp (Budu) Mdivani, Anastas Mikoyan, and Avis Nurijanyan sent a telegram to People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs

9 Azerbaijan, 3 December 1918.

10 Interim Agreement with the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Azerbaijani Government. August 15, 1919, APD PARA, f. 1, r. 169, v. 249/II, p. 13-14.

11 Letter from Chairman of the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the Paris Peace Conference Ali Mardan bey Topchubashov to chairman of the Peace Conference. September 9, 1919, SAAR, rec.gr. 970, inv. 1, f. 142, sheet 77. For more detail, see: Jamil Hasanli, *Leadership and Nationalism in Azerbaijan: Ali Mardan bey Topchibashov, Founder and Creator* - Routledge Studies in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe (London & New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2018).

12 For more detail, see: “Results of Soviet Construction in Azerbaijan,” Report of Narimanov to Lenin. September 15, 1921, Russian State Archives of Social-Political History (RSASPH), rec. gr. 5, inv. 1, f. 1219, sheet 12; Jamil Hasanli, “Nagorno-Karabakh: Old Delusions and New Interpretations,” *Caucasus and Globalization* 3–4 (2011).

Georgii Chicherin in which they informed him of the Dashnak army's onslaught and its success in Kazakh and Kedabek. A copy sent to Grigorii (Sergo) Orjonikidze in Vladikavkaz contained the following telltale passage: "The Armenians are in fact in a state of war with Azerbaijan. As for the allegedly disputable Karabakh and Zangezur, which have become part of Soviet Azerbaijan, we categorically state that these places should, without doubt, in the future too, remain within Azerbaijan."¹³ On 22 June 1920, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, enraged by the fact that the well-known Bolsheviks working in the Caucasus, Baku and, on the whole, Azerbaijan were dead set against the Center's policy, complained to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) (CC RCP (B)) about "the lack of discipline among the Baku comrades and the scandalous contradiction between their actions and the line of the CC."¹⁴ People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin followed his own, very specific logic. He went on to explain to Lenin that "so far Russia is not transferring these lands to the Armenians so as not to offend the Tatars [he was referring to the Azerbaijanis]. When conditions for the Sovietization of Georgia and Armenia appear, the problems will disappear of their own accord."¹⁵ His numerous explanations and telegrams sent to Lenin, Orjonikidze, and Narimanov make it abundantly clear: Karabakh was nothing but "small change" and bait in the talks with Armenia.

Stronger Armenian claims to the mountainous part of Karabakh forced those Bolsheviks who were well known in the Caucasus (Nariman Narimanov, Polikarp (Budu) Mdivani, Anastas Mikoyan, and Viktor Naneishvili) and even members of the Military Council of the 11th Army, Iakov Vesnik, Mikhail Levandovsky, and Boris Mikhaylov, to send a letter to the CC RCP (B) which said:

"We believe that it is our duty to inform the C.C. of our concerted opinion about Karabakh and Zangezur; the decision which is planned as intermediate in the talks with Armenia will contradict the interests of the revolution in the Caucasus. *Under the Musavat government, the whole of Karabakh was part of Azerbaijan. The inseparable cultural and economic ties between Karabakh and Zangezur and Baku, which employed tens of thousands of workers from these provinces, and the complete isolation of these provinces from Erevan were confirmed in 1919 by the Congress of Armenian Peasants of Karabakh which, even under the Musavat regime (which was insufferable for the Armenians) and despite provocation by Armenian agents, resolutely supported complete unity with Azerbaijan on the condition that a peaceful life be guaranteed for the Armenians.*" [italics added for emphasis -J.H.]

13 Telegram of Narimanov, Mdivani, Mikoyan, Nuriyanyan to Chicherin. June 19, 1920, SAAR, rec. gr. 28, inv. 1, f. 211, sheet 115.

14 See: Letter of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs G. Chicherin to the Politburo of the CC RCP (B), June 22, 1920, APDUDPAR, rec. gr. 1, inv. 1, f. 2a, sheet 9.

15 Chicherin's reply to Lenin's enquiry. June 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 2, inv. 1, f. 1451, sheet 1.

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The authors concluded that the Muslim masses would regard Soviet power as perfidious if it proved unable to preserve the old borders of Azerbaijan. They wrote that this would be taken as Armenian-philism or as the weakness of Soviet power and warned against indecision in the question of Karabakh and Zangezur “so as not to turn Azerbaijan into a mongrel supported by the Red Army and handed out to the Armenians and Georgians.”¹⁶

In an effort to make Soviet recognition of Armenia look official, Chicherin tried to convince Orjonikidze that Soviet Russia needed a compromise with the Dashnak government of Armenia:

“The Azerbaijani government has described as disputable not only Karabakh and Zangezur, but also the Sharur-Daralayaz Uezd. The latter has never been disputed and even the Musavat government always regarded it as Armenian. Without it, Armenia will have practically nothing left. After resisting for a long time, the Armenian delegation at the peace talks agreed to accept Karabakh and Zangezur as disputed territories in the hope of finally acquiring large chunks of them. The delegation is firm about the Sharur-Daralayaz Uezd. On the other hand, we need an agreement with the Azerbaijani government so that our treaty with Armenia does not contradict the demands of Azerbaijan. We ask you to use your exceptional influence in Baku to convince the Azerbaijani government to yield on its demand to describe the Sharur-Daralaghez Uezd as a disputed territory and limit it to Karabakh and Zangezur.”¹⁷

After receiving Chicherin’s ciphered telegram of 2 July 1920 and discussing the issue with newly appointed Envoy Plenipotentiary of Soviet Russia to Armenia Boris Legran and Saak Ter-Gabrielyan, Orjonikidze informed Moscow directly that;

“Azerbaijan insisted on the immediate and unconditional unification of Karabakh and Zangezur. I think this should be done since economically both uyezds are attached to Baku and have absolutely no ties with Erivan. The Bayazet Turkish Army, which has wedged its way in, has made this especially obvious. According to Comrade Gabrielyan, the Armenian delegation will undoubtedly accept this. In this case, it will be possible to convince Azerbaijan to drop its claims to the other regions. I think that Karabakh and Zangezur should be immediately united with Azerbaijan. I will force Azerbaijan to grant autonomy to these regions; this should be done by Azerbaijan, but in no way should this be mentioned in the treaty.”¹⁸

16 Letter of Narimanov, Mdivani, Mikoyan, Naneishvili, Vesnik, Levandovsky and Mikhaylov to the C.C. R.C.P. (B.). July 10, 1920, APDUDPAR, rec. gr. 1, inv. 44, f. 118, sheet 25-27.

17 Chicherin’s ciphered telegram to Orjonikidze. July 2, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 85, inv. 3c, f. 2, sheet 3.

18 Orjonikidze’s reply on direct line to Chicherin’s telegram of 2 July about the disputed territories claimed by Azerbaijan and Armenia. July 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 85, inv. 3c, f. 2, sheet 6.

By means of another direct communiqué, Orjonikidze informed Lenin, Stalin, and Chicherin that the Armenian government had deliberately misinformed them:

“Today Gabrielyan told me that the Armenian delegation will accept immediate unification of Karabakh and Zangezur with Azerbaijan if it drops its claims to the Sharur-Daralayaz Uezd and the Nakhchivan Region. We have agreed among ourselves that when we are in Baku we will talk to Narimanov about this. You can see for yourself that there is no lack of clarity or understanding. I assure you that we are fully aware of our peaceful policy and are sticking to it. I am convinced, and this is my deepest conviction, that to strengthen Soviet power in Azerbaijan and to keep Baku in our control, we must join Nagorno-Karabakh; its valley part is out of the question: it has always been Azeri and part of Zangezur. Azerbaijan has guaranteed safety of the Armenians living there. We shall grant autonomy and organize the Armenian population without moving Muslim armed units there.”

Orjonikidze deemed it necessary to warn:

“Any other decision will shatter our position in Azerbaijan and will give us nothing in Armenia. I know that we might need Armenia under certain political circumstances. The decision rests with you; we shall follow suit. Let me tell you that this treatment of Azerbaijan undermines our prestige among the broad masses of Azeris and creates fertile soil for the efforts of our adversaries.”¹⁹

Chicherin and Lev Karakhan, who filled the post of Deputy People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, pushed the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs toward cooperation with Armenia at the expense of Azerbaijan. On 16 July, Orjonikidze, unable to withstand the pressure, telegraphed Lenin, Stalin, and Chicherin with a request not to enter a peace treaty with Armenia before the Azeri delegation arrived. He wrote: “The local comrades are very concerned about the possibility of peace with Armenia without involving Azerbaijan.”²⁰ Anastas Mikoyan, member of the CC Communist Party of Azerbaijan (Bolsheviks), was of the same opinion. On 29 June, he wrote to Orjonikidze: “We are all enraged by the Center’s policy toward Karabakh and Zangezur. You should also defend our opinion in the Center. We have nothing against peace with Armenia but not at the expense of Karabakh and Zangezur.”²¹

19 Direct reminder to Lenin, Stalin and Chicherin. July 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 85, inv. 3c, f. 2, sheets 8-9.

20 Telegram from Orjonikidze to Lenin, Stalin and Chicherin. July 16, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 85, inv. 3c, f. 2, sheet 12.

21 Telegram of Mikoyan to Orjonikidze. June 29, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 17, sheet 134. For more detail, see: Jamil Hasanli, “Karabakh: Looking into the Past in Search of the Truth,” *Caucasus and Globalization* 3-4 (2011).

This shows that, strange as it may seem, Soviet Russia and Dashnakian Armenia were engaged in secret negotiations about Azerbaijan, to which it was not invited and to which it had not agreed. The developments in Armenia copied what had happened with Georgia a month before: a lot of interesting information had traveled in the ciphered parts of the telegram Orjonikidze and Sergey Kirov had sent to Lenin and Stalin. They believed that a treaty with Georgia without clarifying the position of Azerbaijan was fraught with failure: “We want to know why we are signing a treaty with Georgia and refusing to sign a treaty with friendly Azerbaijan. If you have different plans for Azerbaijan, why are we being kept in the dark?” In the ciphered part they warned: “You should not put forward the name of Karakhan as the author of the Eastern policy. Here the Zakatala scandal [the reference is to the promise to transfer the Zakatala District to Georgia under the Moscow Treaty of 7 May 1920. -*J.H.*] is interpreted as Armenian perfidy.”²² Karakhan did play an important role in shaping and realizing the anti-Azeri policy of the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of Soviet Russia. The ciphered and open documents of the time directly point to him as the main plotter. Orjonikidze wrote in an open letter: “Karabakh is another Zakatala of our Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. An enormous provocation is underway here: it is rumored that this is stirred up by the Armenians in Moscow.”²³

Despite the Center’s unprecedented pressure on Azerbaijan, the gap between the Azeri and Armenian positions remained as wide as ever. The talks between Kirov and People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs Mirza Davud Huseynov and the Armenian representatives in Tiflis ended with no results. On August 6, he wrote to Chicherin that he had only convinced the Azeris to cede the Sharur-Daralayaz Uezd to Armenia; the Azeris regarded the rest, that is, the Nakhchivan Uezd, Ordubad, Julfa, Zangezur, and Karabakh, as decidedly their own. The Armenian representatives were no less determined to claim the regions. The Azeris argued that under the Musavat government these regions had belonged to Azerbaijan and that, therefore, if it ceded them, Soviet power would lose its prestige in the eyes of the Azeris, Iranians, and Turks.²⁴

On 10 August 1920, the talks in Moscow and Erivan ended in a treaty of six articles, four of which dealt with a deliberately fanned territorial dispute with Azerbaijan. Under Article 2, the troops of the Soviet Russia occupied the disputed regions of Karabakh, Zangezur, and Nakhchivan; the Armenian troops remained in a specified strip. Article 3 stated that the occupation by Soviet troops of the disputed territories did not predetermine the answer to the question about the rights of the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijan Socialist Soviet Republic to these territories. The same article further stated that the temporary occupation by the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist

22 Ciphered telegram of Orjonikidze and Kirov to Lenin and Stalin. June 12, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 85, inv. 2c, f. 2, sheets 9-11.

23 Telegram from Orjonikidze to Chicherin. 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 17, sheet 304.

24 See: Letter of Kirov to Chicherin. August 6, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 80, inv. 4, f. 102k, sheets 1-2.

Republic (RSFSR) of these territories was intended to create conditions conducive to a peaceful resolution of the territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan; in the future, the issue, said the Treaty, would be settled by means of a comprehensive agreement between the Republic of Armenia and the RSFSR.”²⁵ Russia hastened to sign the treaty with Armenia because, the same day, Turkey and the Allied Powers signed the Sevres Treaty, under which Armenia could have gained a lot. The Russian Soviet diplomats feared, with good reason, that Armenia might be tempted and would fall under the influence of the Allies. Under pressure from Moscow, the half-baked diplomatic document was signed; Armenia was promised the Azeri lands previously transformed by Soviet Russia into disputed territories.

From the very first days of Soviet power in Azerbaijan, much was done to transform the primordial Azeri lands into disputed territories. This is best illustrated by the Russian-Armenian treaty. On 19 June 1920, Orjonikidze, who had been dispatched to Azerbaijan, telegraphed Lenin and Chicherin that Soviet power had been proclaimed in Karabakh and Zangezur and that both areas believed themselves to be part of Azerbaijan. He deemed it necessary to warn: “In any case, Azerbaijan cannot survive without Karabakh and Zangezur. I think that we should invite an Azeri representative to Moscow to discuss all the issues related to Azerbaijan and Armenia before the treaty with Armenia is signed; repetition of the Zakataly scandal stirred up by Armenians will undermine our position here.”

The Treaty of 10 August between Soviet Russia and Armenia, of which Azerbaijan was not informed, can be described as a logical result of the political course of the Central Bolshevik government and of the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in particular, designed to infringe on the interests of Azerbaijan. Some people placed the stakes on Armenia in the territorial disputes between the two republics; some of the top officials in Moscow never hesitated to tell lies, nor did they shun provocations. Long before the treaty was signed, People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin wrote in his report to Lenin: “The Azeri government has claimed Karabakh, Zangezur, and the Sharur-Daralayaz Uezd along with Nakhchivan, Ordubad, and Julfa... This combination should not be accomplished by Russian hands—this is unacceptable. We should remain objective and unbiased. It would be a fatal mistake for our Eastern policy to rely on one national element against another national element. If we take any lands from Armenia and transfer them to Azerbaijan, our policy in the East will be distorted.”²⁶ Chicherin managed to present at least some of his ideas as official and transform them into instructions for the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasian Front sent in the name of the CC RCP (B) to not let either Azeri or Armenian officials into the disputed territories.

25 See: Treaty between the RSFSR and the Republic of Armenia. August 10, 1920, APDUDPAR, rec. gr. 1, inv. 169, f. 249/II, sheets 11-12.

26 Copy of a memo to Lenin. June 29, 1920, APDUDPAR, rec. gr. 1, inv. 1, f. 2a, sheets 13-14.

Formation of Armenia on the Political Map of the Caucasus and Karabakh Issue (1918-1921)

The new leaders of Azerbaijan found themselves in a quandary: on the one hand, enticed by revolutionary zeal, Azeri Soviet power imagined that it was close to Soviet Russia; on the other, Soviet Russia, believed to be the workers' and peasants' ally, detached the lands which had undoubtedly belonged to Azerbaijan under the previous government. This looked ugly, even to the Soviet officials dispatched from Moscow to Azerbaijan. The injustice was glaring. In a long report to Lenin, Nikolai Soloviev, who filled the post of Chairman of the Council of National Economy of Azerbaijan SSR, wrote:

“People pinned their hopes on Moscow, but the peace treaties with Georgia and Armenia, under which chunks of Azeri territory with Muslim population were transferred to these republics, shattered, if not killed, these hopes. The Muslim masses concluded that Moscow had not only captured Azerbaijan, but also increased Georgian and Armenian territories at its expense... The treaty with Armenia under which it acquired part of Azeri territory with Muslim population and a railway of immense strategic and economic importance which blocked the only corridor uniting Azerbaijan with Turkey was the heaviest blow. The ordinary Muslims were puzzled, while certain members of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan explained that the treaty had been compiled on the instructions of influential Armenians who filled high posts in the Center and called themselves Communists while being conscious or unconscious nationalists.”²⁷

Nariman Narimanov was enraged by Soviet Russia's arbitrariness toward Azerbaijan; he knew that these provocations had been devised and realized by People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Georgii Chicherin (who since the summer of 1919 had been dead set against Narimanov's Eastern policy) and his deputy Lev Karakhan. Their posts as heads of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs allowed them to shape and realize the foreign, especially Eastern, policy of the Soviets. In his opposition to Chicherin, Narimanov tried to rely on Lenin, who had pronounced many high-sounding words and had been lavish with his promises. Still expecting Lenin to be fair and unbiased, he wrote to him in mid-July:

“Comrade Chicherin's telegram shows that you are receiving biased information or that the Center has succumbed to those who are still cooperating with what remains of Denikin's crowd against Soviet power in Azerbaijan. If the Center wants to sacrifice Azerbaijan and keep Baku and its oil and renounce its Eastern policy, it is free to do this. I deem it my duty, however, to warn you: you will not be able to keep Baku separated from the rest of Azerbaijan with the perfidious Dashnaks and Georgian Mensheviks as your neighbors. On the other hand, I would like to find out what the Center thinks about us, the Muslims, and how

27 See: Information of Soloviev to Lenin “Our Policy in Azerbaijan in Two Months (May-June) after the Coup. 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 17, inv. 84, f. 58, sheet 15.

it dealt with these important issues without us. The Center was free to mistrust us, but such senior officials as Orjonikidze and Mdivani, likewise, disagree with its decision. Let me plainly say that with its decision about Karabakh the Center deprived us of our weapon, etc. It added plausibility to the provocative statements of the Musavat Party, which is holding forth that the Muslim Communists allegedly sold Azerbaijan to Russia, a country which recognizes the independence of Armenia and Georgia and, at the same time, insists for some reason that the areas which belonged beyond a doubt to Azerbaijan before Soviet power, become disputable. Comrade Chicherin says that we should obey the Center's policy, but is the Center aware that it is using us as a screen? We are told in plain terms: 'You cannot secure the absolutely undisputed territories, but you are holding forth about liberating the East.'"²⁸

Soviet Russia preferred to ignore Narimanov's resolute and sometimes even oppositional stand; it followed the policy of humiliation of Azerbaijan devised by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. On 20 July, Chicherin telegraphed Narimanov with a great deal of sarcasm: "So far neither you, nor Orjonikidze have clarified in your telegrams why you and the local Communists are dissatisfied with the occupation of Karabakh and Zangezur by Russian troops and why you want, without fail, their formal annexation to Azerbaijan... We should establish good relations with Armenia because if Turkey turns against us, Armenia, even Armenia of the Dashnaks, will serve as an outpost of our struggle against the advancing Turks."²⁹ In another letter, Chicherin deemed it necessary to warn the Politburo of the CC RCP (B) that relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia should be treated as part of Russia's Turkish policy: "When discussing the Azeri-Armenian disagreements, I have always pointed out that if the Turks acquired aggressive trends in the Caucasus, Armenia will serve as a barrier and will defend us."³⁰

As Soviet Russia was consolidating its position in Azerbaijan, the republic was gradually being turned into a toehold for the Bolsheviks' regional policy; its natural resources and territories were used to lull the Georgian and Armenian bourgeois republics and to create conditions conducive to Sovietization of Armenia. On 23 September 1920, Boris Legran sent a ciphered telegram to Lenin in which he described Soviet Russia's intentions regarding the Azeri territories: there was no danger in transferring Zangezur and Nakhchivan to Armenia. The very idea that Russia needed these territories for its liberating military operations in the Turkish and Tabriz sectors was utopian. One could not disagree with the territorial claims of Azerbaijan. Moscow's objective and subjective considerations would undoubtedly satisfy Azerbaijan; as for

28 Letter of Narimanov to Lenin, July 1920, APDUDPAR, rec. gr. 609, inv. 1, f. 71, sheets 41-42.

29 Urgent telegram of Chicherin to Narimanov. July 20, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 5, inv. 1, f. 2097, sheet 1.

30 Letter of Chicherin to the Politburo of the C.C. R.C.P. (B.). October 5, 1920, Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Federation (AVP RF), rec. gr. 04, inv. 39, Folder 232, f. 52987, sheet 40.

Karabakh, it was possible to insist on its unification with Azerbaijan.³¹ In another of his telegrams dated 24 October 1920, this time addressed to Chicherin, Legran described his agreements with the Armenians regarding the Azeri territories: “The Armenians categorically insist that Nakhchivan and Zangezur immediately be recognized as theirs. I pointed out that without Azerbaijan this issue cannot be resolved and that it can be raised only if the Armenians drop their claims to Karabakh. After long discussions they agreed, with minor stipulations, to renounce their claims to Karabakh.”³² After a short while, however, late in November 1920 when Soviet power had been established in Armenia, the struggle for the mountainous part of Karabakh entered a new stage.

As soon as Soviet power was established in Armenia on 29 November 1920, the Communists returned the Karabakh issue to the political agenda. On 30 November 1920, Nariman Narimanov and People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs Huseynov congratulated the Armenian Revolutionary Committee in a telegram. The telegram, however, did not entirely correspond to the decision adopted by the joint meeting of the Politburo and Orgburo of the CC of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan held on November 30. Narimanov’s speech at the grand meeting of the Baku Soviet on the occasion of establishing Soviet power in Armenia and the Declaration he read on 1 December 1920 also contained certain contradictions. The Declaration said:

“Soviet Azerbaijan, which intends to appease the fraternal Armenian working people fighting the Dashnaks who have spilled and are spilling the innocent blood of our best Communist comrades in Armenia and Zangezur, declares that from this time on territorial issues will never cause bloodshed between two peoples who have been neighbors for centuries; the territories of the Zangezur and Nakhchivan uyezds are an inalienable part of Soviet Armenia. The toiling peasants of Nagorno-Karabakh are granted the right to complete self-determination; all military actions in Zangezur are being suspended, while the troops of Soviet Azerbaijan are being pulled out.”³³

The Declaration Narimanov read on 1 December mentioned Nakhchivan in addition to Zangezur as the territories transferred to Armenia. Jörg Baberowski of Humboldt University asserts that in the Summer of 1920, Narimanov, under the pressure of Orjonikidze, agreed to transfer Zangezur, Karabakh, and Nakhchivan to Armenia.³⁴

31 See: Legran’s telegram to Lenin. September 23, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 5, inv. 1, f. 21, sheet 144.

32 Secret telegram of Legran to Chicherin. October 24, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 5, inv. 1, f. 2178, sheet 20.

33 *Kommunist*, December 2, 1920.

34 See: Jörg Baberowski, *Vrag est vezde. Stalinism na Kavkaze* (Moscow, 2010), p. 237. German version: Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind ist überall: Stalinismus im Kaukasus* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003), p. 882.

The text which appeared in the Baku newspapers had been falsified by Grigorii Orjonikidze. On 1 December, he informed Legran and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR Chicherin of the following in a ciphered telegram: "Azerbaijan has already responded and transferred Nakhchivan, Zangezur, and Nagorno-Karabakh to Soviet Armenia."³⁵ On 2 December, in another telegram, he informed Lenin and Stalin of the following: "Yesterday Azerbaijan announced that Nakhichevan, Zangezur, and Nagorno-Karabakh were transferred to Soviet Armenia."³⁶ On Stalin's initiative, two days later "good news" appeared in *Pravda*. Stalin's article, based on a distorted telegram written when Soviet power was established in Armenia, appeared on the same day in *Izvestia*. The question arises: Was Orjonikidze misinformed, or was it a lie? When Soviet power was established in Dilijan, Orjonikidze discussed the issues mentioned in the Declaration of the government of Azerbaijan with Amayak Nazaretyan by direct telephone line and said in particular that "today, the Soviet gathered for its gala meeting in Baku where Narimanov read the Declaration of the government of Azerbaijan, which pointed out that there were no longer borders between Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan. From this day on, the territory of the Zangezur and Nakhchivan uezds became an inalienable part of Soviet Armenia. It was exclaimed: "*The Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh have been granted the right to self-determination*. The riches of Azerbaijan - oil and kerosene- have become the riches of both republics." Overjoyed, Nazaretyan exclaimed: "We shall start shouting in the press: Bravo, Azeris!"³⁷

Did anyone in Armenia see the real text of the Declaration? We know that the text signed by Narimanov and Huseynov was telegraphed to the Armenian Revolutionary Committee. After reading the document, Askanaz Mravyan (a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Committee) informed Armenian representative in Moscow Saak Ter-Gabrielyan that Azerbaijan had announced that Zangezur and Nakhchivan had been united (with Armenia) and that a referendum would take place in Nagorno-Karabakh.³⁸

Why did Narimanov suggest in his Declaration that Zangezur be transferred to Armenia? The idea belonged to the Politburo of the CC RCP (B). Orjonikidze was behind this Declaration; this means that the man convinced that Zangezur belonged to Azerbaijan suddenly changed his mind. Why? He wanted to drive a wedge between Azerbaijan and Turkey to reduce to naught Turkey's potential threat to Azerbaijan. On 23 November 1920, Stalin, while

35 Orjonikidze's ciphered telegram to Legran and Chicherin. December 1, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 85, inv. 14, f. 33, sheet 12.

36 Orjonikidze's letter to Lenin and Stalin, December 2, 1920. RSASPH, rec. gr. 85, inv. 14, f. 33, sheet 20.

37 Conversation between Nazaretyan and Orjonikidze by direct telephone line. December 1, 1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 85, inv. 14, f. 37, sheet 1. For more detail, see: Jamil Hasanli, "How the Caucasus Bureau of the C.C. R.C.P. (B) Discussed the Karabakh Issue in 1920-1923," *Caucasus and Globalization* 1-2 (2011).

38 See: From a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Committee (Mravyan) to representative of Soviet Armenia Ter-Gabrielyan. January 4, 1921, AVP RF, rec. gr. 04, inv. 39, folder 232, f. 53001, sheet 14.

travelling from Baku to Moscow, used a direct line from Rostov-on-Don to inform Lenin that, according to Orjonikidze, the Turks' desire to establish a common border between Turkey and Azerbaijan looked threatening and that the Turkish plans could be upturned by transferring Zangezur to Armenia.³⁹ This explains why the Turks regarded the treaty between Soviet Russia and Dashnak Armenia and friendly relations between these countries when Armenia became Soviet to be an obstacle on Turkey's road to the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus.⁴⁰

Back on 4 November 1920, during his "famous" trip to the Caucasus, Stalin attended a joint meeting of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party (Bolshevik) (CC Az.CP (B)) and the Caucasian Bureau of the C.C. R.C.P. (B.), which listened to Legran's report on the situation in Armenia and passed a decision. Point "b" of the document, which related to the discussed treaty between Russia and Armenia, said the following: "To inform, at the same time, that the Politburo insists that the point on the transfer of Nakhichevan and Zangezur [suggested by Moscow. -J.H.] is not advantageous either politically or strategically and can only be carried out in an emergency." Point "d" instructed Nariman Narimanov to substantiate the Politburo's opinion about Nakhchivan and Zangezur.⁴¹

This meant that there was no Karabakh problem at all initially, which was why it was not discussed. On 20 November 1920, a diplomatic mission of Soviet Russia arrived in Erivan to monitor the talks between Turkey and Armenia underway in Gumri and to sort out Armenia's territorial claims against Azerbaijan and Georgia.⁴² People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Georgii Chicherin was informed that "today, the continued existence of the Armenian people depends not so much on military force as on diplomacy. We should abandon party romanticism and arm ourselves with grim realism." The diplomatic mission deemed it necessary to remind the people's commissar that "when talking to the Turks in Batumi [at the peace conference held in Batumi in May-June 1918. -J.H.], Kachaznuni and Khatisyan agreed to transfer Karabakh to Azerbaijan."⁴³ Despite the fact that on 1 December 1920, Nariman Narimanov made public the Declaration of the Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan, Nakhchivan and Karabakh (both its valley and mountain parts) still belonged to Azerbaijan. Under the Moscow Treaty of 16 March 1921 between Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey, the Nakhchivan Region became

39 See: Conversation between Stalin and Lenin by direct line. November 23, 1920, AVP RF, rec. gr. 04, inv. 39, folder 232, f. 52987, sheet 47.

40 See: Letter of Legran to Chicherin. 22.12.1920, RSASPH, rec. gr. 5, inv. 1, f. 212733, sheet 5.

41 See: Protocol No. 4 of the joint meeting of the CC Az.CP (B) and Caucasian Bureau. November 4, 1920, APD UDP AR, rec. gr. 1, inv. 1, f. 22, sheet 20.

42 For more detail, see: Firuz Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia (1917-1921)* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), p. 290; Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 130.

43 The Diplomatic Representatives of Soviet Russia in Erivan to People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin. November 1920, SAAR, rec. gr. 28, inv. 1, f. 38, sheet 15.

an autonomous territory as a protectorate of Azerbaijan on the condition that it would never cede protectorate to a third state. This revived the problem of the mountainous part of Karabakh as an urgent issue between Azerbaijan and Armenia.⁴⁴

On 3 June 1921, members of the Caucasian Bureau, Grigorii Orjonikidze, Filip Makharadze, Nariman Narimanov, Alexander Myasnikov (Martuni), Ivan Orakhelashvili, Amayak Nazaretyan, and Yurii Figatner (candidate for bureau member), Secretary of the C.C. of the Azerbaijan CP Grigorii Kaminsky, and member of the CC of the Communist Party of Georgia Shalva Eliava attended a plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). Its evening sitting was expected to discuss three questions: (1) the Azerbaijani issue; (2) the issue of Zangezur; and (3) the nomads. Protocol No. 6 deals with the decisions on the first and third points; the second was discussed separately in the Addendum to the Protocol, which started all the trouble.⁴⁵ First, as distinct from Protocol No. 6, the decision on Zangezur, which consisted of seven points, was marked as “strictly confidential.” Second, of the seven points, only six dealt with Zangezur, while Point 5 said: “The declaration of the Armenian government should mention that Nagorno-Karabakh belongs to Armenia.”⁴⁶

On 12 June, the Council of People’s Commissars (CPC) of Armenia issued a decree on joining the mountainous part of Karabakh to Armenia. The decree said: “Proceeding from the declaration of the Revolutionary Committee of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan and from the agreement between the socialist republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is declared that from this time on Nagorno-Karabakh has become an inalienable part of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia.”⁴⁷ The same day, Myasnikov and Karabekyan signed the document; three days later, on June 15, it was discussed by the CC CP of Armenia, which passed the following decision: “The decree on the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh and Soviet Armenia should be published.” The same sitting discussed the fifth point of its agenda on dispatching a representative to Karabakh; it was decided “to send Comrade Mravyan together with Pirumov, Akop Ionisyan, Ter-Simonyan, and a group of other comrades to Karabakh.”⁴⁸ The government issued a corresponding decree, which the Armenian Revolutionary Committee published a week later on 19 June. Askanaz Mravyan was appointed Chargé d’Affaires Extraordinaire in Nagorno-Karabakh.

44 For more detail, see: William Edward David Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border (1828–1921)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

45 See: Protocol No. 6 of the evening sitting of the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). June 3, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 76rev.

46 Addendum to Protocol No. 6 of the evening sitting of the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). June 3, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 77.

47 *Bakinsky rabochy*, June 22, 1921.

48 Protocol No. 8 of the meeting of the CC of the Communist Party of Armenia. June 15, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 105, sheet 11rev.

As distinct from the Decree of the CPC of Armenia of 12 June, the Declaration of the Azerbaijan Revolutionary Committee did not mention the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia; this was not discussed by the republics which had never concluded any legally valid agreement either. It seems that the authors of the Decree were inspired by the “strictly confidential” decision on the Zangezur issue which the Caucasian Bureau had passed on 3 June 1921. The sitting was chaired by Orjonikidze with Figatner acting as a secretary. The decree of 12 June did not mention the 3 June decision of the Caucasian Bureau because, first, it was “strictly confidential” and second, the Caucasian Bureau was not empowered to pass decisions of this kind.

What caused the hasty and legally untenable actions designed to transfer Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia? What was behind Armenia’s actions and the decision of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B) in May-June 1921? The answer is simple. On 15 June, the commission on border problems among the Transcaucasian republics was to meet in Tiflis. On 2 May 1921, the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau set up a commission of representatives of the three republics headed by Sergey Kirov to delimitate the administrative borders.⁴⁹ On the eve of the Tiflis meeting, the Caucasian Bureau (by its decision of 3 June) and the Armenian government (by a decree of 12 June) wanted to confront Azerbaijan with the accomplished transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

On 26 June, the CPC of Azerbaijan discussed Navy Commissar of Azerbaijan Aliheydar Karaev’s report about his trip to Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan and decided that the Armenian claims to Nagorno-Karabakh should be studied and summarized in a detailed report to the Council. A group of three (Shakhtakhtinsky, Vezirov, and Aliev) was set up to cope with the task. It was decided to suspend the powers the Armenian government had extended to Mravyan until the group had completed its report and to inform Grigorii Orjonikidze, Chairman of the Armenian Revolutionary Committee Alexander Myasnikov, Navy Commissar of Azerbaijan Karaev, and Askanaz Mravyan of this decision.⁵⁰ On 27 June, Nariman Narimanov, in fulfillment of the decision, informed Orjonikidze and Myasnikov by telegraph that the CPC of Azerbaijan had unanimously deemed the unilateral decision on Nagorno-Karabakh passed by the Armenian Revolutionary Committee without discussion at the CPC of Armenia and the arrival of Mravyan in Nagorno-Karabakh as envoy extraordinary of Armenia to be an unprecedented political and tactical mistake. It was also requested that Mravyan be immediately recalled.

On 27 June, a joint sitting of the Politburo and Orgburo of the CC of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan discussed the problem of borders between

49 See: Protocol No. 2 of the sitting of the Caucasian Bureau of CC RCP (B). May 2, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 57.

50 See: Protocol of a sitting of the Council of People’s Commissars of Azerbaijan. June 26, 1921, SAAR, rec. gr. 411, inv. 1, f. 12, sheet 1.

Azerbaijan and Armenia and dismissed the Nagorno-Karabakh issue raised by Alexander Bekzadyan as untenable in view of the region's obvious economic bias toward Azerbaijan. Likewise, it was administratively and economically untenable to divide the localities with Armenian and Azeri populations between the two republics. On the basis of Narimanov's declaration, involving Armenian and Muslim villagers in wide-scale Soviet construction was suggested as the only answer. It was also suggested that all discussions be discontinued until relevant information had arrived from Tiflis. Even before the sitting adjourned, Alihedar Shirvani, instructed by Narimanov, informed Huseynov in Tiflis of this decision.⁵¹ His message said in part: "The Council of People's Commissars has agreed with the decision. Comrade Narimanov asked me to inform you that the question must be resolved in this way, otherwise the Council will divest itself of all of its responsibilities, since if this is the way Soviet Armenia wishes to make a good impression on the Dashnaks and the non-party masses, we should bear in mind that by the same token we will be reviving anti-Soviet groups in Azerbaijan similar to the Dashnaks."⁵²

On 28 June, the CPC met once more under Narimanov's chairmanship. Myasnikov's Declaration, which proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh part of the Armenian S.S.R., was declined; the meeting discussed the possibility of recalling Mravyan, extraordinary representative of Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh. After this, Narimanov departed to Tiflis to attend the plenary meeting of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B) scheduled for 4 July 1921. The famous sitting of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B) of 27 June 1921 never considered the historical and ethnographic aspects; the decision was based on Karabakh's economic pull toward Azerbaijan. On 4 July, however, at another plenum of the Caucasian Bureau attended by Joseph Stalin, Sergey Kirov, future head of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (three weeks later he would have to become Secretary of the CC Az.CP (B) of Azerbaijan. -J.H.), and Grigorii Orjonikidze (the Transcaucasus republics' curator) voted for the following resolution: "*To include* [italics added for emphasis -J.H.] Nagorno-Karabakh in the Armenian SSR and limit the plebiscite to the mountainous part."⁵³

The plenary session was attended by member of the CC RCP (B) Stalin and members of its Caucasian Bureau Orjonikidze, Makharadze, Narimanov, Myasnikov, Kirov, Nazaretyan, Orakhelashvili, Figatner; Breitman (Secretary of the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Young Communist League), and members of the Central Committee of the

51 See: Protocol No. 20 of the sitting of the Politburo and Orgburo of the CC Az.CP (B). June 27, 1921, APDUDPAR, rec. gr. 1, inv. 74, f. 1231, sheet 64.

52 Conversation of Shirvani and Narimanov by direct phone line with Huseynov. June 27, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 215, sheet 14.

53 Protocol No. 11 of the evening sitting of the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). July 4, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 118.

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Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Georgia Tsintsadze, Mdivani, and Svanidze. The discussion revealed two opposite opinions. The participants were invited to vote for the following: (a) Karabakh *should remain* (italics added for emphasis -J.H.) part of Azerbaijan (Narimanov, Makharadze, and Nazaretyan voted “for”; Orjonikidze, Myasnikov, Kirov and Figatner voted “against”); (b) The plebiscite should be carried out throughout the entire territory of Karabakh among the Armenians and Muslims (Narimanov and Makharadze voted “for”); (c) The mountainous part of Karabakh should be joined to Armenia (Orjonikidze, Myasnikov, Figatner, and Kirov voted “for”); (d) The plebiscite should be carried out only in Upper Karabakh (Orjonikidze, Myasnikov, Figatner, Kirov, and Nazaretyan voted “for”).⁵⁴

The protocol contains a note: Comrade Ivan Orakhelashvili was absent when the vote on Karabakh was taken. This was a much more honest position than that of future Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Sergey Kirov and Grigorii Orjonikidze, who repeatedly demanded in his telegrams to Vladimir Lenin and Georgii Chicherin that both the valley and the mountainous part of Karabakh be left in Azerbaijan. They voted “for” on the two last points. The adopted decision violated Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity. This made people wonder why Orjonikidze and Kirov, who several months earlier “could not imagine Azerbaijan without Karabakh,” changed their minds in June 1921 and voted against Azerbaijan at the 4 July sitting of the Caucasian Bureau. Were they guided by the Center’s secret instructions? Here is an explanation: the Moscow Treaty of 16 March 1921 between Soviet Russia and Turkey (with a point which preserved Nakhichevan within Azerbaijan on the condition that Azerbaijan would never cede protectorate to a third state) turned Nagorno-Karabakh into a target of secret and then open discussions at the Caucasian Bureau in June-July 1921 and triggered attempts to transfer Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia by force.

The text and the political sense of the decision of the Caucasian Bureau of 4 July was frequently falsified and misinterpreted. The Armenian authors performed a “minor” operation by replacing the verb “include” with the verb “keep within.” Nariman Narimanov stated resolutely that “because the Karabakh issue is so important to Azerbaijan, I believe it necessary to transfer the final decision on it to the CC RCP.” It was thanks to his protest that the meeting arrived at the following decision: “Since the Karabakh issue has caused serious disagreements, the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B) believes it advisable to transfer the final decision to the CC RCP (B).”⁵⁵ This meant that the same sitting discussed the Karabakh issue as Point 5 of the

54 See: Protocol No. 11 of the evening sitting of the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). July 4, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 118. For more detailed information, see: Jamil Hasanli, *The Sovietization of Azerbaijan: The South Caucasus in the Triangle of Russia, Turkey, and Iran, 1920-1922* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2018), pp. 146-148.

55 Protocol No. 11 of the evening sitting of the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). July 4, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 114.

agenda; the decision passed by a majority vote after Narimanov's statement (Point 6) annulled the previous results.⁵⁶

On 5 July, the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau adopted the following decisions on Point 2 of the agenda in view of the firm position of Narimanov and Orjonikidze's retreat from his previous stand: (a) proceeding from the need to maintain national peace between the Muslims and the Armenians, the economic ties between Upper and Lower Karabakh, and its constant contacts with Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh *should be left* (italics mine -J.H.) within the Azerbaijan SSR with broad regional autonomy and its administrative center in the town of Shusha, which belongs to the autonomous region (for-4; abstained-3); (b) the CC of Azerbaijan should be instructed to identify the boundaries of the autonomous region and present the results to the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B.) for approval; (c) the Presidium of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC should be instructed to talk to the CC of Armenia and the CC of Azerbaijan about a candidate for the post of commissar extraordinary of Nagorno-Karabakh; (d) the CC of Azerbaijan should be instructed to identify the volume of rights of the autonomy of Nagorno-Karabakh and present the result to the Caucasian Bureau of the CC for approval.⁵⁷

When commenting on the repeal of the first "fair decision" on the Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian side referred to Joseph Stalin's unexpected arrival in Tiflis, who had allegedly pulled the strings for the Azeris in his usual manner. We have established that Stalin had arrived in Tiflis earlier, late in June and could not, therefore, suddenly arrive at the plenary meeting of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B) on 5 July. Why do the Armenian historians who falsify the historical documents of the Caucasian Bureau implicate Stalin in "keeping" ("transferring" being their favorite term) Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan? Because the crimes perpetrated under Stalin give the Armenians a chance to present themselves as victims of the totalitarian regime and create the semblance of "fairness restored."⁵⁸

The results of the discussion of the Zangezur (3 June 1921) and Nagorno-Karabakh (4-5 July) issues were caused by a wave of Communist nationalism in Armenia raised by the fact that the Moscow Treaty (March 1921) between Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey had registered the status of the Nakhichevan Region and the attempts of the Center to quench this wave. On 15 April 1921, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of Armenia Alexander Bekzadyan (who headed the Armenian delegation at the Moscow talks) sent a long letter of protest to Georgii Chicherin in which he accused Soviet Russia of failing to protect the interests of the Armenians. The letter said: "The

56 See: Protocol No. 12 of the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). July 5, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 122.

57 See: Protocol No. 12 of the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). July 5, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 1, sheet 122.

58 Tofiq Köçerli, *Qarabağ: Yalan ve hegiget* (Baku: İrşad, 1998), p. 172.

Armenian delegation finds it very important to point out that the Turkish delegation at the conference acted as a protector and defender of the Muslim population of the Transcaucasus and of the interests of Soviet Azerbaijan in particular.”⁵⁹ Bekzadyan was concerned about the fact that Turkey had managed to retain Nakhichevan, a border point of great importance for its safety in the east, within Azerbaijan. He deemed it necessary to stress that “the conference’s decision on the Nakhichevan and Sharuro-Daralaghez issues deprived Armenia of the possibility of administering Zangezur, which belongs to it, in a normal way.”⁶⁰

Chicherin wrote a letter to Saak Ter-Gabrielyan, who represented the Soviet government of Armenia, informing him of the above, by saying that he was amazed by Bekzadyan’s attempt to justify what the Armenian delegation had been doing at the Moscow conference and push the guilt onto the Russian delegation. He wrote that the Armenians, with whom he had been communicating, were well-aware of the conference’s main aim and had never complained of its decisions.⁶¹ Chicherin sent a more or less similar telegram to Boris Legran in Tiflis, which said: “I strongly object to the way Bekzadyan is trying, first, to heap the guilt on the Russian delegation and, second, to purge the Armenian delegation of accusations in front of readers or listeners, of whom I know nothing, by distorting the facts and suppressing information of which the Armenian delegation was well aware.”⁶²

The Armenian leaders resorted to blackmail of this sort to be able to take advantage of an opportune moment (in the context of the closed discussions of the Moscow Treaty) to appropriate Karabakh and pull the Center to their side. The Armenian leaders, who had remained silent at the Moscow Conference, suddenly formulated their claims to Soviet Russia; they obviously wanted Karabakh as a compensation of sorts. The Nagorno-Karabakh issue was discussed once more on 5 July at the insistence of Orjonikidze and Nazaretyan.

The decisions of the Caucasian Bureau of 5 July began to be implemented in the first days of August. On 1 August 1921, an extraordinary Congress of the Soviets of the 2nd Part of the Shusha Uezd was held in the village of Kendhurt. L. Mirzoyan, who was invited to represent the Council of People’s Commissars, delivered a report in which he proved that economically, spiritually, politically, and ethnically Karabakh was closely connected with Baku as the center of Azerbaijan. He described the decision of the Caucasian Bureau to set up an administrative unit subordinated directly to Baku in the

59 A. Bekzadyan’s letter to Chicherin. April 15, 1921, AVP RF, rec. gr. 04, inv. 39, folder 232, f. 53001, sheets 58-59.

60 A. Bekzadyan’s letter to Chicherin. April 15, 1921, AVP RF, rec. gr. 04, inv. 39, folder 232, f. 53001, sheet 62.

61 See: Chicherin’s letter to Ter-Gabrielyan. April 21, 1921, AVP RF, rec. gr. 04, inv. 39, folder 232, f. 53001, sheet 63.

62 Chicherin’s telegram to Legran. April 22, 1921, AVP RF, rec. gr. 04, inv. 39, folder 232, f. 53001, sheet 65.

mountainous part of Karabakh as absolutely correct⁶³ and promised that with the establishment of an autonomy all the problems would be resolved. On his return, Mirzoyan supplied a detailed report in which he wrote, in particular, that the Karabakh issue had been created (and fanned) by top party and Soviet officials, on the one hand, and by the Armenian nationalist-minded intelligentsia, on the other.⁶⁴

After 5 July, it was rumored that the Armenians had been evicted from Karabakh to Armenia (Mirzoyan mentioned in his report that the rumors were started by nationalist-minded Armenians). Gradually, this “information” reached the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B). It should be said that all those who were displeased with the decisions of the Caucasian Bureau of 5 July acted through Sergey Kirov (when he was elected First Secretary of the CC of the Community Party of Azerbaijan). In August 1921, Secretary of the Caucasian Bureau Figatner wrote to Kirov that allegedly after the decision of the Caucasian Bureau of 5 July to keep Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan, “many Armenian villages were moved from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.”⁶⁵ After receiving this information, Kirov immediately asked Karaev and Mirzoyan (who were in Karabakh) to clarify it. They answered that there was an opposite trend: in the first months of Sovietization of Azerbaijan, Muslims started moving away from Karabakh to other places.

The decision of the Caucasian Bureau on an autonomous status for the mountainous part of Karabakh forced the Center to closely follow the relevant developments. In a letter to Sergey Kirov, First Secretary of the CC Az.CP (B), dated 22 May 1922, Joseph Stalin wrote the following with a great deal of sarcasm: “They say that Fonstein, a ‘native’ of Karabakh, represents it in the Central Executive Committee of Azerbaijan.”⁶⁶ In his letter dated 18 June, Kirov explained to Stalin that he had been deluded and listed the members who represented Karabakh at the Central Executive Committee (CEC).⁶⁷ At the same time, the Center was playing into the hands of the Armenians; it tried to prevent subordination of the party organization of Karabakh to the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. On 1 August 1922, however, Kirov and Matyushin, who headed the organizational department of CC Az.CP (B), telegraphed to Moscow: “The territory of Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan, while its party organization is part of the Az.CP.”⁶⁸

63 See: Protocol of the extraordinary Congress of the Soviets of the 2nd Part of the Shusha Uezd. 01.08.1921, APDUDPAR, rec. gr. 1, inv. 2, f. 18, sheets 120-120rev.

64 See: Report by Mirzoyan at the C.C. Az.C.P. (Copy to the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B)) about his trip to the mountainous part of Karabakh. August 3, 1921, RSASPH, rec. gr. 64, inv. 1, f. 95, sheet 3rev.

65 Information supplied by Secretary of the Caucasian Bureau of the CC RCP (B) Figatner to Kirov. August 1921, APD UDP AR, rec. gr. 1, inv. 129, f. 107, sheet 58.

66 Stalin’s letter about the situation in the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and the representative of Karabakh in the CEC of Azerbaijan. May 22, 1922, RSASPH, rec. gr. 558, inv. 11, f. 746, sheet 1.

67 See: Kirov’s confidential letter to Stalin. June 18, 1922, RSASPH, rec. gr. 558, inv. 11, f. 746, sheet 2.

68 Telegram sent by Kirov and Matyushin to the CC RCP (B). August 1, 1922, RSASPH, rec. gr. 80, inv. 25, f. 2, sheet 1.

On 7 July 1923, the Central Executive Committee of Azerbaijan crowned three years of preparatory work with a decree on setting up the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAR) as part of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This is how the struggle over the territorial affiliation of Nagorno-Karabakh which began in the first years of Soviet power in the Transcaucasus ended. On 27 May 1924, Nariman Narimanov wrote the following to Stalin: “Under Mirzoyan’s strong pressure, Nagorno-Karabakh was made an autonomous region. I was not able to accomplish this, not because I was against the autonomy, but because the Armenian peasants themselves did not want this. Meanwhile, Mirzoyan, assisted by the Dashnak teachers, tilled the soil and pushed the decision through the Transcaucasian Territorial Committee.”⁶⁹ He knew that the trouble for Azerbaijan did not stop there; he predicted that the autonomy of Nagorno-Karabakh was the beginning of a future tragedy.

Conclusion

Back in the 19th century, Alexander Griboedov, a Russian diplomat and poet, wrote: “We ... have been holding forth long enough about how to convince the Muslims to accept their current problems as not lasting forever and how to eradicate their fears that Armenians will seize the land on which they were allowed to settle temporarily.”⁷⁰ The fears proved justified: the Armenians put down roots in the Azeri lands and eventually became hostile toward the true owners of the land. Throughout the 20th century, the Azeris deeply regretted the hospitality with which they treated the Armenians. In the last two decades, this regret has become even more agonizing.

69 N. Narimanov, *K istorii nashey revolyutsii v okrainakh (Pismo I.V. Stalinu)* (Baku, 1992), p. 59.

70 A.S. Griboedov, *Sochinenia v dvukh tomakh, Vol. 2* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 340-341.

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CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE TURKISH EASTERN ARMY UNDER GENERAL KAZIM KARABEKİR’S COMMAND TO TURKISH NATIONAL RESISTANCE AND PEACE-MAKING WITH THE CAUCASIAN REPUBLICS AT WORLD WAR-I AND THE FOLLOWING TURKISH WAR OF LIBERATION*

(BİRİNCİ DÜNYA VE KURTULUŞ SAVAŞLARINDA KAZIM KARABEKİR KOMUTASINDAKİ TÜRK ORDUSUNUN MİLLÎ MÜCADELEYE VE KAFKAS CUMHURİYETLERİYLE BARIŞIN TESİSİNE KATKILARI)

Ali Bilge CANKOREL**

Abstract: *World War-I was considerably about the territorial partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. The Allied powers of Great Britain and France had offered, apart from their own shares, Istanbul, Turkish Straits of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, parts of the eastern Black Sea coast-line and of Eastern Anatolia to Russia, while promising Greece the Aegean coast including İzmir (Smyrnia), also planning the establishment of carved-out Armenian and Greek-Pontus states. The Mudros Armistice Treaty of 30 October 1918 and the Sèvres Peace Treaty of 10 August 1920 officialised these*

* This is the English translation by Ahmet Can Öktem of the article authored by Ali Bilge Cankorel titled “Birinci Dünya Savaşı ve Millî Mücadelede Kâzım Karabekir Komutasındaki Türk Ordusunun Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Doğu Sınırlarının Çizilmesi ve Kafkas Cumhuriyetleriyle Barışın Tesisi Yolunda Katkıları” that was originally published in the *Ermeni Araştırmaları* journal. To view the original article: Ali Bilge Cankorel, “Birinci Dünya Savaşı ve Millî Mücadelede Kâzım Karabekir Komutasındaki Türk Ordusunun Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Doğu Sınırlarının Çizilmesi ve Kafkas Cumhuriyetleriyle Barışın Tesisi Yolunda Katkıları,” *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 60 (2018): 25-72.

** ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9253-6854>
Ambassador (R)

secret arrangements upon the defeat of the Central Powers, whereas the Ottoman Parliament would never ratify the Sèvres Treaty, thereby rendering it defunct.

The Turkish National Resistance against the occupying Powers and the surrendering of the Istanbul Government was led by General Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). However, the Eastern Front under General Kazım Karabekir's command deserves the credit for setting the stage at the Erzurum People's Congress of July 1919 for the launching of the Resistance Movement under Mustafa Kemal's leadership in defiance of orders from the surrendering Istanbul Government and against the Allied Governments. Karabekir's military victories leading to the retrieval of all eastern Anatolian territory from the occupying Russian and Armenian forces as well as the protection his forces extended to Azerbaijan against Russian-British-Armenian aggression would win him the popular reputation as the "Savior of the East". His military victories in eastern Turkey and the Caucasus would be sealed by the peace treaties of Gyumri and Kars which he negotiated with Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, drawing current borders.

Keywords: *WW-I, Turkish National Resistance, Eastern and Caucasian Fronts, Karabekir*

Öz: *Birinci Dünya Savaşı önemli ölçüde Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun parçalanmasıyla ilgiliydi. İtilâf Devletleri İngiltere ve Fransa, kendi alacakları hisseler dışında İstanbul'u, Boğazlar'ı, Doğu Karadeniz ve Doğu Anadolu'nun bir kısmını Rusya'ya önermişler, Yunanistan'a Ege kıyılarıyla İzmir'i vaat etmek yanında Anadolu'dan koparılacak topraklarda Ermeni ve Rum-Pontus Devletleri kurulmasını öngörmüşlerdi. İttifak Güçlerinin savaştan yenik çıkması üzerine imzalanan 30 Ekim 1918 Mondros Ateşkes ve 10 Ağustos 1920 Sevr Antlaşmaları bu gizli paylaşım anlaşmalarına resmiyet kazandırmış olmakla beraber Osmanlı Meclisinin onaylamayışı sebebiyle Sevr asla yürürlüğe girmemiştir.*

İşgal güçlerine ve teslimi kabul eden Osmanlı Hükûmetine karşı Millî Mücadele hareketinin Mustafa Kemal önderliğinde başlatıldığı Temmuz 1919 Erzurum Kongresinin İstanbul Hükûmeti ve İşgal Güçlerinin baskılarına rağmen başarıyla sonuçlanmasını sağlayan Kazım Karabekir Paşa komutasındaki Şark Cephesinin İstiklâl Harbinde özel bir yeri vardır. İşgal güçlerine kaybedilen toprakların ilk olarak Rusya ve Ermenistan'dan geri alınması ve komutasındaki askeri birliklerin Azerbaycan'a Rus-İngiliz-Ermeni saldırıları karşısında koruma sağlamış olması Karabekir'e halkın gönlünde "Şark Fatihî" ünvanını kazanmıştır. Karabekir'in Doğu Türkiye ve Kafkasya'daki askeri zaferleri, kendisinin Ermenistan, Gürcistan ve Azerbaycan ile yaptığı müzakereler sonrasında elde edilen ve mevcut sınırları belirleyen Gümrü ve Kars Barış Antlaşmalarının imzalanmasıyla nihai şekline kavuşmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Birinci Dünya Savaşı, İstiklâl Harbi, Şark ve Kafkas Cepheleeri, Karabekir*

INTRODUCTION

From the break-out of World War-I in 1914 to the end of the Turkish National War of Liberation in 1922, the Turkish nation fought in Macedonia, Galicia, Romania, Gallipoli, the Suez Canal, Iraq, Hedjaz-Yemen, Syria-Palestine, East-West-North-South Anatolia, and the Caucasia fronts.

During this ten-year period of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire which unfolded with the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, the first Anatolian lands under occupation were to be taken back at the Eastern Front. The Turkish forces would further advance into Southern Caucasus whereupon the agreements signed with those eastern neighboring countries and Russia would confirm the first international recognition of the new Turkish Regime succeeding the Ottoman Empire, thus providing vital moral, material, military, and political support to the Western Front where the final victory was to be won. The short-lived Ottoman Caucasus Islam Army created in 1918 was also supported by the Eastern Front.¹

The Eastern Anatolia and Caucasus fronts experienced severe fault-line breakages upon the Bolshevik Revolution of 7 November and the Mudros Armistice Treaty of 30 October 1918. Despite the Armistice which deprived the Turkish Resistance Movement of all its territorial retrievals in the Eastern Anatolian and the Caucasus fronts, those lands would be won back before long for the second time from Armenian occupation while, upon the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the new Soviet Government, withdrawing from the war, would also waive the Tsarist Regime's claims on Turkish territory. As was the case in all fronts of the Turkish National War of Liberation, military activities that were closely intertwined with on-going political-diplomatic developments had to be interrupted at times in the Eastern Front as well. Indisputably, the most important development in this process setting the course of the war in favor of Turkey, particularly in the Eastern Front, was the institution of the critical relations between the National Resistance leadership and the Bolshevik Government under the highly volatile circumstances prevailing in the post-Bolshevik Revolution times. In the extremely difficult conditions imposed by the Armistice of Mudros, the uncompromising stance held against the Allied Powers reflects the exemplary sharp diplomatic vision and resoluteness of the National Resistance leadership. The same leadership displayed another example of foresight with regard to the Central Powers' strategies in carefully avoiding the exploitation of the Islamic sensitivities of the Anatolian and Caucasian peoples, a method which the German Administration consistently tried employing through the Ottoman Union and Progress Committee's Prime Minister Talât Pasha and War Minister Enver Pasha.

However, the most important feature of the Eastern Front is that the National Resistance Movement was ignited there.

1 Halil Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin Kuruluş Mücadelesi ve Kafkas İslam Ordusu* (İstanbul: İdil Yayıncılık, 2010).

Kazım Karabekir, who was most closely identified with the Eastern Front and who left a mark in the hearts of the people as the “Savior of the East”, was promoted to Lieutenant General and Commander of the Eastern Front shortly after being assigned to the Eastern Second Army Corps Command Post in Silvan in April 1917, at the age of 35, as a colonel. One of the last brightest Ottoman staff officers, he has gone on the records of history as the leader who cleared the way for the National Resistance with his decisive and efficient stance in Mustafa Kemal’s election to the Congress Presidency and National Resistance leadership at the 23 July-7 August 1919 Erzurum People’s Congress in defiance of an arrest warrant just issued by the Istanbul Government. The Erzurum Congress, which is considered as the launching of the nation-wide uprising against foreign occupation, as well as the succeeding Sivas Congress and the Amasya meetings of September and October, would lay the political and military blueprints of the National Resistance. Therefore, this article mainly focuses on Kazım Karabekir’s military and diplomatic achievements in National Resistance and in the liberation of the Eastern Front, as well as in peace-making with the neighboring South Caucasian countries. The General’s detailed journals have served as the main source of reference for this article.

WORLD WAR-I

The Background of the War

While the fever of nationalism was spreading in the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire lost Western Thrace, Thessaloniki, Macedonia, Albania, and Crete in the two Balkan wars of 1912-13 initiated by Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, and Montenegro.

During World War-I that broke out in June 1914, Britain, France, Russia, Japan, and (later) the US were united as Allied Powers against the Central Powers of the Ottoman, German, Italian and Austria-Hungarian states. Italy would later switch sides and Russia would withdraw from the war as a result of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The Allied war plans, which largely focused on the partitioning of the Ottoman territory, could not be altered despite Ottoman government’s exhausting initiatives with Britain and France who refused to be persuaded against the consistent pursuance of a policy of offering Istanbul and the Straits to Tsarist Russia and the Aegean coast to Greece, as well as creating prospective independent Armenian, Kurdish, and Greek-Pontus States in eastern and northern Anatolia. These rigid commitments of the Allied Powers practically left the Ottoman State with no other option than an alliance with Germany nourishing competitive policies against Great Britain particularly and promising a bright deal to the Ottoman Government.² The two outstanding motives behind the mutual clash of pre-War interests were manifest firstly in the conduct of a patronizing Russian Pan-Slavic policy inciting Bulgaria,

2 Altay Cengizer, *Adil Hafızanın Işığında* (İstanbul: Doğan Yayınları, 2014).

Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia against Ottoman rule since the Balkan Wars, and secondly, in Germany's strategy of controlling the routes passing through Muslim populated Caucasian territory to the riches of the Far Eastern British colonies and the Baku oil resources. Germany would thus tactically set out to exploit her alliance with the Ottoman Empire as the spiritual leader of the Muslim World in its capacity as holder of the status of the Caliphate. This German policy, widely referred to as the "German Jihad", is also known to have significantly involved the instrumentalization of this government's close alliance particularly with the ruling Committee of Union and Progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Talât and the War Minister Enver Pashas and Germany's attempts to convince them to follow Pan-Turkist policies.³

The Ottoman State in World War-I

The two German cruisers Goeben and Breslau which were "sold" to the Ottoman State and renamed *Yavuz* and *Midilli* in accordance with a German-Ottoman secret agreement of 2 August 1914 bombarded, under German Vice-Admiral Souchon's command, Russia's Odessa and Sevastopol ports on 29 October. The Ottoman State thus formally entered the war.

In retaliation of Russia's immediate bombardment of Turkey's Black Sea ports and invasion of Eastern Anatolian lands on 1 November, the Ottoman army repelled the Russian army on 10 November at the First and Second Köprükoy and Azap battles. The War Minister Enver Pasha, pressured by Germany to further advance, launched the hastily planned Sarıkamış offensive on 20 December 1914 resulting in a disastrous defeat under harsh winter conditions. When the battle finally ended in late January, Ardahan and Oltu were once again occupied by Russia, and only 30,000 Turkish soldiers of the 3. Army survived out of 80,000.⁴ Towards the end of the Sarıkamış campaign, the 37th and 38th Divisions under the command of Enver Pasha's uncle Halil Pasha and some gendarmerie units set out from Diyarbakır on a campaign against the Russian invasion of Southern Azerbaijan. Encouraged by the liberation of Tabriz on 14 January 1915, Ganja-based independence movements were incited in Northern Azerbaijan. The military imbalance between the Russian and the Ottoman forces at the time, however, would hardly support any realistic expectations from those Ottoman offensives in view of the following figures: while the size of the Russian Caucasian Army numbered 197,000 soldiers and the number of their cannons 386, the size of the Ottoman 3rd Army in the Caucasian front stood at 50,539 soldiers only and the number of its cannons at 180, not to mention the impressive Russian superiority in supplies, clothing,

3 Kerem Çalışkan, *Alman Cihadı ve Ermeni Sürgünü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2015).

4 Numbers regarding the losses in the Sarıkamış operation vary. Information contained in the General Staff Archives regarding the 3rd Army operations in the War is closest to the numbers given here. For further information see the following source contained in the archives of the Presidency of the War Department of the Turkish General Staff (Tr. Genelkurmay Harp Dairesi Başkanlığı): *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Kafkas Cephesi 3. Ordu Harekâtı, C. 3* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1993), 535-536.

subsistence, and training.⁵ Consequently, the Russian forces would take back Tabriz and initiate their occupation of Eastern Anatolia by the end of January with the tangible involvement of Armenian elements. Furthermore, Erzurum on 16 February 1915, Muş and Bitlis immediately afterwards, Trabzon on 19 April, and Erzincan on 25 July would all fall to the Tsar's forces.

As official acknowledgment of the foregoing Russian occupation, partition of the Ottoman territory was laid out by Allied Powers through a series of secret agreements during the war. Istanbul Agreement of 18 March 1915 between France-Britain-Russia left Istanbul and the Straits, part of the Thrace and the Marmara coasts to Russia. London Agreement of 26 April 1915 between Britain-Russia-France-Italy was essentially designed to solicit Italy's accession to the Allied bloc, so the Antalya and Konya provinces were promised to this country and the continuation of its rule of the 12 Aegean Islands was endorsed. Sykes-Picot Treaty of 3 January 1916 between Britain-France-Russia gave Jordan, including Baghdad (excluding Mosul) to Britain; Lebanon, Syria, Antep, Urfa and Maraş to France; the Straits, the whole of Istanbul, the Eastern Black Sea Coast up to Trabzon and Eastern Anatolia to Russia; the Petrograd Agreement of March 1916 between Britain-France-Russia confirmed Russia's occupation of the Eastern Black Sea coasts; and the agreement signed by exchange of letters in 1916 between the Monarch of Hedjaz Sherif Hüseyin and Britain's Governor of Egypt Mc Mahon promised the Arab leaders independence in exchange for their uprising against the Ottoman rule. Finally, Treaty of St. Jean de Maurienne of 21 April 1917 between Britain-France-Italy appropriated Western Anatolia including İzmir to Italy (Italy would later waive this appropriation in favor of Greece).

Those secret agreements which would later be made public by the Bolshevik Governments had thus left the Turkish Eastern Black Sea, Van, Erzurum, Erzincan, Bitlis, Sivas, Muş, and Elazığ provinces to Russia. The Tsar's armies occupied these provinces with a view to instituting an Armenian state within Russian boundaries. This plan would be pursued in the future by means of arming Armenian bands which would thereafter increasingly intensify their massacre of the civilian Turkish-Muslim population. Other than the Turkish provinces mentioned above, Kars, Ardahan, and Batum (*Elviye-i Selase*, "the three districts") had already been occupied by Russia in accordance with Berlin Treaty of 13 July 1878 signed after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78.

While the War was in process, two developments would make a decisive impact on the balance of powers. The first of these developments was the US entry into the War in April 1917. Apart from the significant impact this development made on the overall situation, it also introduced a new element in the War which concerned the Turkish Resistance Movement: the question

5 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi...*, 40. For detailed information regarding the comparative situations of the Ottoman-Russian Armies in the Caucasus Front, see: *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Kafkas Cephesi...*

was whether the principle of “self-determination” among the 14 “Wilson Points” announced on 8 January 1918 would theoretically compromise Turkish sovereignty on Eastern Anatolia against Armenian claims based on formerly made promises to “justify” partitioning of Anatolia. The other critical development which played a crucial role on the course of the War would occur in Russia: two major civil wars that had erupted in 1917 February and October would result in the 7 November 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and Tsarist Russia would collapse to be succeeded by an “anti-imperialist socialist” government that negated all the international treaties of the previous period. This development would lead not only to the disbanding of the Russian army and the Bolshevik Regime giving up on the Eastern Anatolia and Eastern Black Sea territories promised to it but would also result in the adoption of the new Bolshevik policy of supporting the Turkish National Resistance Movement. Contrary to Moscow’s expectations, however, the new Turkish leadership would avoid adopting a communist regime, disappointing the Bolshevik leadership that would nevertheless continue supporting the new Turkish regime.

THE EASTERN FRONT

General Kazım Karabekir and the First Move towards Liberation in the Eastern Front: the Brest-Litovsk Meetings, the Erzincan Armistice and the Liberation of Erzincan

Following his assignments in the Balkan Wars, Kazım Karabekir was serving in the Command Headquarters Intelligence Office as a lieutenant colonel when the World War broke out. He was then assigned to the operations in Western Iran, Northern Iraq, and Baghdad, also serving as acting Governor of Basra for a short period. He would later be moved to the Gallipoli Front to fight in the defense of Kereviz Dere against the French. His next appointment was the Istanbul First Army Chief of Staff which would be followed by his promotion and assignment as commander of the Iraqi Front 18th Army Corps where he conducted successful defensive operations against the British forces for a year and a half.⁶ By orders he received on 6 April 1917, he was transferred to the 2nd Caucasus Army Corps Command of the Diyarbakir region where he arrived on 16 April 1917.

The 2nd Army Corps headquarters in Silvan was under the command of the 3rd Army Commander lieutenant general in Sivas, Vehip Pasha. The Turkish army was defending the area between the Black Sea and Lake Van with four corps within a formation of two armies and the 2nd Army Corps was defending the 250 km-front covering the South of Lake Van. Kars, Ardahan, and Artvin were left to the Russians since the 1877-78 war, whereas Erzurum, Erzincan,

6 Kâzım Karabekir, *İ. Dünya Savaşı Anıları* (Tr. *Memoirs of World War-I*) (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011), 529-530.

Muş, Bitlis and Trabzon were under Russian occupation of 1916. When Karabekir set out for a long march on the Silvan, Siirt, Diyarbakır, Ergani, Harput, Arapkir, Eğin, Kemah, and Refahiye route to inspect the area, important political developments were taking place in the Region: The grassroots movements that erupted in Russia resulted in the Bolshevik Revolution on 7 November and in the Brest-Litovsk meetings which started on 15 December 1917 between the Bolshevik Government, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman States, the Bolshevik Government declared its decision to withdraw from the war and from the secret agreements which the Allied Powers had previously signed. The Erzincan Armistice of 18 December signed within this framework resulted in the truce declared between the Ottoman-Russian armies, and Russians began withdrawal preparations out of the Turkish territory. In this new setting in the Eastern Front, which completely changed the scene, Karabekir was transferred on 1 January 1918 from the Second to the *First* Caucasus Army Corps Command.⁷ This new assignment covered the wide span of command oriented towards the liberation of Erzincan, Erzurum and beyond. He arrived at his new headquarters in Refahiye on 28 January.

Upon his arrival, Karabekir received the following report from the Erzincan Armistice Russian committee officers hosted at the Headquarters:

“...The Russian troops were withdrawing from the area but the Armenian Tashnak bands were filling in the vacuum and they started massacring the Turks... The Armenians had the capacity to double the army corps that consisted of 50,000 soldiers and it was said that 50 more battalions were on the way. The regular troops and bands were dispatched to the Erzurum and Van provinces. Their stated goal was the establishment of an Armenian State in South Caucasus also including Van, Bitlis, Muş, Erzurum and Iskenderun (in Mediterranean Turkey). The Georgians wanted Western Caucasus. Georgian and Caucasian Russian army corps were expected to ally with the Armenian and Greek bands against the Muslim elements of the Region. The Greek and Ossetian forces were also trying to get organized in divisions. Azerbaijan was looking forward to the arrival of the Ottoman army.”

On the other hand, four Turkish army corps in total were nominally facing five Russian army corps which were significantly superior in terms of weapons, ammunition, food, and supplies. The means left behind by these dispersing Russian troops were being usurped by the Armenian forces. Against this background, the Turkish forces would conduct forward operations with three army corps. The Fourth Army Corps of the Van-Beyazıt area would be positioned on the right flank, Karabekir’s First Caucasus Army Corps in the center towards Erzincan-Erzurum-Sarikamış, and the Second Caucasus Army corps on the left flank towards Bayburt-Trabzon in the region up to the Black

7 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 535.

Sea. The First Army Corps had 15 thousand staff corps officers and soldiers, 10 thousand non-combatant components, 94 machineguns, and 53 cannons. The size of the combatant force (especially officers) was limited and subsistence and clothing problems were at the peak.⁸ The orders received from the Third Army Commander Vehip Pasha on 23 and 29 January 1918 stated that the operation would commence soon and that, in the framework of the Erzincan Armistice provisions, Russian soldiers would not be maltreated.⁹

On 12 February, the forward operation was launched as planned and Erzincan was liberated the next day from a two-and-a-half-year captivity. The unspeakable atrocities of the Armenian bands; murdered people and burning houses were seen everywhere. Only a handful of people were left of Erzincan's 20,000 Turkish population. The army continued its operation and freed Gümüşhane, Torul, and Vakfikebir on 15 February, Bayburt on 20 February, Trabzon on 24 February, Of, Aşkale and Tercan on 25 February, and Rize on 2 March.¹⁰

The high value and quantity of food, weapons, ammunition, telegraph equipments, barbed wires, snow shoes, sledges, pickaxes, shovels, various stoves, etc. seized from enemy in Erzincan was impressing. The war spoils thus seized from the prosperous Russian army would temporarily meet the urgent daily 10-ton food and animal feed needs of the Turkish force in extreme hardship and would momentarily lift their morale. Further forward operations, however, could hardly be continued without every time seizing more war spoils in the next battles.

The Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty of 3 March 1918 and the Liberation of Erzurum

Following Erzincan, there were pressing reasons for launching the Erzurum operation as soon as possible. The harsh subsistence requirements of the army which would obviously not allow the luxury of a long wait could have soon reduced the soldiers' high motivation and morale following the Erzincan victory, but more importantly, the increasing severity of the atrocities and massacres of the Armenian bands against unarmed Turkish Muslim population added urgency to the need for a timely offensive. Furthermore, there was no guarantee that the Russian army, which was dissolving after the Bolshevik Revolution, would not revive one way or another and regain its eagerness for land reclamation. On the other hand, Karabekir was of the opinion that the Armenian command was not expecting an attack under harsh winter conditions and had reasons to believe that a surprise attack would do the job.¹¹

8 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 563-566.

9 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 567.

10 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 581-583.

11 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 597-599.

In accordance with the army's forward operation orders, a thorough reconnaissance of the region was undertaken immediately, and the Army Corps started a 160-kilometer march. A line of defense would be established 80 kilometers from Erzincan. As the march column head entered the Mamahatun district, some entrenchment supplies, weapons, and ammunition were seized, although Armenian bands had completely burned this settlement and destroyed all provisions *en route*.

During these later stages of battle preparations, Karabekir received a "personal" cipher telegram from Deputy Commander-in-Chief Enver Pasha on 23 February. The message briefly stated:

"Upon the Bolshevik Revolution, the Caucasian Muslims have decided to establish their independent governments. Our 3. and 6. Armies have already established contact with inner Caucasus and we have organized in Baku... Karabekir is being considered as head of the organization to be established for providing the support the Muslim people have requested from us against Russian and Armenian repression".

It came as a total surprise for Karabekir that he was being asked to consider leaving his current assignment in the middle of the battle to liberate his country from enemy occupation. In his response to Enver, he mentioned the drawbacks of the possibility that openly mobilizing the Muslims in South Caucasus could provoke the Russian-Armenian-Georgian forces to unite against the Ottoman Army, argued that the project could actually be postponed until after securing Anatolian borders or that it could alternatively be performed secretly in similar manner as militia operations, and requested therefore to be excused from the assignment for the time being.¹² Enver Pasha would assign his brother Captain Nuri Bey to the head of the Ottoman Caucasus Islam Army later in June 1918 and promote him to the rank of General in line with the project requirements.

While the operation against Erzurum was advancing, the forward front line that was defined by the army command for Karabekir's army corps was exceeded by 60 kilometers to the north. As the forces advanced, they continued to witness the Armenian bands' atrocities such as in Aşkale where 32 civilian people had been murdered. As the soldiers advanced, subsistence problems were growing too, particularly due to the long-lasting interruptions of the transport of supplies under harsh winter conditions, increasing the urgency for that final strike against Erzurum. In his correspondence with the Army Commander Vehip Pasha, Karabekir reported that the Armenian bands were turning Erzurum into a "fire ground" and "graveyard" every passing moment, whereas his 9th Division alone had grown capable of taking Erzurum fast in an immediate offensive, so there was no reason to postpone the operation any longer. Vehip Pasha approved the plan tentatively but nevertheless criticized Karabekir for advancing on his own initiative beyond army orders. As was the

12 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 602-604.

case, the next orders from Vehip Pasha would conflict with Karabekir's plans based on ground realities. His advance being stalled and faced with risking his corps, Karabekir reached the point of no return as he expresses in the following words in his journals:

"I have written about these drawbacks and also explained them on the phone. I am now obliged to undertake full personal responsibility and act as the situation necessitates... because in the event of a disaster, the material and moral responsibility will rest only on myself... The army headquarters is 300 kilometers away... I will certainly not deliberately send my soldiers to freeze and starve to death."¹³

On 10 March, Karabekir instructed his staff to be prepared for an offensive and moved out from Erzincan to the front lines. The clashes between the advancing reconnaissance teams and the Armenian forces were now within 10 kilometers of Erzurum. The march continued on steep mountains and deep snow. In the hamlets they could reach in bitter cold, the structures they took shelter in during nights lacked roofs or floors and they generally had to sleep on the ground. Along the path, the abundance and quality of the weapons, ammunition, provisions, fortifications, and transport infrastructure that had been left by the Russian army to the Armenian forces could be observed. This displayed the enemies' sophisticated preparation and determination to invade Anatolia.

Reports received from Army headquarters earlier on 3 March had stated that the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty had been finally signed between the Bolshevik and the Ottoman-German-Austria/Hungarian-Bulgarian governments. This development would drastically change the fate of the War as war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire was formally ending and the Bolshevik government accepted to withdraw from Kars-Ardahan-Artvin and disband its army. What remained to be done now was liberating Eastern Anatolia from Armenian occupation. The march continued in this new high spirit.

On 5 March, they reached Mamahatun and heard shrieks of the residents "still suffering the horrors of the Armenians' spine-chilling murders". The 8-metre diameter hole that was "filled with the Turks' corpses of all ages and both genders" was nauseating. "Only one household had escaped by running to the mountains. The sense of abhorrence I felt witnessing this sight was no match with my feelings even in the bloodiest battles before."¹⁴ Upon arriving at the 9th Division headquarters in Yeniköy in the morning of 7 March, they saw again Russians' excellent infrastructure. The highway and desert/field railroads had already been opened, everywhere was full of piles of rocks, stonebreaker machines and cylinders. The bridges were completed and even a train station had been constructed. Armenians were building fortifications along the Erpik

13 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 611.

14 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 618.

(Yeni Gazi)- Halasur (Malakan)-Garan (Great Dikme Village) line and at the western ridge of Ilıca, and some 2,500 Armenian forces were in contact with the Turkish troops.

On 7 March, Karabekir sent a letter to the Armenian commander in Erzurum by an Armenian prisoner of war. The letter wrote:

“Peace has been negotiated with the Soviet Regime and Russians are evacuating the whole of our country, including our land that they had occupied in the 1877-78 war... our troops are heading towards Batumi and Kars... we have begun exchanging our prisoners of war. Our army corps have positioned around Erzurum to take back the lands where the Russians have withdrawn from... I solemnly warn you to evacuate Erzurum and subsequently the whole of our lands and to withdraw to inner Caucasus by 9 March 1918 evening.”¹⁵

Karabekir’s strategy was to confront the enemy out in the open outside the wire fences surrounding the city and to enter Erzurum without allowing the enemy an opportunity for defense in the trenches. Both forces of about 5,000 troops were almost equal and Karabekir was certain of the victory. Karabekir informed the Army Command of his plan but it was declined due to it being “not safe enough” and he was ordered to wait for the other two army corps on the right and left flanks to rally on the same line before the final attack. Because this would remove the shock effect of the attack and would consume the soldiers’ subsistence stocks while the massacre in the city would continue to mount each day, Karabekir decided to take on the responsibility and act on his own to execute his own plan. In the morning of 9 March, he moved his headquarters further from Yeniköy to Tazegül. The Armenians had burned down about 100 houses and murdered 30 people including women and children while withdrawing from this settlement of 180 houses.¹⁶

In the morning of 10 March, the headquarters was again moved to the Alaca Village that had a higher observation position. The Armenian trenches were approached by 10 kilometers. The scene that they saw at this village was the worst of all the disasters they had so far witnessed: “The crying by the side of bayoneted or burnt corpses, the clamors of murdered mothers holding their babies on their bayoneted breasts...” Karabekir tried to console the survivors by handing each of them a silver *medjidie* (Ottoman coin). In the morning of 10 March, the 600 Armenian terrorists who launched an offensive were repelled. At the dawn of 11 March, Karabekir launched the final offensive at all fronts with four infantry regiments. The village of Ilıca was taken at 8 o’clock and Yarımca at 11 o’clock, Gez at 13:15. Shortly afterwards, Armenian forces were withdrawing from all points towards Erzurum. It was understood from the intelligence reports received later that the Erzurum Fortress

15 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 621.

16 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 628.

commander Armenian General Andranik (Antranik) Ozanyan had decided that night to retreat. The 9th Division launched its final attack in the afternoon and entered the city.

On 12 March 1918, Erzurum was liberated from three years of Russian captivity. Turkish casualties in the last offensive were 14 fallen and 116 wounded soldiers. 35 Russian and 3 Georgian officers and 3 Russian privates were taken prisoner. About 500 Armenians were killed. The Armenian resistance was completely broken on 14 March and cavalry troops captured Horasan on 16 March where many locomotives, 100 wagons and a telephone center were seized in good condition.

During the same days, the 37th Caucasus Division marching from Trabzon along the coast captured Çayeli and Hopa on 10 and 14 March and advanced towards Batumi. As Erzurum was going to be a base for new offensives, it was important for the army to establish a local government and communication channels with the residents, so Karabekir assigned his artillery commander Recep Bey as the city governor and provost marshal. Citizens were called to duty and government and municipality services were restored. The new voluntary militia organization and public order services were soon extended to cover the more remote districts and villages, thus reasonably securing law and order.

The most interesting sources regarding the situation of the Russian army in Eastern Anatolia following the Bolshevik Revolution are reports drawn up by the Russian commanders. Among the writings of the Russian artillery commander Lieutenant Colonel Twerdohlebov regarding Erzurum, these citations from Karabekir's memoirs are striking:

“During mid-December 1917, the Russian Caucasus Army retreated from the front without the supreme military command's authorization... We had only 40 Russian cannoneers left to operate the more than 400 cannons in the Erzurum Fortress... Because discipline could not be secured in the regiment, privates were fleeing, engaging in looting and threatening the officers... Some Armenian soldiers pillaged the home of one of the Erzurum gentry and murdered him. Orders to apprehend the culprits in three days yielded no results... Due to the indiscipline of the Armenian and Georgian soldiers, conflicts were constantly erupting between them and the Russian officers. Russian officers were forced to intervene in the Armenians' oppression against the Muslim people... The day the Armenian Russian General Andranik was assigned to the Fortress command, I received news that the entire population of Tepeköy was murdered by the Armenians. Nobody was arrested despite orders... The Russian officers residing in the Muslim neighbourhood had been forced to move out so that they could not intervene in the murders. The officers resisted but this time it was heard that the massacre was spreading outside the city. I informed the Fortress commander that we

urgently demanded the Armenian savagery and disgrace be stopped, otherwise all Russian officers be dismissed. ...”¹⁷

The Turkish army which entered Erzurum was once again eye-witness to Armenian atrocities. 1708 Muslims were confirmed murdered in 29 districts of Erzurum only, and everywhere had been torched and wrecked.¹⁸ These words in Karabekir’s diary describe the horrible sight:

“It was as if the Erzurum field railroad station was a graveyard where corpses were thrown outside. We saw two brick buildings full of burnt Turkish corpses. The fortress vaults of Karskapısı were also full of murdered people. Almost nobody was left alive in the Umudun, Sitavuk, Arzuti villages in northern Erzurum.”¹⁹

Liberation of Erzurum from captivity at such horrible cost nevertheless served as the key to the National Resistance. Erzurum would indeed become the base for further military operations of liberation. This largest center in Eastern Anatolia would soon play another equally important role in paving the way to the national organization of the Independence War at the Erzurum Congress between 23 July and 7 August 1919 which would endorse the authority of the National Resistance Movement leadership.

Sarıkamış, Kars, and Beyond

The forward operation was advancing on the path that was opened by the liberation of Erzurum. From 17 to 23 March, the 3rd Army Corps saved Narman, Varto, Kötek, Hınıs, and Malazgirt from the Armenian bands’ invasion and would shortly reach the pre-1877 borders.

Karabekir was rewarded with the “Second Rank Sworded Ottoman Medal” decoration for his victory in the battle of Erzurum. Notwithstanding this State appreciation, however, the Second Army Commander Vehip Pasha would continue criticizing Karabekir in correspondence dated 21-24 March for taking personal initiatives. Highly demoralized, Karabekir asked for a two month leave, only to be denied by the Army Command. He was further informed that the First Caucasus Army Corps under his command was being placed under the Eastern Group Command, a new formation under Brigadier General Yakup Şevket Pasha. Upset again, Karabekir then requested that the previous offer for his assignment to the Caucasus Islam Army Command be reconsidered but this request was turned down too on grounds that the recently assigned Nuri Pasha had already set off for his new duty post.

17 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 650-669.

18 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi...*, 143

19 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 677.

Sarıkamış was then the next target in the Eastern Front for the First Army Corps. 5,000 Armenian soldiers escaped from Erzurum were reported to have moved to Sarıkamış, preparing for an offensive against Erzurum joined by Armenian bands who had seized a large amount of high-quality weapons, ammunition, and supplies left behind the deserting Russian forces. Kars, on the other hand, was still occupied by Armenian, Georgian, and Russian forces. Meanwhile, a delegation under the Ottoman Navy Chief of Staff Rauf Bey (Orbay) had commenced peace negotiations in Trabzon on 14 March in execution of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with the Armenian, Georgian, and Azerbaijani leaderships which had recently separated from the Soviet administration and formed a Trans-Caucasus federal government. Karabekir was worried that these negotiations were being prolonged by the Armenian leadership in order to stall the Turkish offensive so that they could buy time for reinforcement. He was therefore convinced the operation against Kars had to be concluded urgently.

Karabekir warned the Kars Armenian Community leadership and the Caucasus Greek Association in his letters dated 29 March 1918 that the citizens of this region were living under the assurances of the Ottoman State's laws regardless of race and religion, that residents should be strongly advised against accommodating rebellion forces rising against law and order at the eve of the operation the army was about to launch against the Armenian bands who had been committing atrocities against the Muslim people.²⁰

Karabekir informed the army headquarters of his operation plan to be launched on 2 April. While the Group Command responded positively, certain alterations were suggested which were not compatible with the ground realities. Indeed, Sarıkamış was a tough target where Enver Pasha's Third Army had suffered a grave tragedy, losing approximately 50 thousand soldiers in early 1915, and the suggestions received from headquarters meant new complications for forces attacking a well-fortified target in the forests defended by the enemy that could inflict considerable losses to charging armies with a small defensive force also benefiting from the advantage of occupying an elevated position. Nevertheless, the operation was already well under way, so Karabekir departed from Erzurum on 31 March to move his headquarters to Horasan. The settlements that they passed through on their path were entirely abandoned by residents. They found Horasan as an "impressing railway station".

"Many locomotives, wagons, workshops, railway switches, road machines and telegraph lines feature a civilized appearance. At every step forward we felt a growing sense of gratitude for the collapse of the Russian Empire."²¹

Indeed, as opposed to the superior physical facilities enjoyed by the Russian army, the Ottoman army did not even possess a single truck, for example, and

20 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 694, 695.

21 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 702.

it had to count largely on ox-driven carts for transport. Those limitations, however, were still far from reducing the urgency for liberating the motherland in the face of continuing Armenian atrocities. Upon the Army's arrival at the Karaorgan 9th Division headquarters, it was reported that the Armenian bands had recently committed horrendous massacres in 28 villages around Kars where they were gathering forces and sending their families to Gyumri in apparent preparation for a major battle. Armenian activities had indeed visibly intensified on all fronts.

In the operation which was started on 3 April, troops were having difficulties forming a front line against the stubborn natural resistance of forest, snow, and steep terrain. Finally, on 5 April, Sarıkamış was taken without any clashes. The repatriation of that city which Russians had reconstructed so conspicuously was a major gain. Significantly, the railroad that reached Kars and extended beyond was recaptured. Some weapons, ammunition, and a large quantity of food was seized as well.

The next target following Sarıkamış would be Kars. On 8 April, Kağızman and Van were retaken. A major massacre of Muslims by the Armenian bandits was committed there as well.

On 9 April, the Transcaucasus Federal Government declared its independence from Soviet Russia. In an order received on the morning of 11 April, the operation would be halted because the Transcaucasus Government had accepted the Brest-Litovsk conditions and had declared its readiness to evacuate and return the Kars-Ardahan-Artvin districts. However, orders would be reversed immediately, and the operation would be resumed due to on-going conflicts contradicting that commitment.

It was understood that the Armenian defense preparations for Kars were superior compared to Erzincan and Erzurum. The 36th Division's offensive on 19 April at Novo Selim, half-way between Sarıkamış and Kars, proved inconclusive. With the offensive on the morning of 22 April, however, Armenian forces were defeated on all fronts. On 23 April, though, while the final offensive preparations were under way the Group Command ordered again to temporarily suspend the operation: the Transcaucasus Government had accepted all Turkish conditions regarding the return of all the lands lost in the 1878 War and Karabekir was assigned to conduct the negotiations regarding the evacuation of Kars. The operation would thus be paused 2 kilometers from Kars pending the conclusion of negotiations. Accordingly, at 5 o'clock in the morning, the city was put under siege at all fronts. Around 14:00 hours, a Russian-Armenian committee representing the invaders of Kars approached the Turkish lines raising a white flag. During the brief meeting held at the headquarters, they stated that they would surrender the Kars fortress the next day. Meanwhile, in a letter that the new Caucasus Republic Leader Chenkeli had sent to the Army Commander Vehip Pasha, Karabekir's pursuance of the forward operation despite the agreed terms of the truce was protested and a

deadline of one month was requested for the orderly evacuation of the city and its surrender. The same day (24 April), a directive from the Group Commander Şevki Pasha consequently ordered to halt the operation until further notice from the Army. Strangely enough, the enemy had already surrendered that morning as of the next day and Karabekir nevertheless decided to conclude the operation immediately, believing that engaging in the renegotiation of a date of surrender would only mean allowing the enemy more time to finish up the massacre of the Muslim people in Kars. Thus at 8 p.m. on 25 April 1918, the 29th Regiment took the Kanlıtabya, the outer trenches circling the City. At 9 p.m., the First Army Corps First Gunner Battalion entered Kars thus liberating the city from a forty-year captivity. The Russian Fortress commander General Daef surrendered together with 400 Russian soldiers and that many Greek cavaliers and infantry troops. All Armenian soldiers had fled. It was later reported that, apart from the 300 captive Ottoman soldiers found at the fortress, some 2,000 had already been sent to Tbilisi by Russian officers before so as to be spared Armenian maltreatment. One hundred Turkish captives imprisoned by the Russians in the Kars train station were found murdered by the Armenian bands.²²

With the victory of Kars, all Turkish territory lost in the Eastern Front at the 1878 war was recaptured.

INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS IN THE CAUCASUS AND TURKISH INVOLVEMENT

The War Shakes the Caucasus

As the eruption of the World War-I and the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution shook the Caucasus, also raising expectations of autonomy and independence, emergence of the Ottoman Empire from the War as an independent state was also becoming a high priority for the Caucasian Muslim peoples of mostly Turkish origin.

The Caucasian lands, particularly Azerbaijan had long been a focus of interest for Western powers for two main reasons. The first reason was the oil resources of the region. The Nobel Brothers first invested in the Baku oil in 1875 and achieved practically half of the world oil production in 1901, to be joined by the Rothschild family later. Around 65% of the world's oil reserves are known to lie in the Middle-Eastern and Caucasian neighbourhood of Azerbaijan and Turkey, although this was not exactly known at the time. The second important reason behind the Western Powers' interest in the region was the strategic geopolitical location of the Caucasus. Indeed, one of the critical priorities behind the pre-War competition among European powers was access to the economic riches of the Far East. The fast-economic development rate of

22 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 795.

Germany had led to imperialistic ambitions to challenge British rule in India. This could only be achieved through domination of the routes to Far East, just as it had also been the major incentive behind the German project of “Baghdad Railroad” extending from Berlin through Ottoman territory to the Persian Gulf. The project had been launched in 1888 by the concessions granted by the Ottoman *Sublime Porte* to a German company and plenty of blood would be shed for the protection of this railroad during the War, even though it would never reach its final destination. However, the extension of transport lines would have to continue beyond Ottoman territory also in the Caucasus, which required the German control of this region. Thus, the German strategy was to take advantage of its alliance with the Ottoman Empire holding the status of the spiritual leadership of the Muslim World, the Caliphate. While Great Britain would fight back to protect her domination against such designs, Russia would also resist both before and after the Bolshevik Revolution against any foreign domination of that region which was within their own sovereign power. It was under those circumstances that the other neighboring imperial power Ottoman forces would enter the picture in the name of Ottoman interests and upon the Azeri appeal for support against aggression. World War-I was then to a great extent about European competition on controlling Caucasia as much as it was about partitioning Ottoman territory by European powers. The peoples of Caucasia were consequently put under increasing pressure to organize themselves for protection against both European and Russian aggression as well as against regional hostilities in that chaotic environment, particularly following the Bolshevik Revolution. This fight for survival in various fronts and shifting alliances would eventually result in declaration of their independences.

The first sparks of the war at the Caucasus Front had flared up on 1 November 1914 when the Russian armies attacked the Eastern Anatolian lands. Developments regarding the loss of the greater part of Eastern Anatolia to Russia and the recuperation of those lands by the Ottoman Forces following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution have been addressed in the foregoing paragraphs. However, the Ottoman military operation was not limited to Eastern Anatolia but the War Minister Enver Pasha, urged by his ally Germany and despite his disastrous 1914-15 Sarıkamış defeat, decided to intervene in the Russian occupation of southern Azerbaijan and dispatched the 37th and 38th Divisions under the command of his uncle Halil Pasha and some gendarmerie units from Diyarbakır on a cross-border operation. The seizure of Tabriz on 14 January 1915 sparked some Ganja-centered uprising movements against Russia in northern Azerbaijan and Azeri populated regions of Iran. The Russian Caucasus Army was, however, far more superior to the Ottoman 3rd Army; the Russian fighting force quadrupling the Ottoman forces and the Russian firing power doubling the Turkish firing capacity, not to mention the Russian military infrastructural superiority. The Russian army consequently took back Tabriz in two weeks and started the occupation of Eastern Anatolia jointly with the Armenian forces.

Meantime, while independence movements in Northern Azerbaijan were coming to life, the representative of the Azeri Turks' secret organization *DİFAİ* (the Defense Committee of all Caucasian Muslims) in Ganja Amir Arslan Han met with Enver Pasha in Erzurum in February 1915 and requested support for the idea of establishing an independent confederation that comprised Baku, Ganja, Yerevan, Terek and Daghstan. Enver Pasha responded positively, provided that Russian intervention could be avoided. This initiative is known to be the first ever move towards independence in Caucasia.²³

The Armenians, on the other hand, were busy working on ways and means of exploiting opportunities against Ottoman territory and interests. As a matter of fact, even before the war broke out, the Russo-Ottoman protocol signed on 8 February 1914 under the pressure of European powers had called for the initiation of "reforms" to protect the interests of the local Christian population in eastern Turkey. Those reforms would be executed under the supervision of two regional governors to be appointed by European powers. In a subsequent letter dated 5 August 1914 by the Armenian Catholicos of Etchmiadzin to the Russian Governor General of the Caucasus Vorontsov-Dashkov, the Armenian spiritual leader suggested the annexation of the "Armenian" eastern Anatolian provinces to Russia and putting them under the rule of an Armenian regional governor with a broad authority. The Russian bureaucrat would turn down the suggestion on grounds that measures amounting to further territorial expansion might not look too good for them "internationally" against their standing tactic to continue defaming Turks, but he would also state that the Armenian concerns would be addressed in any case.²⁴ Indeed, the Russian invasion of the Eastern Anatolia provinces and the increased Russian violence committed against the Caucasian Muslim people were already more than serving Armenian aspirations of domination including ethnic cleansing. The Laz and Adjara populations of 52,000 settled at the Georgian border, for instance, had been massacred by the Russian army in early 1915 on grounds that these people were "sympathetic" to Ottoman policies.²⁵ In another instance, Russian forces invaded Iranian Azerbaijan and entered Hemedan, Kazvin, Esfahan, and Kirmanshah in November 1915 to cut off the Baghdad railway so as to undermine German-Ottoman influence in Iran. The 13th Ottoman Army Corps took action but failed and retreated. On the other hand, it appeared that Russia never considered an independent Armenia outside Russian borders as it was explicitly underlined in a diplomatic note delivered to the British and French Ambassadors in Petersburg on 17 March 1916 by the Russian Government. France also opposed the establishment of a "greater Armenia" comprising the whole of eastern Turkey and additionally including ancient Cilicia in the Anatolian Mediterranean region, which France considered her own area of interest.

23 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi*..., 34.

24 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi*..., 35.

25 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi*..., 37.

In the face of growing Russian-Armenian pressure at this stage, Azerbaijani intellectuals started getting organized and pursuing efforts to inform the public in Istanbul and European capitals about the problems they were experiencing. Among many such organizations operating in Azerbaijan, the more widely known were the Ganja National Committee, the Caucasus Society of Benevolence (*Cemiyeti Hayriye*), the Azerbaijan Youth Organization, as well as the Social Democrat Charity Party (*Himmat Partisi*) led by Nariman Narimanov and the *Musavvat* (Equality) Party, established in 1904 and 1911 respectively. The Caucus of the Caucasian Muslims was convened by the Muslim National Council between 15-20 April 1917 to be followed in Moscow by the First Congress of all Muslim Peoples of Russia between 1-11 May 1917.

The Bolshevik Revolution, Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and Russia's Withdrawal from the War

Political developments gained momentum upon the people's uprisings of Russia on 12 March and in October 1917. In the face of the complete dissolution of the Tsar's army and administration, the region fell into absolute anarchy. The interim Prime Minister Prince Lvov was pressed to turn the Tsar's authority over to a five- person Transcaucasus Committee composed of Russian-Azerbaijani-Georgian-Armenian representatives which would never manage to live up to the pressing challenges. In their continued search for decentralized solutions to administrative problems, the Russian interim government decreed on 9 May 1917 to appoint Armenian governors to rule the occupied eastern Turkish provinces of Van, Erzurum, Bitlis, and Trabzon. Further encouraged by those developments, Armenians declared in a congress convened in Tbilisi in October 1917 their decision to establish a "Greater Armenia" comprising Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia and they also instituted an "Armenian National Parliament" as well as an "Armenian Council".²⁶ Contrary to their claims, however, the localities inhabited by a majority of Armenian population at the time were limited to Etchmiadzin, Gyumri, Novo Beyazıd, Zengezur, and Shusha (Karabakh), while even in Yerevan the Turkish/Azeri population's ratio until the World War-I was to stand at 83%, only to drop to 5% as a result of ethnic cleansing by the end of the War.²⁷

Vladimir Lenin's 7 November 1917 declaration of "Russian Peoples' Manifest"²⁸ calling for self-determination encouraged the people of Caucasus to establish their own states, but Lenin's pledge would soon be reformulated to rule out independence outside Soviet territory. Under those circumstances, the problem of developing relations amongst the people of Azerbaijan, Georgia,

26 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi...*, 62.

27 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi...*, 133.

28 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi...*, 78-80. To view the text of the Turkish versions of Vladimir Lenin's "Russian Peoples' Manifest" of 24 November 1917 and Joseph Stalin's "Appeal to All Toiling Moslems of Russia and the East" of 3 December 1917, please see: Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya (1798-1919)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF Yayınları, 1970), 649-652.

and Armenia independent from Moscow became a more urgent issue while the continued advance of the Ottoman Army was emerging as an increasingly relevant development to follow. As tendencies grew in Azerbaijan to close ranks with the Ottoman Administration, Ottoman authorities also considered the important role which could be played by the Turkish-Muslim people of the Caucasus in the protection of Ottoman interests against Russian and British imperialistic plans in the region. Those Ottoman aspirations were also closely shared by Germany from the point of view of their own interests.

On 28 November 1917 following the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian-controlled Transcaucasus Committee gave way to an independent Transcaucasus Commissariat²⁹ composed of Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Armenian representatives. Meanwhile, military clashes had already been suspended between the Ottoman and Russian armies upon the Erzincan Armistice Agreement of 18 December 1917.

The Caucasus Turkish-Muslim Peoples' Appeal to Ottoman Protection, Establishment of the Ottoman Caucasus Islam Army

Russian-British supported Armenian and Georgian forces had begun filling in the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the Bolshevik army from the stage. A British-French Mission in Tbilisi was engaged in a plan to put together an Armenian-Georgian army corps to replace Russian soldiers who had deserted the front and two divisions were formed by south Caucasian Russians and Armenians. It was also widely told that, taking advantage of this authority gap, Armenians were planning an imminent large-scale massacre against the Muslim population. These developments were precipitating the national independence movements and added urgency to the Muslim peoples' need for defense. On 17 December 1917, local national militia disarmed the Russian soldiers in Ganja and drove them out. In January 1918, the Ganja National Committee sent a military delegation to the 3rd Army Commander Vehip Pasha formally appealing for protection³⁰ and initiated the establishment of a national army. However, the Armenian-supported major Bolshevik massacre in Baku between 31 March-1 April resulted in the tragic loss of some ten thousand Azerbaijanis. The Baku Bolshevik Soviet that had taken over the government in Baku was by then entirely seized by the Bolsheviks and Armenians, so the Azeri population would start a mass exodus to Northern Caucasus, mainly Ganja, which was declared the new capital tentatively replacing Baku.

The land-mark development in the War at those times was the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of 3 March 1918 whereby the Bolshevik Government declared its decision to withdraw from the war, dissolve its army, and start peace talks. This new Russian position would radically alter the balance of powers in the

29 Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya (1798-1919)*, 84.

30 Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya (1798-1919)*, 106.

region as well as raise the momentum for search of national solutions. The formation of the Ottoman Caucasus Islam Army (OCIA) also took place during those developments. Enver Pasha decreed on 5 April 1918 the establishment in Azerbaijan of an army corps formed of three infantry divisions of three regiments each. He first offered the commander of the Second Army Corps Kazım Karabekir to take command of this new formation but Karabekir declined in the face of the urgencies dictated by his current responsibilities in freeing Eastern Anatolia from Russian and Armenian occupation.³¹ The new Army Corps would then be commanded by Enver Pasha's brother Captain Nuri who would be promoted to the rank of general. The emerging Ottoman strategy was to make a move for the establishment of a friendly independent buffer Southern Caucasian State so as to keep Russian threat at a distance, if possible. The Ottoman administration also considered this occasion as a timely opportunity to gain influence in the Caucasus perhaps in partial compensation for the vast Ottoman Arab territory just lost to European powers. Another important development in the region was the self-abrogation of the Transcaucasus Commissariat on 22 April to declare an independent, democratic, and federative Transcaucasus State. The new State's primary task would be to revitalize the peace negotiations in Batumi which had been previously initiated with the Ottoman Empire in Trabzon on 14 March within the framework of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty provisions, which the Armenian and Georgian parties had been undermining.

In this heated atmosphere, the Azerbaijan National Council announced the independence of Azerbaijan during the historical Tbilisi meeting of 27 May 1918. Georgia and Armenia would follow suit on the 28th. The independent Transcaucasian State would thereby come to an end. The first independent Azerbaijan coalition government formed under the presidency of non-partisan Feth-Ali Han Hoyski immediately decided to unite with Turkey but the Ottoman Minister of Justice and Head of the Administrative Court Halil Mentеше heading the Turkish delegation in Tbilisi declined the offer, explaining that such a move "would be accepted neither by friendly nor hostile parties", but Turkey would nevertheless always be prepared to lend any assistance needed to support the new independent State of Azerbaijan. The Treaty of Friendship signed on 4 June³² indeed envisaged the armed support of the Ottoman Government to Azerbaijan in the case of Azerbaijan's request and it also contained a "most-favored nation" clause. Having thus enjoyed its first diplomatic recognition, the new Azerbaijan Government immediately requested armed assistance from Turkey following the signing of the treaty.³³ The Turkish-Azerbaijan National Council and Government would then move from Tbilisi to Ganja on 16 June.

31 Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya (1798-1919)*, 113, 245. (Establishment Regulations of the Ottoman Islam Caucasus Army Corps)

32 Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, Karton No. 560, as quoted by: Kurat, *Türk-Rus İlişkileri (1798-1919)*, 662-666.

33 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi...*, 182-184.

Karabekir's Forces Enter South Caucasus

The Ottoman Eastern Army commander Karabekir, who had just freed Erzincan, Erzurum, Sarıkamış, and Kars from enemy occupation left Kars on 1 May 1918 and received orders on 3 May to launch an operation against Tbilisi. He was to dispatch simultaneously a division to Tabriz against a British-supported Armenian invasion but the advance of the Ottoman forces in this operation necessitated controlling Gyumri which was *on route* and holding the strategic railroad intersection. The army advance patrol teams reported that the perimeter of Gyumri was recently fortified and that the Gyumri fortress was well reinforced. The Armenian forces would defend Gyumri with 6,000 soldiers and 20 cannons. The 11th Division was tasked with the taking of Gyumri, three squadrons of the 28th Regiment from the 9th Division and the 107th Reserve Regiment were to provide back-up support. The offensive launched on 13 May resulted in the seizure of Gyumri and a large area of its surroundings on 16 May. The locomotives and the 30 wagons operating on the railroad connecting with Kars would remedy a huge transport problem of the Ottoman army. A significant amount of war and food supplies were also seized. The clashes continued for four days against the Armenian forces which had grouped around Karakilise and Başabaran. On 20 May, Karabekir moved his headquarters from Kars to Gyumri. Armenia's second biggest city after Yerevan, Gyumri was thus taken.

Gyumri and its surroundings had been ruled by the Shirak, Seljuk, Karakoyunlu, Aqqoyunlu, Ottoman, and other Turkish clans throughout history. The region was occupied by the Russians following the 1977-78 War and Armenian populations were settled from the surrounding regions while Muslim families were uprooted from their hometowns. Just recently, on 19 April 1918, nearly 3,000 Turks trying to flee Gyumri to Azerbaijan through Ahilkelek were brutally murdered. Thus, the first thing Karabekir did after entering the city was to secure the 250 Turkish households left in Gyumri. He appointed a certain Cihangiroğlu İbrahim Bey from the local gentry as district governor of the Muslim neighbourhood. A security operation would also be launched against Ahilkelek, due to the latest massacre which had taken place there.

The Batumi and Gyumri Treaties with Azerbaijan-Georgia-Armenia; Establishment of the Eastern Armies Group Command

On 26 May Georgian, and on 28 May Azerbaijani and Armenian independent Republics were declared and the Northern Caucasus Federative Government had ended.

In the instructions Karabekir received from the Army Command on 1 and 4 June, it was reported that understanding for a peace agreement had been reached with the Georgian and Armenian delegations at the Batumi negotiations within the framework of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the maintenance

of the territory Ottoman forces had seized was recognized and it was agreed to commence negotiations for the execution of conditions of peace. It was also understood that the Armenians and Georgians were enjoying Germany's patronage, and in light of these developments, except for the Ahilkelek operation, a forward campaign upon Yerevan and Tbilisi was to be suspended for the time being.

The Ottoman Government signed peace agreements in Batumi with the Georgian Government on 4 June, and with the Armenian and Azerbaijani Governments on 11 June. In the agreement concluded with Georgia, the Brest-Litovsk borders had been exceeded as the Ahiska and Ahilkelek sub-districts along with Batumi were left inside the Ottoman boundaries. Just as in the agreement with Georgia, the agreements to be signed with Armenia and Azerbaijan would also recognize the borders prior to the Ottoman losses at the 1877-78 war with Russia. Georgia and Armenia recognized the Ottoman Empire's right to utilize the Caucasus railroads until the end of the war. Nationals and representatives of the enemy states of Turkey would be expelled from those countries. Tbilisi and Yerevan would each provide for the services of a *mufti* who would refer in sermons to the Ottoman Sultan's name as the Caliph of the Muslim World. The Ottoman-Georgia-Azerbaijan oil agreement of 4 June 1918 concluded that petrol would be pumped to Turkey through the Baku-Batum pipeline, a project which Turkey would pursue and finally materialize later in that century. Despite the agreements, however, Armenia and Georgia would consistently raise objections on grounds that those instruments were actually signed under duress, conveying their complaints to Germany. The actual establishment of the Ottoman Caucasus Islam Army under Nuri Pasha's command happens to take place at those times. The Ottoman Empire's ally Germany, concerned about the compromise its own interest in the Caucasus petrol would suffer by the Ottoman forces' continuing advance in the region, would not hesitate to support the Georgian and Armenian complaints. As for Russia, which had not raised any objections to the Trabzon and Batumi negotiations, would categorically object to the Ottoman annexation of Batumi.

The Gyumri negotiations conducted by Karabekir representing the Ottoman Empire envisaged, apart from the foregoing issues, disarming of the Armenian bands in the regions where the Ottoman army was deployed, guaranteeing fair treatment to Muslim people, exchange of the prisoners of war, and improvement of migrants' conditions. Karabekir's assignment in Gyumri would thus be concluded at the signing of the peace protocols with the new independent Armenian Government on 13 July 1918.³⁴

Meanwhile, Armenians in Ganja organized a battalion of 600 and began threatening the Muslim people on 8 June. The 5th Division of the Second Caucasus Army Corps launched an operation to suppress this threat in Ganja

34 For the Peace Protocol texts, please see: Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 867-884.

and jointly with the local Azerbaijani local militia disarmed the Armenian battalion on 13-14 June. The 5th Caucasus Division from the Eastern Armies Group was also commissioned to support the Caucasus Islam Army. In another front, a regiment of the Fourth Army entered the Iranian provinces of Tabriz on 12 June and Orumiyeh on 31 July. The 5th Caucasus Division captured the Shemahi-Hajikabul line of Azerbaijan from Bolshevik forces in July and took Baku from the British and Armenian forces on 16 September in battles that lasted two months. On 8 October, the 106th Infantry Regiment and the 9th Caucasus Regiment commanded by Colonel Cemil Cahit Bey took Karabakh in a joint operation with the 1st Azerbaijani Division. The Ottoman losses in the Baku battles reached a thousand. Bolshevik Russia meanwhile kept insisting on holding Baku and the German-Russian agreement signed to that end on 27 August provided for the deployment of Germany's influence on Ottoman administration to stop the Ottoman Army from advancing beyond the Kars-Ardahan-Artvin line which the Brest-Litovsk Treaty had left within Ottoman boundaries. According to the Russo-German agreement, Germany would receive in return a quarter of the Baku petrol shares. The Ottoman administration would strongly protest this agreement and failing to stop the Ottoman forces' advance towards Baku, Germany would offer as a last-ditch attempt to enter the city together with the Ottoman forces, only to be refused again.³⁵

On 7-9 June, Vehip Pasha (subsequently Enver Pasha's uncle Halil Pasha) was assigned to the command of the Eastern Armies Group, a new formation in the Eastern Front, and Karabekir's 1st Caucasus Army Corps would be attached to this army on 28 July. Karabekir's new orders from the Eastern Armies Group was to deploy his 9th Division to control the region south of Yerevan covering Nakhchivan (Nakhichevan) while the 11st Division would once again intervene in Tabriz. Just promoted to the rank of major general, Karabekir consequently proceeded to move his army corps headquarters to Nakhichevan and arrived there on 7 August. He would however decline the suggestion of the Army Commander Halil Pasha to proceed further towards Tehran due to the risks such a move would cause at times when the Ottoman armies were suffering tragic defeats in other fronts.³⁶

Karabekir's Forces in Nakhchivan

Following the Bolshevik Revolution and the collapse of the Russian administration and army Nakhchivan, disconnected from the Azerbaijan mainland due to its geographic position, found itself in a struggle for survival. As conveyed in the detailed memoirs titled *Aras Şahittir (Aras Witnesses)*³⁷ of Lâtif Hüseyinzade, a resident intellectual who was eye-witness to the

35 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi...*, 214.

36 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 885.

37 Lâtif Hüseyinzade, *Aras Şahittir* (Bakü: Nurlan, 2001).

developments of that period, the Turkish Muslim National Committee of Nakhchivan established in 1918 assumed governance of the Mehri, Ordubat, Culfa, Shahbuz, Sherur, and Dereleyaz districts and the surrounding regions. The National Committee declared military mobilization when Armenian armed bands reinforced from Yerevan were heard of terrorizing Muslim villages in March and preparing for a large-scale Muslim ethnic-cleansing of the region. Those Armenian bands had indeed conducted on 30 March-1 April a major massacre in Baku, inciting the National Committee to send a delegation to Turkey for seeking armed support.

Kazım Karabekir, who was then fighting Armenian forces in Eastern Anatolia met with the Nakhchivan delegation in Sarıkamış. In his letter of 4 April 1918 addressed to the National Committee President, he promised support to Nakhchivan and in the following days, Lieutenant Halil Bey who was stationed in Eastern Beyazıt was dispatched to the Shahtahti district of Nakhchivan together with some officers and soldiers. Artillery commander Hüsni Bey and cavalry officer Osman Nuri Bey were also sent to Nakhchivan. Their mission was to support the forming and training of a Nakhchivan national army. The Armenian community leaders they invited to Shahtahti for discussing the continuation of the cease-fire failed to appear. Meanwhile Turkish forces under Karabekir's command, having just liberated Erzincan, Erzurum, Sarıkamış, and Kars from occupation had crossed the border river Arpaçay and entered Gyumri, advancing towards Yerevan. These developments raised the morale of the Nakhchivan people and forced the Armenian bands to retreat. However, news circulated early June indicated that the Dashnak (Tashnak) Armenian general Andranik had crossed the Nakhchivan borders with his army of 15,000 and started massacring the Muslim people, looting their property and burning their villages. The same bands were organizing attacks on the Ottoman Army, too. In reaction to these developments, Karabekir initially conveyed a warning in letters he sent on 27 and 29 June to the Armenian Army Corps Commander General Nazarbekov which yielded no positive outcome.³⁸ Consequently, on 5-6 July 1918, the Turkish army crossed the Sorsu Bridge at the salt mines hills (*Duzdağ*) at the outskirts of Nakhchivan and attacked the Armenian troops with artillery fire, forcing them to flee.

The Nakhchivani people raised the Turkish flag in the city upon the entry of the Ottoman army and decided that Nakhchivan would apply for annexation to the recently announced South-Western Caucasus Republic of Kars. According to Hüseyinzade's recollection, Karabekir Pasha's entry into Nakhchivan in the first week of August was welcomed with enthusiastic celebrations. Mobilization was declared and efforts to establish a national army were expedited. Karabekir declared Nakhchivan as the "Gate to the East", a definition which has ever since been held high in Nakhchivan.

38 Karabekir, *I. Dünya Savaşı Anıları*, 900-902.

It was reported in early September that in revenge of this defeat, the Armenian commander Andranik's bands were advancing to capture neighboring Tabriz in Iran with the support of a British unit there. Karabekir's troops mobilized once again and the British-Armenian forces were driven out of Tabriz, Turkish troops returning to their headquarters in Nakhchivan. Karabekir's observations as conveyed in his memoirs indicate a particular tendency for sympathetic relations with Iran and Russia among the politically dominant Nakhchivani circles of Persian Khans and clergy.³⁹

Peace was finally achieved in Nakhchivan. The intellectual community of Nakhchivan was, however, after something more and they wanted their own independent republic. The Turkish army's liberation of Baku on 16 September and Karabakh on 8 October had further encouraged the citizens. This optimistic environment led at the end of October to the declaration of the Nakhchivan-Aras Turkish Republic. The first government formed under the presidency of Emin Bey Nerimanbeyov by the new national council would immediately proceed with urgent administrative arrangements. Meanwhile, deliveries of weapons, ammunition, equipment, and military wear from Turkey had been started and hundreds of Nakhchivani youth were being sent to military schools in Turkey. Cultural and educational activities in the young Republic were being restored. People's economic well-being was improved, and the war-stricken buildings were being repaired. The new government would later join on November 30 the short-lived South-Western Caucasian Republic of Kars.

However, these happy days would not last for long. In accordance with the 30 October 1918 Mudros Armistice Treaty provisions, Karabekir and his troops would depart from Nakhchivan amidst sad send-off ceremonies. Karabekir would however leave behind his well-trusted officers Halil, Hüsnü, and Veysel Beys together with some 400 Turkish soldiers and 20-30 officers.

Following the withdrawal of the Turkish army, the Armenian attacks would resume. In December 1918, the Dashnak bands stormed the Uluhanlı, Gemerli, Vedibasari, and Sederek villages and began advancing towards Nakhchivan, only to be stopped again by the Turkish army back-up forces from Turkey.

Recognizing that they could not take Nakhchivan by force of arms, the Armenian Dashnak leaders would then resort to an international campaign appealing for political support from the Armenian communities in Britain, France and the US. Thus, during the first days of 1919, a British general arrived in Nakhchivan together with some 50-60 officers and stated that according to recent international agreements Nakhchivan was thereafter put under his command. He began interfering in the domestic affairs of the Aras-Turkish Republic, demanded that the Turkish soldiers leave Nakhchivan, hauled down the Turkish flags and attempted to withdraw Turkish currency from circulation. The local people would put on a fierce public reaction and the Turkish soldiers

39 Kâzım Karabekir, *Günlükler (Journals)*, C. 1 (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009), 542.

were not allowed to leave. But pressure would continue to mount, and a certain General Thompson sent after the previous British general arrived this time to convey the message that “in accordance with the decisions of the three great powers, Nakhchivan was given to Armenia”. (Some sources state that the British forces actually occupied Nakhchivan the day following the departure of Karabekir’s forces on 17 November).⁴⁰

Early in May 1919, a third British general named Davy (or *Davie*?) arrived with a unit of Hindu soldiers under his command and repeated that Nakhchivan was given to Armenia. Following these developments, the Armenian forces sent from Yerevan seized control of the Nakhchivan administration. But with the determined resistance of the people and the Nakhchivan armed forces, first the British general and his army, then the Armenian bands retreated from the city. The next visitors were a US congressional delegation presided by General Harbord who were sent on a fact-finding mission but would present a report generally confirming the Muslim identity of Nakhchivan and the Armenian pressures there. General Harbord would also meet with Karabekir Pasha later in Erzurum and convey his similar findings to the Congress.

Nakhchivan would not be able to resist for long against this pressure. The Soviet Red Army would eventually enter and take over Nakhchivan in mid-July 1920 and establish on 28 July a new government under the Soviet Union, the “Nakhchivan Soviet Socialist Republic”. The same development had occurred in Baku as well. During the course of these events, the current Head of the Nakhchivan Government Turkish Army Commander Veysel Bey left Nakhchivan together with his soldiers. The khans of Nakhchivan took refuge in Iran.

Not long after, Nakhchivan was attacked again by Armenian bands. Political and military situation in the Caucasus was, however, being reshaped by Karabekir’s army once again defeating the invading Russian and Armenian forces in Eastern Anatolia and advancing towards Yerevan. The Yerevan Government would request a cease-fire and Armenian aggression against Nakhchivan would be stopped again. This development would end up with separate agreements to be signed between Turkey and Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, namely the 3 December 1920 Gyumri, 16 March Moscow and 13 October 1921 Kars Agreements. Nakhchivan’s autonomous status under Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its borders were thus confirmed under Turkey’s guarantee. Developments regarding these international instruments will be taken up in the following chapters.

40 Bal, *Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetinin Kuruluş Mücadelesi...*, 228.

THE MUDROS TREATY OF ARMISTICE AND THE END OF WORLD WAR-I

While the Turkish armies were pursuing their forward operations in the Eastern Anatolian and Caucasus fronts beyond the borders prior to 1878, negative reports were being received from the Palestine and other fronts. The Central Powers were defeated at the end of the four-year war and were signing treaties of surrender. The Ottoman Empire, which was also defeated along with its allies, had lost 200,000 men just in the Eastern Front during those four years. The losses of the Russian armies in that front were close to 147,000. The Ottoman Government of Istanbul also signed the Mudros Treaty of Armistice on 30 October 1918 with Britain, France, Italy, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro, thus ending the war. General Karabekir accordingly received orders in Nakhchivan on 31 October to disband the headquarters of the First Caucasus Army Corps and move to Istanbul.

In accordance with the ruthless conditions of the Treaty, the Turkish Straits would be occupied by the Allied Powers, ports, railroads, and shipyards would be opened to the occupying forces, the Ottoman Army would be reduced to 50,000 soldiers and disarmed excluding domestic security purposes and border patrolling, military supplies and transport vehicles would be handed in, the Allied Powers' and Armenian captives held by the army would be unilaterally returned outright, Ottoman soldiers in North-Western Iran and the Caucasus would immediately withdraw, Allied Powers would intervene in the case of any disorder in the eastern "Armenian" region (Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Sivas, Elazığ, Diyarbakır), and State telegraphic communication would be confiscated. The country was being completely taken hostage under foreign occupation and rule, and all the territorial retrievals won in the Anatolian Eastern Front and Caucasia at huge sacrifices were being written off. On 24 December, British forces occupied Batumi, too, forcing the Turkish forces out. The Mudros Treaty officialized the previous secret plans to partition Ottoman lands and Istanbul would be consequently occupied by Allied Forces in November 1918. Britain would further invade Kars, Samsun, Eskişehir, İzmit, Afyon, Irak, Urfa, Antep, Maraş, Merzifon; France some regions in Adana, Mersin, Dörtyol, Zonguldak, and Thrace (France would later take over Urfa, Antep and Maraş from the British); Italy would occupy Antalya, Muğla, and Konya; and Greece would invade İzmir and its vicinity. In his address on 8 November in the House of Commons, the British Foreign Minister Lord Curzon would state that "the Armenian, Greek, Kurdish, Arab and Jewish communities had been saved from Ottoman oppression."

The other Central States would soon surrender, too: Bulgaria by 29 September 1918 Thessaloniki Treaty, Austria-Hungary by 3 November 1918 Wilaquste Treaty, and Germany by 11 November 1918 Rethandes Treaty of Cease-Fire. The war would officially end with Germany signing 28 June 1919 Versailles, Austria-Hungary 10 September St. Germain, Bulgaria 27 November 1919 Neully, Hungary 6 June 1920 Trianon, and the Ottoman Empire 10 August 1920 Sèvres peace treaties.

POST-MUDROS: EASTERN FRONT IN THE NATIONAL RESISTANCE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Seeds of the National Liberation War Are Sown

The Ottoman Prime Minister *Grand Vizier* Talat Pasha and Minister of War Enver Pasha resigned on 15 October 1918 and fled Turkey on 2 November.

Karabekir Pasha returned to Istanbul on 28 November 1918 on a ferry via Trabzon. Entry into Istanbul through the Bosphorus decorated with British and French flags was tragic. Karabekir had been offered the position of Chief of Armed Forces General Staff by Prime Minister İzzet Pasha but he declined the offer, stating his determination to be reposted back to the Eastern Front. İzzet Pasha would in fact soon resign to be replaced by Fevzi Pasha (Çakmak) on 23 December. During the week of Karabekir's arrival at Istanbul, he visited the War Minister Abdullah Pasha, Undersecretary of that Ministry, and his close friend Colonel Ismet Bey (İnönü), the Chief of Armed Forces Staff Cevat Pasha and former Premier İzzet Pasha. On 6 December, he was given audience by Sultan Vahdeddin. The single-most issue Karabekir consistently underlined in these meetings was the assignment of all young generation commanders to inner Anatolia for the national resistance movement that had to be launched against occupying powers. Accordingly, he insisted to be reassigned to the Eastern Front. Indeed, on 13 March, he received orders of his next assignment as commander of the new 15th Army Corps in Eastern Anatolia which had replaced the previous 9th Army consisting of two army corps. Meanwhile, his transfer was to be tentatively put off due to an absurd situation probably arisen as a product of the Mudros Treaty of Armistice that involved the revoking of the promotions given for achievements in battlefields, which meant that Karabekir would be demoted from general to lieutenant colonel. The problem was eventually settled, and he paid a farewell visit on 11 April to General Mustafa Kemal. At this historical meeting, Karabekir shared with Mustafa Kemal the strategy he thought was vitally important to follow, which was the initiation of the national resistance movement by first securing the Eastern Front. This naturally meant immediately ending the occupation of the Armenian bands who had been fast rearming and then shifting the forces to the Western Front to confront the Greek army. Karabekir insisted that Mustafa Kemal also immediately move to Erzurum under the pretext of a proper assignment in order to lead this movement and to lay the foundations of the national resistance there. Once Karabekir arrived at his command post, he would make all necessary preparations for the plan.⁴¹ Karabekir's assessment of the situation was that the Allied Powers were not too forthcoming to engage in a war in Anatolia mainly because their armies and public were suffering from combat fatigue after four years of World War-I, as was clearly manifested in widespread desertions as well as the articulation of those public sentiments

41 Kâzım Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz (Our War of Liberation)*, C. 1 (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), 17.

in European media. Furthermore, the conflict that emerged amongst them at the January 1919 Paris Conference regarding the interpretation of the Wilson Principles of “self-determination” had resulted in appropriating İzmir and its vicinity to Greece from Italy, which meant the liberation war would fundamentally be fought against the Armenian bands in the east and probably the Greek army in the west. Meanwhile, ideas for future action circulating in Istanbul seemed to lack any optimism or energy for an independence-based solution to be won by national armed resistance, the more favorite tendencies being compromising with the British to save at least some small territory, or accepting a British or American mandate, or embracing Bolshevism and allying with Moscow, or simply dismissing any such plans and just waiting-out the future developments as they came.

The first reactions to the Mudros Armistice were to come from Eastern Anatolia and South Caucasus. On 28 October 1918, the Meskhetian Provisional Government and on 3 November the Aras-Turkish Republic in Nakhchivan were declared. On 5 November, the Kars Islam Council was convened to declare on 18 January the South-Western Caucasus Government of Kars-Ardahan-Batum-Ahıska-Nakhchivan, Ahilkelek, Etchmiadzin, the south of Yerevan, Kağızman, and Oltu. This government would however be brought to an end with the British forces invading Kars on 13 April 1919 and its representatives would be exiled to Malta.

Karabekir would reach Trabzon on 19 April 1919 and the 15th Army Corps headquarters in Erzurum on 3 May. He would first contact the influential civil rights NGO's, the Trabzon Society of the Protection of Rights and the Erzurum Society of the Defense of Rights, which were both very pessimistic. Karabekir explained to them that the Allied Powers had no intention of fighting a war in Anatolia but would instead push the Greeks and Armenians to war promising the Greeks İzmir and vicinity in addition to a Pontus state on the Black Sea coast and the Armenians their own state in Eastern Anatolia. Karabekir warned the local NGO's that many military elements had definitely infiltrated into the Greek population being resettled in the region, that they would set to work primarily to disarm the Turkish army and militia organizations in accordance with the Mudros provisions, for which reason a determined resistance had to be put up against pressures for disarmament, and that the blueprints of a national strategy would soon be laid in a congress to be attended by the people's representatives in Erzurum. Before long, Karabekir would indeed face pressures from the Mudros Treaty observers French and British officers in Trabzon and Erzurum to surrender weapons and ammunition, clear out the barracks and turn over the army corps headquarters. Those demands would also be often reiterated by the Ottoman Ministry of War, only to be declined every time by Karabekir. The Mudros Treaty observers were apparently exhausted by the Turkish commander's consistent non-compliance with the Mudros provisions and it was reported in this connection that the commander of the Allied Forces' observation mission in Erzurum Lieutenant Colonel

Rawlinson (the nephew of Great Britain's Foreign Minister Lord Curzon) had told some Erzurum public representatives that Erzurum could indeed be left to them if they would eliminate or somehow banish Karabekir Pasha but failing this, their city would remain within the borders of a future Armenian state.

Karabekir found his army corps in reasonably good condition, although the evacuation of the army from Kars, Ardahan, and Batumi had demoralized them. In his directives to his army corps, he ordered them to be ready for an offensive and categorically refuse all demands to surrender bolt handles, ammunition and sheaths of their weapons, prisoners of war and some Turkish officers to the British, as well as resist pressures to abolish the military and administrative structures.

Mustafa Kemal Arrives at Samsun, the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses Convene

On 15 May 1919, the Greek invasion of İzmir began.

On 19 May, Brigadier General Mustafa Kemal, in his capacity as imperial honorary aide-de-camp and the 9th Army Troops Inspector, set foot on Samsun and moving to Havza, met his comrades-in-arms Admiral Rauf (Orbay), Generals Ali Fuat (Cebeşoy), and Refet (Bele) there to make an assessment of the situation. In his memoirs, Karabekir wrote:

“I was so jubilant that M. Kemal Pasha had finally arrived. This was what I had been anticipating for the last one month... I had already made my mind up in Istanbul to bring him to power and support this plan through with all the power I had...”⁴²

M. Kemal and his friends moved to Amasya on 21-22 June and published a memorandum that would constitute the main strategy of the Resistance Movement for Independence:

“As the government has failed to fulfil its responsibility towards taking necessary measures to liberate the homeland from occupation, the Erzurum and Sivas congresses will be convened with the participation of three delegates from each province to represent the national will regarding the future strategy to be adopted.”

Mustafa Kemal's passage to Erzurum would be on 3 July. Meanwhile, the Minister of Internal Affairs Ali Kemal had outlawed in his circular order of 18 June the Nationalist Forces Movement.

Upon his arrival at the Eastern Front, Mustafa Kemal Pasha issued directives for the army to be ready for a pre-emptive offensive at the Armenian-Greek bands or the Allied forces. Karabekir differed from this approach on the

42 Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 33.

grounds that he was not really expecting an offensive from the Allied Forces, and launching a pre-emptive strike could unnecessarily antagonize the Western public opinion and might even incite an Allied military reaction. Thus, he argued in his correspondence that the current strategy should be limited to regular security operations against the Armenian-Greek bands violating domestic law and order. He also drew attention against some current trends of acknowledging Bolshevism, arguing that on the contrary, it was of paramount importance that the liberation war be conceived and pursued as a *national* movement launched in Anatolia, not ruling out however in this process following an amicable stance towards the Bolshevik administration while preserving absolute neutrality as regards their regime. He shared these views on several occasions with Mustafa Kemal and they reflected the specific attentiveness which would be closely observed throughout the national resistance war to the due consideration of Western public opinion and the Bolshevik leadership's political sensitivities. Mustafa Kemal's following words in his telegram of 22 September 1922 addressed to Karabekir regarding these issues would indeed confirm the diplomatic caution that was maintained even after winning the war: "Notwithstanding our incontestable military potency, we still choose to remain prudent and temperate in politics and diplomacy."⁴³

Two days after Mustafa Kemal's arrival at Erzurum, the Minister of War Ferit Pasha in the course of their six-hour telegraphic conversation on 5 July requested that Mustafa Kemal put an end to his "off-duty" activities and immediately return to Istanbul. In a consequent correspondence with the Palace secretariat on 8 July, upon Mustafa Kemal's insistence on his objections to Government policies, he would be discharged from duty on the spot. With Mustafa Kemal's simultaneous announcement of his resignation, his military career under the Ottoman regime would come to an end at the age of 38. According to the memoirs of Admiral Rauf Orbay, he and Karabekir immediately congratulated Mustafa Kemal for his principled decision and Karabekir declared at that historical moment his continued allegiance to him and the commitment of his army corps to remain under his command.⁴⁴ That critical junction at the outset of the liberation movement was thus safely negotiated through. The next day, Karabekir was assigned by the Government to the position of Third Army Inspector replacing Mustafa Kemal.

Once the crucial question of Mustafa Kemal's relationship with the army was thus cleared despite his dismissal from his military position by the Istanbul Government, preparations for the people's congress could be expedited. Apart from the Government's pressure, another serious obstacle was the obstructions of the Allied Powers' military observation mission which General Karabekir had to deal with on a daily basis while he was preparing the internal political ground for the congress. He was thus busy networking to sort out some problematic issues with local leaders and delegates in early negotiations

43 Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 1286.

44 Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 78.

regarding the items to be included in the agenda and the decisions expected to be reached, foremost, Mustafa Kemal's election to National Resistance leadership. Meanwhile the British military mission commander Lieutenant Colonel Rawlinson visited Mustafa Kemal, too, on 9 July to mention the prospects of an Allied armed intervention unless the congress was suspended.

Having thus done away with his military titles and uniform, Mustafa Kemal was elected Chairman of the Erzurum People's Congress and leader of the National Liberation Movement at its opening session on 23 July. This was an achievement which had never been taken for granted in an assembly composed of delegates from diverse walks of life representing a wide spectrum from religious to militia, intellectual, or bureaucratic backgrounds, most of whom had not met or known Mustafa Kemal before. However, pressure from the Istanbul Government would escalate during the congress (prior to which the governor of Erzurum had fled the city) and Karabekir would receive on 26 July an inquiry from the Ministry of War demanding an explanation on what measures were being taken by the armed forces against the convening of an illegal conference. Karabekir's brief reply was "I am protecting it."⁴⁵ Karabekir would continue resisting the persistent orders from the Damat Ferit Government (Ferit was the Sultan's son-in-law as alluded to in his title "*damat*", meaning "the groom") to prevent the happening of the Erzurum Congress and its follow-up in Sivas. The instructions he would eventually receive from the Ministry of War on 30 July would demand that Mustafa Kemal and Rauf (Orbay) Bey be immediately arrested and sent to Istanbul. In his long and detailed historical reply on 1 August, Karabekir explained the terrible condition the country was in, and strongly criticized the Government's continuing directives to mitigate and disarm the army and discharge the bright commanders in accordance with the provisions of the Mudros Treaty on surrender. He reported in conclusion that: "He did not see anything contradictory with the country's high interests and laws in Mustafa Kemal's and Rauf Bey's activities... the state and conditions prevailing in the country certainly did not allow their arrest ... and any such action could lead to catastrophic consequences". He also circulated his reply within the army corps.

The Erzurum People's Congress was concluded on 7 August with the following declaration:

"The Province of Trabzon and all eastern provinces are an integral part of the country. The Country's defense as well as the protection of the Caliphate and Sultanate are secured under the power of the Nationalist Forces and the rule of national will. The boundaries of the country are the boundaries prior to the Mudros Treaty of Armistice and any kind of invasion and offence will be defied. The establishment of a separatist

45 Karabekir, *Günlükler*, 612.

Armenian, Greek or any other state will not be allowed. The equal rights of the non-Muslim citizens are under the legal assurances of the State but no religious groups will be granted privileges.”

The Congress named a ten-member Representative Committee under the presidency of Mustafa Kemal with his close comrades in the movement Kazım Karabekir, Rauf Bey, and Bekir Sami Bey also on this committee. The decisions of the committee were conveyed to the Istanbul Government, as well.

The People's Movement of Resistance for Liberation was thus launched.

In the days following the Congress, at his farewell visit to Karabekir, the British Lieutenant Colonel Rawlinson repeated his threats against the army corps' resistance to disarmament. Karabekir would simply reply that it was an internal matter and the Mudros observation missions had no authority to intervene in.

The subsequent Congress of the Country-wide Resistance Organizations of Anatolia and Thrace convened in Sivas again under the presidency of Mustafa Kemal during 4-11 September 1919 would essentially confirm the decisions of the Erzurum Congress at a larger representative scale.

Obstructions Continue: Provocation of Separatism and Religious Reactionism by Foreign Powers

Like the Istanbul Government, the British were also profoundly concerned by developments of the national movement and resorted to stirring separatist tendencies and also provoking the army against the Kurdish population by circulating rumors of Kurdish uprisings in Sivas and Harput. In a related development, intelligence reports would reveal a 7-point secret agreement signed between Prime Minister Damat Ferit and the British Government on 12 September 1919 placing the Straits under British authority and deciding on the establishment of a carved-out independent state of Kurdistan, as well as on the aversion of national movements and the renouncement of Turkey's entire jurisprudence over Egypt and Cyprus.⁴⁶ This “Kurdish separatism” conspiracy would be averted by Karabekir through dialogue with the Kurdish gentry which invalidated the uprising rumors. However, there was still another instrument the Istanbul Government and the British were jointly deploying against Mustafa Kemal and Karabekir, which was the provocation of religious reactionary dynamics by spreading rumors about those leaders' “anti-caliphatism, ungodliness and bolshevism”. It was also known that the British were simultaneously provoking the Bolshevik revolution tendencies in Anatolia to weaken National Resistance. Karabekir was additionally facing accusations of “forcefully recruiting the youth to arms for a hopeless war.” The National Resistance Movement leadership would indeed face serious

46 To view Mustafa Kemal's telegraph to the 15th Army Corps regarding this issue, please see: Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 442.

problems of desertion and reactionary uprising attempts in the future, mainly provoked by these rumors. The US stance, on the other hand, turned out to be somewhat different from other Allied Powers. The US policies were essentially based on President Wilson's 14-point principles regarding "self-determination of peoples" but were rather focused on humanitarian missionary activities providing health and education support to Christian communities of the region. Regardless of efforts by those who were keen about taking advantage of such ideas as "self-determination" in favor of their plans to claim territory from Ottoman Empire, the National Resistance leadership was not really worried due to the actual majority of the settled Muslim-Turkish culture and population in the lands that the Armenians were claiming rights to. On the contrary, the Resistance leadership viewed humanitarian services with sympathy. When the fact-finding US Congressional mission under General Harbord's leadership arrived in Erzurum on 25 September in response to the pressure of the Armenian lobby in the US, Karabekir would provide the visiting delegation with extensive information regarding the demographic and historical structure of the region and the developments in the Eastern Front. The report that the committee would thus produce for the US Congress would essentially confirm the Muslim-Turkish indigenous cultural and demographic predominance in the region as well as the Armenian atrocities during the war but also the determination of the Turkish people's and army's organized national resistance for the liberation of their motherland. Subsequently visiting Yerevan, General Harbord is reported to have advised his Armenian counterparts to *handle their matters in Erzurum with the Turks instead of soliciting assistance from the West* (interestingly enough, this piece of conversation would be later be disclosed to Karabekir during negotiations of the Gyumri Treaty by his Armenian counterparts). The US would refrain from signing the Sèvres Treaty of 20 August 1920 that would practically enslave the Ottoman Empire and largely partition its territory amongst the winners of the war.

The Last Meeting of the Ottoman Parliament, Declaration of the National Pact and Establishment of the Grand National Assembly

Although Mustafa Kemal and his friends had severed relations with the Damat Ferit Government of Istanbul, they still pursued a policy of keeping their contacts alive as much as circumstances allowed in order to expand the political basis of the resistance movement. The Amasya meetings conducted on 20-22 October between Prime Minister Ali Rıza Pasha Government's representative Navy Minister Salih Pasha and Mustafa Kemal, Rauf and Bekir Sami on behalf of the Representative Committee of the Resistance Movement are significant in this regard. Known for his sympathy towards national resistance, Ali Rıza Pasha had replaced the previous Premier Damat Ferit who had to resign on 30 September failing the prevention of the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses. Salih Pasha's cabinet on the other hand included members who had been in active

contact with the Nationalist Forces. Indeed, the protocols signed at the conclusion of the Amasya meetings rejected enemy occupation, external patronage, and concessions to the minorities while recognizing the credentials of the All-Anatolian Society for the Defense of Rights and deciding to convene the Ottoman Parliament *Majlis* (which the Sultan had abolished on 21 December 1918) outside of Istanbul for serious safety concerns. With this protocol, the Anatolia resistance movement was formally recognized by the Ottoman Government although Damat Ferit's return to power as head of government between 5 April-17 October 1920 would lead to the rupture of relations again.

The last Ottoman Parliament which indeed convened according to the Amasya protocols but in Istanbul declared the "National Pact" on 28 January 1920 by unanimous vote. The six-point manifesto which would serve as the constitutional guidelines for the resistance movement was authored in line with the decisions of the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses and declared *the principles of self-determination for the future of the regions populated by people of Arab origin under foreign occupation at the time the Mudros Treaty of Armistice was signed, as well as for the legal status of Western Thrace, organization of a referendum likewise if necessary in Kars-Ardahan-Batum, and the rejection of the imposition of any restrictions on Turkey's full political-judicial-fiscal sovereign independence*. The last Ottoman Parliament thus having achieved this historical task in its last meeting would be raided and abolished by British forces on 16 March 1920. 145 deputies identified with the Nationalist Forces were arrested and exiled to Malta. Among them were former Prime Minister Sait Halim Pasha, Speaker of the Parliament Halil (Menteşe), ministers, governors, commanders such as Rauf (Orbay), and renowned intellectuals and authors such as Ziya Gökalp and Hüseyin Cahit. On 10 April, the showpiece military commissions instituted under the pressure of occupying Powers to investigate the Armenian massacre claims executed the innocent Boğazlayan District Governor Kemal Bey. The abolishment of the parliament would actually result in leaving the National Resistance Representative Committee as the sole representative of the national will and would thus clear the way to the establishment of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara on 23 April 1920. Among the members of this new legislative body would be Karabekir Pasha as a deputy for Edirne.

The Military and Diplomatic Fronts Get Activated

Hardly two years having passed from Mustafa Kemal's and Karabekir's transition from Istanbul to Anatolia, the political and military infrastructure of National Resistance was put in place, its strategy was determined, and preparations were initiated to repatriate the eastern provinces. As contained in Karabekir's memoirs, based on the agreement between Karabekir and Mustafa Kemal at their earlier meeting in Istanbul and also according to the negotiated conclusions of the Erzurum-Sivas Congresses, the national resistance military

strategy was conceived as first securing the Eastern Front and then concentrating forces in the Western Front for a final strike.

A significant aspect of the military and diplomatic operations conducted in the Eastern Front was acting in dialogue with the Bolshevik army that was preparing for military intervention to reinforce its sovereignty in the southern Caucasus. In the same vein, it was important to negate the tactics of the Allied Powers to provoke the National Resistance leadership into going to war against Russia, as much as diverting the Armenian and Georgian military capacities from their aggressive plans against Turkish territory to defensive priorities against Russian threats. This strategy of constant dialogue with Russia was the opposite of the policy pursued by the Istanbul Government, which was mainly leaning towards various Western mandate plans. On the other hand, possible initiatives the Armenian committees could take to approach Moscow in search of support for their plans regarding eastern Anatolia had to be closely watched as well. In consideration of this last item, initiation of the eastern offensive was gaining urgency from a humanitarian aspect as much as for military purposes as the atrocities that were being committed all along against the Muslim community under Armenian occupation continued unhindered. Indeed, in his letter addressed to the Armenian Republic Command in Yerevan on 22 March 1920, Karabekir had reminded that, only in February, in the regions of Shuragel, Akbaba, Zaruşat, and Çıldır, 28 Muslim villages had been destroyed, more than two thousand of the population had been massacred, young women were kidnapped, the ones that were able to escape had frozen to death in the mountains, so he demanded measures to be taken to stop those crimes.⁴⁷ On another level, it was necessary to be alert against the designs that could have been lurking behind the recent rumors forged by Britain to the effect that “the new Turkish regime would be recognized by the Allies if it turns out to be a republic”, so that the Resistance leadership might be incited to give up on the operation to be imminently launched against the Armenian bands in turn for a recognition. Meanwhile, reactionary uprisings supported by Britain and spreading to include Samsun, Sivas, and Tokat created another element of pressure on the Eastern Army which was being forced to allocate resources for dealing with that problem as well. Karabekir was convinced that diplomatic negotiations with the Allied Powers would yield no positive outcome because the Allied Powers were really going through their weakest post-war times and all they were doing was trying to buy a few months’ time to conclude their campaign in the Western Front. He would consequently send a report dated 4 June 1920 to the Grand National Assembly along those views underlining that the issue was not to be impeded any longer and the operation had to be launched immediately so that the situation did not get more complicated and the forces are transferred to the Western Front as soon as possible where they are urgently needed.⁴⁸

47 Gnkur. Harp Tarihi Dairesi Arşiv no. (Gen. Staff Military History Archives) 1/105, Dosya no. 10

48 Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 860-861.

Ankara finally gave the operation green light on 6 June and Karabekir immediately set out to step up preparations. In a directive he received on 22 June, however, he was ordered to halt the operation upon Georgii Chicherin's offer for mediation with Armenia. Nevertheless, the Armenian bands' bombardment of Muslim villages in the South of Yerevan on 11 June and their advance towards Nakhchivan and Oltu on 21 June had already nullified all excuses against the initiation of the Turkish operation against Sarıkamış. Karabekir was increasingly worried about more waste of time and took action for at least reinforcing his current positions. He sent a platoon from the 11th Division in Bayazıt to Shahtahtı in Azerbaijan so as to support Nakhchivan, he further had Oltu occupied by a division, and held the strategic points of the Allahuekber Mountains north of the Bardız Mountain by the 9th Division. He also began fortification of positions beyond the 1878 boundaries. However, attempts for a dialogue with the Bolshevik administration were still proving fruitless and the Turkish delegation would return from Moscow on 17 July without signing an agreement. As a large part of the Bolshevik army in Azerbaijan had recently been shifted to the Polish front, it was understood that the Red Army's capability of occupying Armenia and Georgia was currently weakened, and Moscow would impede a unilateral Turkish operation in that direction.

Meanwhile, on 24 May 1920, Sultan Vahdettin decreed the execution of Mustafa Kemal Pasha (together with Ali Fuat Pasha, as well as active intellectuals such as the Adnan and Halide Edip Adivar couple). However, the Greek army also kept advancing in the Western Front invading Balıkesir on 30 June and Uşak on 9 August. Domestic uprisings were spreading as well. Under those exceptionally difficult circumstances, responding to the urgent requirements to support the Western Front with an army division proved an impossible mission for the Eastern Army, as it would create great risks in the East. Benefiting from the forces under the command of Nuri and Halil Pashas who had fled to Azerbaijan from Istanbul and Batumi and where they had been arrested was also out of the question. Furthermore, the uprising that Nuri Pasha had instigated in Ganja against the Bolsheviks, which would result in a tragic failure, also contradicted the National Resistance diplomacy that was trying hard to establish a dialogue of cooperation with Moscow.

The Sèvres Treaty and Beyond: National Resistance on the Rise, the Retrieval of Sarıkamış and Kars

On 10 August 1920, the Sèvres Treaty of Peace was signed between the Ottoman Government and the Allied Powers. The treaty, which amounted to the suicidal surrender of the Ottoman Empire, simply confirmed the Mudros provisions currently in force, transforming the Allied Powers' *de facto* occupation from a state of armistice into a status of sovereignty. The greater part of İzmir, the Aegean coast and Thrace were thus given to Greece and the size of the Turkish armed forces was to be reduced to fifty thousand. Moreover,

Armenian and Kurdish states would be established in Eastern Anatolia. Armenia immediately signed the treaty, although it was not a member of the Allied Powers, nor party to the peace conference. The same day, Armenia also signed a peace agreement in Moscow with the Bolshevik Government. As the Sèvres Treaty would not be ratified by the Ottoman Parliament, however, it would legally become null and void and would go down in history as the only peace treaty of World War One which failed to come into effect.

Meanwhile, Moscow had still not been convinced into signing a bilateral agreement with Ankara while the National Resistance leadership was anxious for the preservation of this cooperation as, significantly, transfer of Russian arms and financial aid to the Resistance forces continued via Nakhchivan through Karabekir's intermediary. That particular period during Resistance is also known to have embraced tendencies sympathetic towards the Bolshevik ideology under the introduction of "Islamic Communism in Anatolia", which was treated with "controlled" tolerance. This movement was more or less initiated by the announcement of Turkey's *İştirakiyun* Organization on 10 September 1920 under the leadership of Mustafa Suphi in Baku, but it was followed by the "official" Turkish Communist Party established on 18 October 1920, obviously for ensuring the closest possible supervision of the movement. Thus, by Mustafa Kemal's orders, practically all top political leaders including Karabekir, Fevzi (Çakmak), İsmet (İnönü), Ali Fuat (Cebesoy), Refet Bele and some other dignitaries signed in as co-founders of this new political party. Enver Pasha would also soon join the movement announcing his own party, the People's Council Party in Batumi in March 1921. These currents would, however, be very short-lived and brought to an end towards the end of 1921 to the dissatisfaction of Moscow.⁴⁹ The chances of a joint operation on Armenia with the Bolshevik army were, however, still growing thinner, and Karabekir Pasha, serving as the "Eastern Front Commander" since August, would increasingly insist on an early offensive so as to pre-empt the possible entry of the Bolshevik army in the three provinces of Kars-Ardahan-Artvin, the *Elviye-i Selase* under any circumstances. His point of view was approved by Mustafa Kemal.⁵⁰

As of Autumn 1920, the National Resistance Movement would be gaining momentum with the military successes supporting diplomatic initiatives.

On 12 September 1920, Armenian forces would once again charge against the Turkish 9th Division. An enemy fleet was spotted off-shore İnebolu in Black Sea sailing towards Trabzon on 6 September. On 12 September a Greek division, and on 14 September a Greek force of 5,000 were reported to have landed at the Black Sea coast. Running out of patience largely consumed during the standby that had stalled the offensive already for four months, Karabekir finally decided to launch the operation. The counter attack in the 9th Division

49 Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009).

50 The summary of this correspondence is found in: Karabekir, *Günlükler*, C. 1, 671.

front on 13 September was a success and Armenian troops were repelled. The forward offensive plans were finally approved by Mustafa Kemal Pasha on 20 September with instructions that the first stage of the offensive be extended to the Kars-Kağızman-Noviselim-Merdenik line, and that Karabekir send a delegation to Tbilisi to secure the neutrality of the Georgians.⁵¹

Sarıkamış was taken back on 28 September and Karabekir's headquarters were transferred there. Kağızman was next to be retrieved on 1 October but the Armenian attacks had not yet been stopped. As a result of the offensive launched at the 9th Division front on 13 October Beşkaya and the powerful outer positions on the east-west extension of Kars were captured. With the final offensive of 28 October, Kars was captured on 30 October 1920. 1150 Armenian soldiers were taken prisoners. Among them were the War Minister Araratov, Chief of Defense Vekilov, Kars Fortress Commander Primov, a civilian minister, three generals, six colonels and about fifty officers. A large number of weapons and ammunition were seized. The Turkish army had lost nine men and 47 soldiers were wounded.

The message received from the Grand National Assembly Defense Minister Fevzi Pasha on 31 October 1920 read Karabekir's promotion to lieutenant general. He was 38 years old at that time.

Karabekir's Gyumri Operation and the Gyumri-Moscow Treaties

On 3 November, Karabekir left the defense of Kars in charge of a volunteer Samsun battalion of 1,000 men and started the Gyumri operation. Armenian troops were driven away until the west ridges of the city. When the Armenian Government's peace offer of 3 November reached Karabekir on 6 November, it was too late to stop and Gyumri was surrendered to the Turkish army on 7 November. Upon the Armenian government's rejection of the truce conditions⁵² contained in the diplomatic note of the Ankara Foreign Office that Karabekir delivered to the Armenian side on 8 November, Karabekir transferred his headquarters to Gyumri and occupied some positions to the east of Arpaçay River. Armenian forces consequently evacuated the district of İğdır on 12 November and retreated to the north of Aras River. Finally, on 17 November they declared their acceptance of all truce conditions. The cannons and rifles seized from Armenian forces were immediately sent to the Western Front. The Gyumri Treaty that was signed as a result of the 25 November-3 December 1920 peace negotiations conducted by Karabekir leading the Turkish delegation concluded the return of Kars and its region back to Turkey; Armenia's withdrawal of its signature from all international agreements instituted against Turkey (including the Treaty of Sèvres); delimitation of Turkey's eastern border with Armenia along the line that reached the Aras River and Çıldır Lake;

51 Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 984-985.

52 Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 999.

mutual recognition of equal rights with other citizens in both countries for people of Armenian and Turkish origin; establishment of diplomatic relations and mail-telephone-telegraph lines between the two countries as soon as possible; recognition by Armenia of the local autonomy to be decided through self-determination accorded to the Nakhchivan province of Azerbaijan under Turkey's assurance; Turkey's assurances to assist Armenia if so requested by that country against foreign aggression; and Armenia's assurances to refrain from importing weapons and to downsize its armed forces as envisaged in the treaty whereupon the Turkish army would evacuate Armenia. Three outstanding consequences of the Gyumri Treaty for the Turkish National Resistance were *Armenia's recognition of the Ankara Government, the Treaty of Sèvres losing its validity as a result of Armenia's withdrawal of its signature, and the delimitation of the Turkey-Armenia border*. The day following the conclusion of the Gyumri Treaty, the Red Army would occupy Armenia, establishing the Armenian Soviet Republic to be included into the Soviet Union. The Treaty of Gyumri would not come into force as the new Soviet government would suspend its approval procedure but the subsequent treaties of Moscow and Kars, respectively on 16 March 1921 and 13 October 1921, would endorse the provisions of Gyumri in its entirety. The first country to recognize an independent Armenian state that Russia had never supported had thus been Turkey under the Ankara Government.

Upon the completion of the Red Army's occupation of South Caucasia at the end of 1920 and its entry into Georgia on 1 February 1921, Karabekir's troops also took action and reclaimed the eastern-most provinces of Ardahan and Artvin on 23 February. The neighboring Caucasian districts of Ahilkelek, Ahiska, and Batumi were subsequently captured as well. Thus, the strategic frontier lands of the "Three Districts" Kars, Ardahan and Artvin "*Elviye-i Selase*" which were left to Turkey by the Brest-Litovsk and Batumi treaties were actually taken back in addition to the three Caucasian districts, nullifying the Mudros and Sèvres borders in the Eastern Front.

Meanwhile on 10 January 1921, with the First İnönü battle won in the Western Front, Greek advance was temporarily stopped. In South Anatolia, too, National Resistance forces drove away the combined forces of the French and their Armenian "Eastern Legionaries". Military successes in Anatolia were followed by the activation of political and diplomatic initiatives. The first Constitution of the National Resistance Movement was promulgated on 20 January 1921 instituting a parliamentary government in Ankara based on unity of powers. Having realized that the Treaty of Sèvres could not be imposed on Turkey by military means, the Allied Powers decided to convene a conference in London between 23 February and 12 March and invited the Grand National Assembly Government Foreign Minister Bekir Sami Bey separately from the Ottoman delegation hoping to be able to successfully "market" a slightly amended treaty. The conference ended inconclusively as the Turkish delegation categorically rejected the Sèvres in its entirety, but the Turkish side

significantly profited from the conference as the status of the National Resistance Government was endorsed through the recognition of the credentials of its delegation by the Allied Powers. The Turkish delegation also took advantage of the conference by formally informing the participants of the National Pact.

During these developments, dialogue was finally established between the Parliamentary Government and Moscow, embassies were mutually opened, and the Moscow Treaty of 16 March 1921 was concluded. The Treaty which was signed by the Economy Minister Yusuf Kemal Bey in the name of the Ankara Government ruled the rejection by the parties of any international instrument (consequently the Treaty of Sèvres as well) that one of the parties had already rejected; Soviet Russia's support of the Turkish National Resistance Movement and recognition of the boundaries contained in the National Pact; maintenance of the Kars-Ardahan, and Artvin provinces within Turkey but inclusion of Batumi-Ahiska-Ahilkelek into Georgia; recognition by Moscow of the treaties that Ankara had signed with Armenia and Georgia; and continuation of the Soviet Russia's assistance to Ankara in gold and weapons. Turkey's eastern borders were thus guaranteed, and the Grand National Assembly Government was formally recognized by Russia.

Military and Diplomatic Activity Continues: The Sakarya Battle, Treaties of Kars and Ankara

Following the Greek army's defeats at the 10 January and 31 March İnönü battles at the Western Front, the progress it had made by occupying Afyon, Bursa, Kütahya, and Eskişehir between 10-24 July was stopped and reversed upon the Turkish army's definitive victory under Mustafa Kemal's command in the Sakarya Battle of 23 August-13 September.

Having achieved its military objectives, the Eastern Front Command would pursue its diplomatic strategy. As the new Soviet republics were not parties to the Moscow Treaty, Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijani delegations together with the Turkish and the USSR delegations would meet once again in Kars in October. The 13 October 1921 Treaty of Kars⁵³ that Kazım Karabekir negotiated and signed as head of the Turkish delegation essentially endorsed the previous Gyumri and Moscow Treaties, once again confirming that Nakhchivan, populated by a majority of Azeri Turks, would preserve its status as an autonomous republic within Azerbaijan. With the conclusion of the Treaty of Kars, the final formality needed to formalize Turkey's eastern borders and the agreed conditions of peace between Turkey and its eastern neighbours was fulfilled. Elsewhere in Anatolia, the Treaty of Ankara signed with France on 20 October 1921, a week after the Treaty of Kars, was the first sign of the disintegration of the occupying forces against National Resistance in the

53 Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 1126-1136.

Western Front. The scandalous exile of nationalist Turks to Malta would also be ended on 1 November and those individuals who could not be duly prosecuted so far in the absence of any evidence on their involvement in the so-called Armenian atrocities (the “Armenian Genocide”, as it later came to be propagated in the third quarter of the century), would be exchanged with the British prisoners of war held by the Turkish government (amongst them Lord Curzon’s nephew Lieutenant Colonel Rawlinson). Fifteen Turkish captives in Malta had however already lost their lives there while twenty of them had managed to escape.

Shortly after World War-I, the former Ottoman Prime Minister and pioneer of the German alliance Talat Pasha would be assassinated in Berlin on 21 March 1921, and the former Navy Minister and Commander of the Palestine Front Cemal Pasha in Tbilisi on 21 July 1922, both by Armenian terrorists. To complete that particular episode of Armenian assassinations, former Minister of War and Germany’s foremost ally Enver Pasha would also be killed in eastern Bukhara on 4 August 1922 during his Pan-Turkist uprising campaign against the Bolsheviks at a raid conducted by a Red Army platoon under the command of Hagop Melkumyan, a junior Armenian officer.

The Turkish Victories That Concluded the National War of Liberation: The Dumlupınar Battle, the Great Offensive, the Mudania Armistice, and the Treaty of Lausanne

Gazi (the title “holy warrior” bestowed upon Mustafa Kemal along with the rank of Field Marshal by a Grand National Assembly ruling of 19 September 1921 upon his victory at the Sakarya Battle) Mustafa Kemal Pasha would strike the final blow at the Dumlupınar “Commander-in-Chief’s” Battle of the Great Offensive on 26-30 August 1922 in the Western Front, thereafter the Greek army would be terminally driven to the Aegean Sea at İzmir on 9 September. The Sakarya and Dumlupınar Battles, which entirely reversed the doom of the Western Front, were vitally reinforced by the Eastern Front in support of an army that was fighting a last-ditch war in great deprivation against hugely more superior armed and equipped Greek forces. Indeed, throughout the span of one year from 1921 August on, the 3rd, 11th, and 13th Eastern Army Divisions, the Hakkari Brigade, and 22 German fighter planes received from Russia as well as an impressive amount of mostly Russian weapons (130 cannons, 13 thousand rifles) and ammunition (18 thousand artillery and 33 million infantry bullets, 133 thousand bombs, 27 tons of gun powder)⁵⁴ seized during the wars in the east and dispatched from the Eastern Army would make a shockingly devastating impact on the enemy and thus a decisive contribution to final victory.

54 *Türk İstiklâl Harbi, C. 3, Doğu Cephesi (1919-1921) (Turkish War of Liberation, Vol. 3, Eastern Front (1919-1921))* (Ankara: Gnkur. Harp Tarihi Dairesi Başkanlığı, Gnkur. Basımevi, 1965).

The Mudania Armistice signed with the Allied Powers on 11 October would stop the armed conflict and establish the maintenance of Eastern Thrace (including Edirne) within Turkey's boundaries.

As for the political costs incurred upon Allied Powers by the victories of the Resistance forces, following Great Britain's War Minister Winston Churchill who was forced to resign after his defeat against Col. Mustafa Kemal at the Gallipoli campaign of 1915-16, the British Prime Minister Lloyd George would be the second British politician in a row to resign from office on 19 October 1922 as a result of the failure of British policies of invading Anatolia during World War-I and the National Resistance. However, Greece had the biggest share of political casualties among the Allied Powers. The leaders of the *coup d'état* which toppled the Greek government days after their defeat in Asia Minor tried and sentenced five former politicians and the commander general of the Greek Army to death penalty on charges of treason and war crimes. The sentence for former prime ministers of the war times D. Gounaris, P. Protopapadakis, and N. Stratos together with former Minister of War N. Theotokis, former Foreign Minister Baltadjis, and former Commander General of the Greek Armed Forces Gen. Hadjianestis was executed on 30 November 1922. The untold reality was that many of those individuals were actually on the record for their opposition to the war in Asia Minor but were practically taken prisoners of British policies.

The post-war period in Turkey was the birth of a new country and regime with the introduction of ambitious reforms to shape a young democracy. On 1 November 1922, the Sultanate would be repealed. Furthermore, the Treaty of Lausanne signed on 24 July 1923 would mark the final diplomatic victory of the National Resistance Movement against the invading forces. The Alliance Powers would leave Istanbul on 6 October 1923 and the new Republic of Turkey would be declared on 29 October 1923. The Constitution of 10 April 1924 would lay the ground for the democratic and secular reforms to be soon put into force.

The Strategy Of The National Resistance Movement Was Implemented In Its Entirety

The "Conqueror of the East" Kazım Karabekir Pasha would be elected representative of Edirne in the 1922 Parliamentary elections and as Istanbul deputy in 1924. He would devote himself therefrom to the democratic progress of the new republican regime and would consequently resign from the First Army Command in 1924 to take the helm of the oppositional Progressive Republican Party. His party would be shut down on 3 June 1925 and his parliamentary mandate would end on 1 March 1927. He would retire from military on 1 November 1927 to enjoy a late opportunity in life to raise a family, also focusing on completing the writing of his memoirs until 1939 when he would be re-elected as an Istanbul deputy in the parliament. His mandate

would be renewed for nine years at the subsequent elections. He would be named the Speaker of the Parliament on 5 August 1946, the second State position after President Inonu, but passed away on 26 January 1948 while in office.

CONCLUSION

Viewing the Turkish National Resistance Movement during and after World War-I basically from the angle of the Eastern and Caucasus fronts, this article underlines the following features of the Resistance Movement: the tactical proficiency in the military, political and diplomatic strategy conducted in coherence with uncompromising compliance with norms of legitimacy and in determined defiance of surrender, the democratic understanding in subjecting the military struggle to national will, and the sacrifice borne in valuing diplomatic opportunities despite the heavy costs incurred by the resulting prolongation of the war. In his memoirs *İstiklal Harbimiz* (Tr. *Our Liberation War*), Kazım Karabekir most strikingly emphasizes in the following words another outstanding feature of the Liberation War, representing an established State legacy regarding the devotion to honest, full, and brave dialogue on state affairs within the National Resistance leadership at the cost of all possible personal responsibility as may be demanded by the requirements of the situation:

“... Our Liberation War has thus been concluded in unanimity of our views, although we have had disputes with Mustafa Kemal Pasha due to some differences of opinion regarding our military, executive and political approaches during those four years in our common fight for the freedom of our people. But it has been an exceptional privilege to be able to move towards eventual victory in consensus and cooperation for success... Mustafa Kemal Pasha... knew perfectly well ... that I was a man of my own voice and that the sole motive ruling my thoughts was the high interests of our People and State. From now on... I would be better disposed to demonstrate to him on a face-to-face basis the genuineness in my thoughts...”⁵⁵

Despite these heart-felt wishes, the ruthless rules of the revolution would again come into play in time, parting these two comrades-in-arms and close friends, imposing on them perhaps one of the heaviest moral tolls out of all other personal sacrifices they had endured during the national war.

This article has made a between-the-lines attempt to allude to some of the secrets behind the victory achieved in this fight for a people's rise from its ashes after the loss of their empire was signed to a coalition of all the current powers in the world. A number of those secrets should be searched in the

55 Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimiz*, 1290.

exceptionally lofty merits, endless devotion, and brilliant achievements of the cadres led by the 20th century's great leader Mustafa Kemal who resurrected under the most unexpected and unfavorable conditions the national identity of a people which had been systematically suppressed by the theocratic Ottoman Monarchy.

Before concluding this article, which was authored in full recognition that there are almost no aspects of the National Resistance Movement left untapped, it should be worth quoting the following observation of US President Bill Clinton in his address to the World Leaders at the Istanbul OSCE Summit in November 1999 that the author personally witnessed to: "Turkey currently stands to play at the outset of the 21st century the critical role which it already played in molding the fate of Europe for the 20th Century."

Revisiting the experience that this country has gone through a century ago should still be infinitely valuable in understanding the secret codes and the standing rules behind the ongoing competition of international powers in Turkey's region.

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In the January 1923 issue of the New York Times, this photograph was published with the comment "A handful of Turks challenging the world". This photograph, taken during the maneuvers being held when the Lausanne negotiations had run into difficulties, was meant to give the message that "If no progress is achieved in Lausanne, we are ready to fight again."



Kazım Karabekir Pasha.



Kars, 1918.



Inspection of troops being transferred from the Eastern to the Western Front.



Atatürk and Latife Hanım in a meeting with the people in İzmir in 1923.



Karabekir's wife İclal Hanım and children.

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THE 1915 EVENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE RUSSIAN ARCHIVES AND INTERNATIONAL COURT DECISIONS

(RUS ARŞİVLERİ IŞIĞINDA 1915 OLAYLARI VE
ULUSLARARASI MAHKEME KARARLARI)

Dr. Mehmet PERİNÇEK*

Abstract: *There are two main points that help us better understand the developments leading to the Relocation and Resettlement Law of 27 May 1915. The first point is the alliance between the sections of the Ottoman Armenian population under the Dashnaktsutyun leadership and the imperialist European states and Tsarist Russia. The second is the policy of ethnic cleansing against the Muslim population by the Armenian volunteer committees in order to change the demographic balance in the region in their favour to achieve the aim of “Great Armenia”. Documents (correspondences between officials, field reports etc.) contained at the Tsarist Russian archives, the archives of a state that was outright at war with the Ottoman Empire, provide us evidence and context to properly understand the rationale and legitimacy of the relocation policy carried out by the Ottoman Empire concerning its Armenian subjects. National and international court verdicts, such as those of the European Court of Human Rights, in contemporary times concerning issues on genocide disputes and freedom of expression add additional perspective on the research of the relocation policy.*

Keywords: *Armenian Question, Dashnaktsutyun, First World War, Ottoman Empire, the European Court of Human Rights*

* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4269-5739>
Invited professor, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University
mp@mehmetperincek.com, +79257011828

Öz: 27 Mayıs 1915 tarihli Sevk ve İskân Kanununa giden gelişmelerin daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlayan iki husus bulunmaktadır. Birinci husus, Taşnaksutyun liderliği tesirindeki Osmanlı Ermeni nüfusunun belli bir kesmi ile sömürgeci Avrupa devletleri ve Çarlık Rusyası arasında kurulan ittifaktır. İkinci husus ise, “Büyük Ermenistan” hedefinin gerçekleştirilmesi uğruna Ermeni gönüllü komitelerinin bölgedeki demografik dengeyi kendi lehlerini değiştirmek için Müslüman nüfusa karşı yürütmüş oldukları etnik temizlik politikasıdır. Çarlık Rusyası arşivleri, yani Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile topyekûn bir savaşa girişmiş devletin arşivleri, Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Ermeni tebaasına yönelik uyguladığı sevk ve iskân politikasının gerekçesinin ve meşruluğunun anlaşılması için delil ve bağlam sunan belgeler (yetkililer arasında yazışmalar, saha raporları vb.) içermektedir. Günümüzde ulusal ve uluslararası mahkemelerin (örneğin Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi) soykırım tartışmaları ve ifade özgürlüğü konuları üzerine aldığı kararlar, sevk ve iskân politikasıyla ilgili araştırmalara ilave bir bakış açısı katmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ermeni Sorunu, Taşnaksutyun, Birinci Dünya Savaşı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi

There are two main points that serve to clarify the developments that lead to the Relocation and Resettlement Law (Tr. *Sevk ve İskân Kanunu*) of 27 May 1915. First: the alliance between the large number Ottoman Armenian groups under Dashnak (Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun) leadership and the imperialist European states and Tsarist Russia. Second is the policy of ethnic cleansing against the Muslim population by the Armenian volunteer committees tasked with altering the demographic balance in the region toward their favour in order to achieve the aim of “Great Armenia”.

Tsarist Russian archives are filled with documents that prove the first point. Russian officials wrote many reports in which they clearly enounce the goal of arming Ottoman Armenians and provoking uprisings against the Ottoman state. They corresponded amongst themselves, meeting and exchanging letters with the Dashnaks. Additionally, they also produced detailed reports of the actions of the Dashnaks along the Russian-Ottoman border. On the other hand, the striking feature of the Russian archives is that they contain thousands of documents confirming the second point. As the Ottoman Empire’s enemy during the First World War, Russia had recorded the massacres by the Armenian committees they supported to invoke the disintegration of Ottoman Empire before and after the relocation. This is understandable, because the massacres and lootings committed by Armenian committees hindered re-establishing order in the territories invaded by Russia and the violence being perpetrated reached disturbing levels for Russian officials.

To understand the relocation, one must carefully examine the period before it. Documents at the Tsarist Russian archives give first hand evidence and reveal the legitimacy of the relocation decision as the documents of a nation which was outright at war with the Ottoman Empire at the time.

Armenians in the Eve of the First World War According To Russian Military Intelligence Reports

Russian military reports between 1910 and 1913 expose the inclinations and actions of a large number of Ottoman Armenian groups right before the war as well as before the Relocation and Resettlement Law, which reveals their policy of cooperating with an enemy state had taken shape well before the war.

For example; the heading of a top-secret intelligence report prepared by Caucasian Military District Quarters in Tbilisi on 11 February 1910 reads, “Political Movements, Civil Unrest and Disorder”. The report states that the Armenians in Erzurum were rapidly arming themselves. Also, one of the Dashnak Party leaders urged the Armenians during a crowded meeting to sell their carpets or borrow money to buy arms in case of insufficient funds. Along with these developments, the report indicated that Armenians were preparing large number of explosives and stockpiling them.¹

1 For the related part of the report, please see: Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA) fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 10 ob.

In a second report carrying the same date, it is stated that Dashnak militants had raided the home of a wealthy, prominent Turk (Kasım) of the region, killing him along with his family and servants. The news, which obviously perturbed Russian officials and indicated that the death of the Turkish man was a political murder, which could trigger public unrest at any moment once news of the incident spread, not only in Muş but also the surrounding cities including Erzurum. It is also repeated in this report that the Armenians of Erzurum were arming themselves.²

The increasing tension between the Muslims and Armenians of Van is highlighted in the report prepared by Vice-Consular S. Olferyev of Tsarist Russia on 28 February 1911. His remarks suggest that both sides in the city were rapidly arming themselves, with arms coming mostly from Siirt and Diyarbakır and, in case of conflict, the military headquarters was expected to take up the side of the Muslims. However, it is also stated these preparations were not intended for Armenians but rather because of developments in Syria and the Arab region.

Continuing in the Russian Vice Consular's report, he stated that he did not expect any massacre against Armenians in Van, as Armenians were in better condition than they were previously and Turks would need to exert much greater force and resources to prevent lootings by the Kurds. Furthermore, the Kurds' attacks on villages could devastate the city and harm the state treasury the most.³

In the intelligence report labelled "secret" and titled "Political Information about Turkey" prepared by Russian Caucasus Military District Quarter on 10 March 1911, the Dashnak movement had reportedly gone underground in Muş and that the Ottoman administration had taken precautions against the armed Dashnaks. Also, it is reported that Armenians in Muş were converting to the Orthodox faith⁴ and were willing to apply for Russian citizenship. Similar information is found in the report for the Armenians in Erzurum. It emphasizes that relations between Young Turks and Dashnaks were not the same as previously, and Dashnaks had petitioned a Russian invasion of "Turkish Armenia". It is stated in the report signed by a brigadier general that in case of a war, the majority of Armenians and Dashnaks were going to take the side of Russia and that the Armenians' inclinations would continue intensifying. Also, Armenians of Karakilise were also willing to accept orthodox faith in order to acquire the protection guarantees from Russia.⁵

2 For the whole report, please see: RGVIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 13, 13 ob., 14.

3 For the whole report, please see: RGVIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 187, 187 ob., 188, 188 ob.

4 What was probably meant here was that these Armenians were converting from being the disciples of the Armenian Apostolic Church to the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate). For a long time, Armenian Apostolic Church, an oriental orthodox church, was considered to practice a "deviant" form of Christianity by churches belonging to other denominations of Christianity such as the Russian Orthodox Church. The wording of the intelligence report suggests that Armenians were not considered to be "proper" Orthodox Christians until their conversion to the Russian Orthodox Church.

5 For the whole report, please see: RGVIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 189, 189 ob., 190, 190 ob.

In another “secret” intelligence report on 3 September 1911, it is stated that the Dashnaks were bringing worrisome large volumes of arms and ammunitions to Van through Erzurum from Trabzon, and the possibility of an Armenian mutiny in Erzurum was evident, along with similar preparations in Samsun.⁶

In the “secret” intelligence report titled “Political News from Asian Part of Turkey” and dated 11 July 1912, it is stated that in case of a Turkish-Russian war, Armenians in Erzincan were going to look forward to the arrival of Russian armies and were going to give any support necessary to the Russians.

Also, it is stated in the report that Armenian soldiers, who were serving in the Ottoman army in Erzincan, were gathering in secret meetings and discussing their stance in case of a war with Russia. During the meetings, some were suggesting escaping to Russia right away while some were opposing this idea because this would put the lives of Armenians who were going to engage in sabotage activities in danger. However, everyone had a consensus on not to go against the Russians. Also, it was chronicled that for Russians to distinguish Armenians from Turks, Armenians had decided to wear crosses under their uniforms even though this was not practiced in their culture. The author of the report (Major General Yudenich) asked this knowledge to be disseminated among Russian soldiers to assist the Russian agent in Erzincan in distinguishing and entrusting the Armenians who were planning to escape to the Russian side.⁷

Another document is the “secret” report of Russian Caucasian Military Quarter’s in Tbilisi on 12 February 1913, in which a brigadier general had chronicled developments headlined, “Political News from the Asia part of Turkey”:

“I am reporting the recent news from the Asian part of Turkey.

It is known that the domestic authorities are enforcing strict controls on Armenians, especially those travelling in Harput. They are not only searching the luggage but also the goods brought in to the city. Already, they have found the hidden arms a few times. Some Armenian culprits have been arrested. But still, step by step, the armament of Armenian population continues.”⁸

Again, another report with the same title and prepared by Intelligence Office on 26 February 1913 reports the following:

“(…) On 30 January, it’s stated that in case of a war, the Russian Military is not going to face any resistance inside Beyazit city. Even Muslims,

6 For the related part of the report, please see: RGVIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 266.

7 For the related part of the report, please see: RGVIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 331, 331 ob.

8 For the related part of the report, please see: RGVIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 402, 402 ob.

Turks and Kurds, are already convinced that Turkey is in no condition to fight with Russia, so they are used to the idea that they have to become a Russian citizen. The more enlightened ones are already looking forward to this.

The Christian population, Armenians, are of course looking forward to the arrival of the Russian armies and are ready to offer any kind of assistance. The Turkish Armenians, independent from their political ideas and communal status are all congruent with each other about the hatred against Turks and dreams to get rid of the Turkish authority.”⁹

The report titled “Information about Turkish Armenians” by Caucasian Army Intelligence Office on 30 April 1913 reports the following:

“The latest information about Armenians shows the number of Armenians who get excited by the Slav victories in Balkans keeps increasing.

Armenians are looking forward to the disintegration of Turkey and invasion of Russia on most of the Armenia with a surprising faith and impatience along with the increase in the risk of Armenian massacre. Armenians had gotten demoralised after an explosion which took down the whole building and created panic among the people of the whole city in Erzincan on 31 March. Apparently, three Armenian criminals, who were preparing bombs, died during explosion.

The news about explosion has seriously registered in the outside of the city as well. Armenians have gotten more afraid of the hostile actions against them by Turks, while Turks view this as an indication of the arming of Armenians in general.

As a result, the relations between Armenians and Turks have gotten tenser and the following has occurred:

The inclination to loot and murder by Turks was prevented with the efforts of several reasonable and influential Turks. A persistent rumour spread that during the levee at Sultan Bayrami¹⁰ on 14 April, a bomb was going to be thrown at governor in front of the residence. The rumour was not verified; maybe, it did not happen because of the precautions taken by the police. Lastly, some armed conflicts occurred between Armenians and Turks with some casualties in Bitlis.”¹¹

9 For the related part of the report, please see: RGVIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 405, 405 ob., 406.

10 It is the anniversary of the ascent to the throne of Mehmet Resat V in 1909 in terms of the old calendar.

11 For the whole report, please see: RGVIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 418, 418 ob., 419.

The “secret” letter sent by Russian Internal Affairs Vice-Minister to the War Minister V. A. Sukhomlinov on 16 May 1913 contained remarks on the following:

“The information that some armed Armenian groups from Russia have passed to Iran through Culfa and that their next destination is the Beyazıt in Turkey was gathered by the commander of the Yerevan Regional Gendarmerie Administration. This situation has worried Turkish authorities and made them instruct the Turkish diplomatic representations to reveal the general inclination of the Armenian population and whether there is an assistance and approval from Russia to the armament and actions against Turkey of Armenians.”¹²

Russian police and gendarmerie intelligence reports support military intelligence reports on that matter. A secret report signed by Tbilisi region gendarmerie director (who was a major) and sent to the police department dated 2 November 1912 stated that “Dashnakstuyun subcommittees in Muş, Van, Zeytun in Anatolia are gathering armed platoons to revolt against the Turks.”¹³

All resources ascertain that city of Van was the centre of Dashnak activities. Eventually, increasing weapon amassment activities had been directed towards Van. For instance, according to an intelligence report dated 8 February 1913, “in 14 January 1913, 52 Berdan machine guns, 42 7.62 mm rifles and 17000 bullets were sent to Van from Yerevan region İğdir village by Kevork the ‘blind’ and an Ottoman citizen Hayko to Van (...) These guns had been delivered for the use of Dashnaksutyun Party Van committee.”¹⁴ Both the domestic and international committees of the Party contributed to these activities. Tsarist police intelligence reports stated that the weapons were sent to “Turkish Armenia” from everywhere¹⁵ and that Armenian units passing the border were gathering in the city of Van in a similar manner.¹⁶

On the other hand, Russian government, because it was aware of the hatred of the Dashnaks against the Turks and the Ottoman government and that preparations were already underway, was trying to change its policy towards the Armenians before the First World War and benefit from their potential. Thus, we can see that the Commander in Chief ordered the Russian army “not to apply any kind of pressure, or interfere with cross border activities” against the Dashnak Party members in a “top secret” letter by Tbilisi region gendarmerie director’s dated 12 September 1914 sent to the police department.¹⁷

12 RG VIA fond 2000 opis 1 delo 7716 list 420.

13 State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) fond 102 DOO opis 1912 delo 14 list pri. 21 ob.

14 GARF fond 102 OO opis 1913 delo 14 chast 92B list 15 ob.

15 GARF fond 102 OO opis 1913 delo 14 chast 92B list 18 ob.

16 GARF fond 102 OO opis 1913 delo 14 chast 92B list 31 ob.

17 GARF fond 102 OO opis 1914 delo 343 chast 4 list 9, 9 ob.

As a result of their intense efforts, just before the war, Dashnaks were able to gather extensive number of weapons and soldiers in “Turkish Armenia”. We can easily observe from a note stating that “if the Kurds begin to use force against the Armenians, Armenians now possess enough weapons to defy attacks by the Kurds”¹⁸ from the Tsarist intelligence report dated 1914 the extent of the preparations made by the Armenians at the time.

Intelligence reports also stated that the Dashnaks “are eager for a war between Russia and Turkey and almost all the male Armenian population would voluntarily and actively join the offensive against Turkey”.¹⁹ Thus according to another report, on August 1914 “15 thousand units from the Caucasus were ready to establish armed battalions.”²⁰

As it understood from all these reports, many Ottoman Armenians, independently of political opinions and social statutes, had begun to wait for the Ottoman Empire to be split apart within the coming period of the First World War. Long time before the war, these elements within the Armenian population had been armed. This orientation had not been limited with any significant class, organisation or political movement etc. and it was widely spread over the population. On the other hand, this movement was ready to be in cooperation with the enemies of the country which they were a national subject of. Beyond not making a stand against the enemy invasion, they were in a preparation to facilitate the invasion. In fact, Armenian soldiers, who were serving in the Ottoman Army, were holding meetings on this point.

A distinctive character of this movement, which spread over the large masses, was the hatred felt against Turks and Kurds. Terror attacks had been concrete reflections of this hatred. The terror attacks carried out by the Dashnaks sowed discord among the Ottoman Muslim and Armenian populations and played a significant role in trigger mutual massacres. This process was detected by Russian authorities early on. The Russian authorities knew that Ottoman authorities and Muslim population felt uncomfortable about the situation and they predicted the results of the Armenian movement’s actions (summarized above).

Two Duties Given To Ottoman Armenians: Volunteer Militias and Mutiny

Along with these developments, according to the plans to disintegrate Ottoman Empire by Tsarist Russia and Western Powers; two duties were attributed to Ottoman Armenians during the First World War. Armenians were to weaken the Ottoman army by staging a revolt behind the frontlines. The second duty was for the volunteer militia to break through the Ottoman defence line to ease

18 GARF fond 102 OO opis 1914 delo 14 chast 79B list 6 ob.

19 GARF fond 102 OO opis 1914 delo 14 chast 79B list 54 ob.

20 GARF fond 102 OO opis 1914 delo 14 chast 79B list 55 ob.

the Russian advance. A significant number of Ottoman Armenians took active place in both duties.

The speech given by the military representative of the Dashnak Party during the United Armenia National Congress in Tbilisi in February of 1915 serves a proof of the confession of these duties:

“As it is known, Russian government has given 242900 rubles at the start of the war to arm the Turkish Armenians and prepare them for mutiny during the war. Our volunteer militia should ensure the advance of Russian armies and the invasion of Turkish Armenia by breaking through the defence of the Turkish Army and creating anarchy behind and at the frontlines while uniting with the mutineers.”²¹

The manifesto that Hovhannes Katchaznoui, the first Prime Minister of Armenia and the founder of the Dashnak Party, presented during his party's conference in 1923 in Bucharest is intriguing for the reason above. Armenian volunteers had started to gather with great enthusiasm and energy in South Caucasus during the fall of 1914, while Ottoman Empire was not in war or preparing for it. Dashnak Party, even if there was an opposing decision against the volunteer militias in its congress in Erzurum, took a large role in the creation of these militias and military actions against the Ottoman Empire. According to Katchaznoui, the South Caucasian branches and some officials of the Dashnak Party had gone against the decisions of the highest administrative branch, the congress, in the matters that needed high responsibility, and which could bring extremely serious and harmful results.

Hovhannes Katchaznoui, highlighting that the inclinations of the public had affected them too, indicates in his manifesto that the party could not resist this trend because of its “weak consciousness”, even though they wanted the formation of volunteer militias, they should have stood against their formation. The leader of Dashnaks states that they had no suspicion that the war was going to be won by the allies and the Turkish Armenians were going to get their freedom.

The Dashnaks had unconditionally relied on the Russians. As Katchaznoui states, they had daydreamed; they had relied on others to achieve their goals and gave too much importance to empty expressions and people without justification. Their hypnosis, so to speak, prevented them from seeing the hard facts of those times.

Katchaznoui thought that they had gotten above themselves and had exaggerated the power of the Armenian public, their political and military qualifications, and the Russians assistance. Katchaznoui, stating that the relocation during the summer and the fall of 1915 had eliminated the promises

21 Please see: Mehmet Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı B. A. Boryan'ın Gözüyle Türk-Ermeni Çatışması, 4. Basım* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, Ocak 2012), p. 55-56.

of the European diplomats about a free Armenia, highlighted that the Ottoman Empire had known what it was doing and thus had no reason to feel guilty about it then. According to Katchaznoui, the first Prime Minister of the Dashnak Armenia, relocation was an accurate and expedient policy.²²

Among the close witnesses to this mission of Armenians was A. B. Karinyan who took important responsibilities in the party and the government branches of Soviet Armenia. Karinyan thoroughly revealed the extent of relations between the Dashnaks and the Tsarist government:

“Tsarist diplomacy just before the war was not hiding its approval of Turkish Armenians to stand next to the Russia and join the military operations in the Caucasus-Turkish front in case of war. Along with this, the liberal Russian press was mentioning the heart-breaking status of the Turkish Armenians for pages and was always mentioning the historical mission of Russia for the protection of the Christian people in the Near East. The Orange Book (Periodical of diplomatic documents: Reforms in Armenia. 26 November 1912-10 May 1914, Petersburg, 1915) which was published by International Affairs Ministry during war years explicitly reveals the state of mind of Russian bourgeoisie and the Tsarist government. In the correspondences of Russian delegates abroad and the reports of agents of the consul and consular, the interest of Tsarist Russia on the ‘Armenian Issue’ is obvious.

Russian diplomacy, which took the role as the protector of the Armenians, was trying to benefit from the services of the revolutionist Armenian parties.²³ The coherent work between the Etchmiadzin Catholicos, Istanbul patriarch and the Tsarist diplomacy can be seen in the Orange Book mentioned above.”²⁴

Karinyan, by reminding of all the correspondences and meetings between Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, Patriarch of Istanbul, Dashnak officials, and Tsarist government, draws attention to the reconfiguration of “Turkish Armenia” by the Dashnaksutyun mutinies in rural areas with the help of Church officials, Russia’s intervention, and the re-emergence of the will of self-governance of Ottoman Armenians. In this manner, Karinyan explains that the Armenian movement was essentially under the leadership of Tsarist government and adds that Dashnaks had spread Turkish hatred in this manner:

“The constant propagandas of the nationalist press and the provocative guidance of the Tsarist diplomats have progressively inflicted chauvinist inclinations among Armenians. Armenian Dashnaks, with the increase

22 For the whole report, please see: Ovanes Kacaznuni, *Taşnak Partisi'nin Yapacağı Bir Şey Yok* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, Kasım 2005).

23 What is implied here are the Dashnaks, Hunchaks etc.

24 A.B. Karinyan, *Ermeni Milliyetçi Akımları, 2. Basım* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, Ekim 2006), p. 70.

in their morale due to the proclamation of the Caucasus viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov, were confident that the war started in the west is going to affect the Near East and inevitably become the salvation for the Turkish Armenians.

Dashnak press, even before the war in Caucasus has started, was filled with pages of articles about Turkish hatred and preparing the public opinion for the oncoming war.

This situation was beneficial for the Russian government. For this reason, Armenian Dashnaks works on propaganda were awarded by the Tsarist agents who were recently examining the Dashnaks.”²⁵

Karinyan also mentions that Dashnaks were preparing volunteer militia for the Battle of Gallipoli on behalf of the Allies.²⁶

Soviet Armenian historian A.A. Lalayan reminds that imperialists had given the promise of “Great Armenia” to the influential Armenian bourgeoisie in return for the following services:

“Allies have planned to use Armenians in two ways: First one was to make them (corps of Turkish Armenians who are called volunteer militia) act against the Turkish government inside Turkey by entente states (France-Britain-Russia) ‘promising’ ‘salvation’, and even ‘autonomy’ to Turkish Armenians. Second was to use deluded Russian Armenians as scouts etc. for the Tsarist army at the Turkish front with the promise 7 provinces and even Cilicia. This was Russia’s and its allies’ draft for Armenians right before the imperialist war.”²⁷

Lalayan, stating that there are many examples of correspondences of Tsarist government on this issue, explained the campaign of the Dashnaks under the mask of the “Salvation of Armenian Brothers” to take part in the war. He indicated that the Tsarist government used the Armenians to their advantage in East Anatolia to capture the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles and reach Mediterranean Sea. Lalayan, who earlier had stated that the Tsarist government intended to provoke Armenians and even Kurds against Turkey, determines that Tsarist International Affairs Department had focused on the following three viewpoints:

“1) The necessity of solving the mutiny matter of Turkish Armenians on behalf of the Tsarist government; 2) To focus on a fallacious strategy to

25 Karinyan, *Ermeni Milliyetçi Akımları*, p. 73.

26 Karinyan, *Ermeni Milliyetçi Akımları*, p. 79.

27 A.A. Lalayan, *Taşnak Partisi'nin Karşıdevrimci Rolü (1914-1923)*, 3. Basım (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, Mart 2006), p. 30.

gain the loyalty of Armenians to the Tsar; 3) In order to benefit from Armenians (even Kurds) during war, arms and equipment should be distributed to keep them on the edge. (...)

Is it not obvious that the Dashnak Party turns the ‘salvation’ of the Turkish Armenians to a Russian weapon and associates it with ‘support’ of the Tsarist Russia is an obvious agent of Tsarist Russia?”²⁸

The declaration sent to Russian Tsar II. Nikolai from Armenian National Bureau that was under administration of the Dashnaks during the World War I, articulated thematic ideals that supported previous pronouncements:

“While glorious Russian army is fighting with Turkey which required the Germany to stand against the mighty Russia in the snowy peaks of Armenia and the Alaşkert valleys in its own territory; Armenians, following the advices of their ancestors, are risen to sacrifice their lives and existence as united for the mighty Russia and its throne.

The good news about the war with Turkey has created great enthusiasm among Armenians. Armenians from all nations were looking forward to take place in the glorious Russian army and contribute to Russia’s victory with their blood. We pray to God almighty to be victorious against enemy at the east and the west. It is our national duty to become the new glorious Russian soldier and validate the historic duty of Russia at the east. Our heart is filled with this desire.

Russian flag is going to wave freely over of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.

Your will, your majesty is going to bring freedom to the nations under the yoke of Turkey.”²⁹

Correspondences of the Tsarist officials also explicitly reveal details about centre of command of the Armenian mutinies and volunteered militias. Neratov, Tsarist Russia’s International Affairs Department’s Vice-Minister, sent a telegram to the London Ambassador Benkendorf, which confirmed the connections:

“Hunchakian Party has a lot of supporters in the Cilicia, especially really numerous in the Zeytun with 3.000 people. They have committees in Adana, Dörtyol, Acin, Sis, Furnuze, Maraş and Halep. The ones who led the 1895 movement; Tokhajyan, Yenidunyan, Surenyan, Chakyrian, Yakupyan and Gasparyan can take the lead of this movement. Armenians of Zeytun states that they can increase the number of their militia to

28 Lalayan, *Taşnak Partisi'nin Karşıdevrimci...*, p. 34 – 35.

29 Mehmet Perinçek, *Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden 150 Belgede Ermeni Meselesi, 4. Basım* (İstanbul: Kırmızı Kedi Yayınevi, Mart 2014), p. 87.

15.000 and can supply high amounts of arms without any need for military landing.”³⁰

Tsarist documents also indicate that Russia was willing to use the Kurdish leverage along with Armenian leverage. The telegraph sent by Tsarist Russia’s International Affairs Minister S. D. Sazonov’s to Istanbul Ambassador M. Girs on 17 March 1914 asks the following question: “In regards to the establishment of Armenian reforms, how do you evaluate the Kurdish movement in Bitlis?”³¹ The telegram from the III. Political Department Consultant to the Istanbul Ambassador Girs on 23 September 1914 answers the relevant questions:

“High commander in chief and the governor of Caucasus agree that it is time for the preparation of Armenian, Assyrian and Kurdish mutinies in the time of war with Turkey. Militias are going to be formed, confidential from the Iranian government, under the observance of our consuls and commander of troops in Azerbaijan. Prepared arms are only going to be distributed at the necessary time. There is credit for the monetary funding. Militias can only take action with our permission.”³²

Russian Maku Consul reported that a Kurdish mutineer Abdul Rezak had advanced against Turkey from Çaldıran with 500 armed Kurds in November 1914, and that his aim was to expel Turks from Kurdistan with cooperation of the Armenians.³³ In the telegram from Russian Commander Yudenich to General Nikolayev, he orders him to warn Drastamat Kanayan (Dro) for the Armenian militias and Abdul Rezak for the Kurds not to fight with each other while invading Van, and he also states whomever disobeyed would be refused Russia’s protection.³⁴

Unfortunately, Ottoman Armenians actively participated in both aims even well in advance of the Relocation. The matter did not fall upon the actions of a few Dashnak members. Armenians in large numbers joined volunteer militias and mutinies. Archives are filled with applications of Ottoman Armenians submitted to Russian officials in order to serve in the Tsarist army and fight with volunteer militias against the Ottoman Empire. Lists of thousands of Armenians, Ottoman citizens, were represented from diverse walks of life — teachers, scholars, doctors, other professionals, university students and ordinary villagers — which can be found in the archives.³⁵ These documents are meaningful for revealing that the threat to the Ottoman Empire was not only comprised of separatist organization leaders and militants, but also for explaining the reasons of relocation.

30 Perinçek, *Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden...*, p. 149.

31 Perinçek, *Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden...*, p. 86.

32 Perinçek, *Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden...*, p.91.

33 RGVIA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 517 list 17.

34 RGVIA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 517 list 29.

35 For the examples of document, please see: Perinçek, *Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden...*

The report titled, “Actions of the Armenian Volunteer Militia during Russian-Turkish War” by an Armenian official is significant for revealing how Armenian masses supported the volunteer movement:

“Government officials³⁶ foresaw that the war would not start before the spring of 1915. So, there was enough time to build activities on a solid ground. But events occurred faster than expected. Administrative branch had to speed up incredibly the process due to the government’s request that they could not lay down strict criteria while choosing the fighters and they had to amass all the volunteers along the border in three weeks. During the volunteer movement, Armenians showed great amount of enthusiasm; thousands of old and young, sick or healthy, trained for fighting or not, decent or wicked, virtuous or virtue-less rushed into the volunteer bureau to apply. And there was no turning back. There were Armenians coming from the most solitary parts of the world where Armenians had reached, even from New Bukhara and America. Educated or ignorant, only one thing brought enthusiasm to them, they all dreamed about one thing: breaking the chains of centuries. Night and day, for days and weeks, they remained and thus wore down the spot next to the place at which they could volunteer. They insisted, requested, sometimes threatened and even cried to volunteer. Many touching instances that revealed the hidden virtue of Armenians deep under in their souls have come to light.”³⁷

The Young Turks government, aware of this situation, tried to prevent the intervention of Russia and Europe into the Ottoman Empire’s internal affairs and the possible incidents that could happen by establishing a direct bond and making a deal with Armenians. The Ottoman government had taken suitable steps for these developments as the Armenian statesman B.A. Boryan states.³⁸ The following lines from Tsarist archives are intriguing for this reason:

“Talat Bey had called for Armenian deputies to resolve the Armenian issues, asking them to help Turks. This minister was thinking that best way for the solution of this issue was the direct correspondences between Armenians and Turks. Talat suggested the recall of the Pogos Nubar Pasha from Paris to end the contact with Europe.”³⁹

Georgian Menshevik government’s Land Department Vice-Minister had desired publicly that the Ottoman Armenians would end their volunteer movement, too. After this request, Ottoman Armenians stated that they did not accept any responsibility and could not give guarantee for the attitude of the Russian Armenians. Karibi also draws attention on disturbance of the Ottoman

36 Russian government.

37 Perinçek, *Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden...*, p. 82.

38 Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı...*, p. 56.

39 Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı...*

Empire due to involvement of Karekin Pastermadjian who was a member of the Chamber of Deputies (Tr. *Meclis-i Mebusan*) as well as many Ottoman Armenians in the volunteer movement. Up to Karibi, not only the government, but also the public had envisioned this movement as a declaration of war of Armenians against Turks. Turks asked the Ottoman Armenians, the citizens of the Empire, to halt their attacks and requested them to send a committee from Salmat to Andranik Ozanyan. However, they got the answer that it was too late from then on and they could not intervene in a movement that had expanded abroad.⁴⁰

Karinyan also emphasised these efforts of the Ottoman government. Karinyan, an important statesman of the Soviet Armenia, highlighted that the Young Turk government had mentioned its requests to the Armenians about volunteer militias:

“In fact, through the period up until the start of the war, Turkish government and affective delegates of the Committee of Union and Progress party have reached the Turkish Armenians many times for them to warn the organisers of the volunteer movement with Vramstyan and Karekin Pastermadjian (and also Armen Karo) who are current members of the Turkish Parliament but still takes part in these processes; also have given promise of protection in return for ‘loyalty’. However, neither these calls of Turkish government nor the insistent requests of Turkish Armenians in person have made any change in this general mood.”⁴¹

The Turkish attempts at reconciliation having failed, Armenians under the leadership of Dashnaks started working fulfil the missions attributed to them by the Russians and the Western powers. The first step was to instigate mutinies behind the Ottoman frontlines. Vorotsov-Dashkov, the Caucasus governor of Russia, mentioned that Armenians were liable to Russians to accomplish the duties assigned to them and to initiate a mutiny in the Ottoman Empire to ease the subsequent invasion by Russia. As a response, in the letter sent to Vorotsov-Dashkov from Armenian Catholicos, stated that Armenians were ready to suppress all their pain and carry out their duty for the Russian Empire.⁴²

Boryan, an important Armenian statesman of the USSR, states in his work that it was known at the beginning that these mutinies could not achieve any success. However, these ‘activities’ were inevitably going to put Armenian people under harm’s way. Armenian masses under the leadership of Dashnaks were sacrificed for the imperialist aims of Tsarist Russia. One would have had to be rather unreasonable to not be able to see that such actions would lead to conflict with the state and intercommunal violence. The Dashnaks, pursuing destructive chauvinist policies, had organised mutinies for the imperialist states

40 Karibi, *Gürcü Devleti'nin Kırmızı Kitabı* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, Nisan 2007), p. 58-59.

41 Karinyan, *Ermeni Milliyetçi Akımları*, p. 78-79.

42 Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı...*, p. 56-57.

and under the direction of their diplomats' orders without evaluating the practical conditions, the power balance, and the inclinations and requests of the masses. These mutinies only benefited the financiers of the relevant countries. Dashnaks had committed crime against their own people by leaving the fate of Armenians to the imperialist states.⁴³

General Prof. Dr. N.G. Korsun, who has published works about the military history during Tsarist era and the period following the revolution, stated that in order to ease the tension surrounding the invasion of the Russian Caucasus armies; Russian military command had held back the Russians and instead provoked the Armenians in the region to propel the efforts. He showed the Van mutiny in spring of 1915 and the documents of the International Affairs Department from 15 May 1915 as examples, which were underscored in his book, used in the Red Army Military Academy:

“With respect to the proclamations of the Internal Affairs Department, at the onset of the war, especially at the beginning of the Sarikamış front, the Armenians were totally armed with new weaponry. Arming efforts also continued at more frequent intervals after the threat of Turkish invasion was eliminated in Transcaucasia.”⁴⁴

Tasked to the Russian Cossack Colonel F.I. Yeliseyev, Armenian mutiny occurring right before the invasion of Van was hugely important. The mutineers acting in accordance with Russian armies have neutralised the Ottoman headquarters in the city. Yeliseyev, who took place in the invasion of Van and closely worked with the Armenian mutineers, in his writings attracts attention to the extremely serious and important contributions of the three Armenian volunteer troop units who are defined as dangerous nemesis of the Turkish army.⁴⁵

Yeliseyev also spoke about the arranged feast with the Armenian volunteers after the Van's invasion, joined by the commanders of the Armenian volunteers, Amazasp, Dro, Keri, and the Van governor Aram Pasha. Aram Pasha, who toasted for honour of the victorious Russian armies and read the telegram that he intended to send to the Russian Tsar:

“We wish for the greatness and victories of Russia and as the delegates of national Armenia, we request you to take us under your protection on the day that your armies have entered the capital of Armenia which is the same day which is your majesty's birthday. Let the autonomous Armenia exist in the magnificent and colourful flower bouquet of the Russian Empire as a small, beautifully scented violet.”⁴⁶

43 Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı...*, p. 57.

44 Perinçek, *Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden...*, p. 77-78.

45 F.I. Yeliseyev, *Kazaki Na Kavkazskom Fronte (1914 – 1917): Zapiski Polkovnika Kubanskogo Kazachego Voyska v Trinadtsati Broshyurakh-Tedradakh* (Moskva: Voenizdat, 2001), p. 81-82, 101-102.

46 Yeliseyev, *Kazaki Na Kavkazskom...*, p. 97.

In the report simply titled “Armenia”, which was written in Yerevan by Bolshevik Armenians to present to Vladimir Lenin on 18 January 1921, it was stated that the Van mutiny in 1915 and participation of Armenian volunteers in military operations had engendered bitter results for the Armenians in Turkey. The Dashnaks, instead of creating good relations with their neighbours of Turks, Azeris, and Kurds; had acted as a shield for the Tsarist armies, thus committing a grave mistake by believing in the empty promises of European powers. Up until the report, the Dashnaks had placed the Ottoman Armenians in danger by creating volunteer militias with chauvinist ambitions. This movement constituted the darkest part of the Dashnaks’ deathly politics and brought painful results for Armenians. The Dashnaks had taken place next to the enemies of the state to which Ottoman Armenians were subject to, begged for the intervention of Russia to the internal affairs of the Empire, and laid the foundation for Armenians being viewed as traitors by Ottoman authorities.⁴⁷

Armenian statesman Boryan reminded that the Dashnak Party’s East Bureau and Istanbul committee had taken the decision of mutiny against Turks of East Anatolia in regard to the plans of the Russian War Ministry and for this reason 10 thousand Dashnak fighters had mutinied in Van while the Armenian volunteers units were approaching Van under the command of Andranik in April 1915. The statement of Boryan below is much more important since it reveals the core of the issue:

“When a mass of 10 thousand men mutiny against the state behind the military front and declare a claim of existence on map, then the state, by definition is going to take precautions for self-defence.”⁴⁸

Boryan stated that under these circumstances, it was going to be necessary to seek for possibilities to suppress the mutinies and protect the state. Under such circumstances, “the means justify the ends” comes into the fore. Boryan continues with the following logic:

“The mutiny of Armenians is their historical and legal right. If a state harshly crushes a public mutiny and suppresses the mutineers, this is also its historical and legal right.”⁴⁹

On the other hand, volunteer militias had organised with a great pomposity. Nikolai II called for Armenians to form volunteer militias on 17 September 1914.⁵⁰ Boryan, stating the that the Dashnaks from that moment expressed the

47 For the related parts of the report, please see: Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) fond 5 opis 1 delo 2797 list 14-15.

48 Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı...*, p. 61-62.

49 Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı...*, p. 62.

50 Mger Slavikovich Simonyan, “Armyanskaya Diaspora Severo-Zapadnogo Kavkaza: Formirovanie, Konfessionalny Oblik, Vzaimootnoshenie S Vlastyu, Obshestvennymi i Religioznymi Obyedineniyami (Konets XVII-Konets XX Veka),” *Dissertatsiya Na Soiskanie Uchenoy Stepeni Kandidata Istoricheskikh Nauk Krasnodarskogo Gosudarsvennogo Universiteta Kultury i Iskusstv Kafedra Istorii i Muzevedeniya* (Krasnodar, 2003), p. 40.

same slogans of the imperialist Russian czar, Britain and France, revealed the Dashnaks' willingness to act as a battering ram for invading forces. The Dashnaks labored to create the idea in Armenians' mind that in order to get rid of the Turks, they had to support the Tsarist army monetarily and perhaps with their lives. In the end, they managed to create this consciousness. As a result, Armenian volunteers fell under the command of the Tsarist army for the 'salvation' of Armenia. From that moment on, Tsar's war principles had become the principles of the Armenians. The Dashnaks started spreading the propaganda that they were with the 'civilised nations' of Europe against the 'vandal' Germans and the 'disorderly' Turks. Promises were given, and Armenians were told that they were not alone in their struggle for 'freedom'.

According to Boryan, gathering of volunteered militias did not benefit for the Armenians. The Dashnaks basically acted as the agents to the Tsarist Russia. The Dashnaks leaders such as Sahrikyan Efendi and Zoryan who lived in Anatolia saw the reality in those years and determined that the dream of "Great Armenia" was unrealistic. These leaders had opposed the Armenian volunteers in the South Caucasus while arguing for the cancelling of operations against Turks. The leaders, who warned the Caucasian Armenians to stay out of the business of the Ottoman Armenians, had insistently stated that such Dashnak politics would bring death to the Ottoman Armenians instead of freedom in 1915. Unfortunately, they could not achieve any positive results.⁵¹

Georgian statesman Karibi (P.P. Goleyshvili), who saw the volunteer movement as treason against the Ottoman Armenians, kept on stating that Jews, Poles, Greeks, and many more nationalities were working on national aims, but none had chosen the path that the Armenians had chosen. None of these nationalities had thought of organising volunteer militias against their state which was under troublesome times. None of them had openly taken the enemy side. According to Karibi, the major mistake of the Armenian leaders was to establish the Armenian volunteer militias and inflame inter-group hate as a result of these politics. In the documents published by Karibi, it can be seen that the Dashnaks, in their relations with West and Russia, had used the volunteer militias as a tool for negotiation and to make them accept their demands.⁵²

Karibi, after determining this situation, evaluated the precautions of the Ottoman government:

"Take Christian Russia or highly civilised Germany in place of Turkey. What would Russia do if Russian Poles would join Austrian Poles to organise all Poles of Europe under a state and fight against Russia? What would Germans do, if the French in Alsace-Lorraine organise volunteer militia to fight against Germany? Naturally, these two civilised Christian states would do the same thing that Turkey has done to Armenians. (...)

51 Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı...*, p. 58-59.

52 Karibi, *Gürcü Devleti'nin Kırmızı Kitabı*, p. 25, 56-57, 60-61.

The English, as recently as yesterday, have crushed the Irish with blood and fire, even if they did not cooperate with the enemy but they only requested their freedom which they had before.”⁵³

Another fact that justified the Ottoman government’s precautions and the struggle against the Dashnaks is the fact that the Muslim population in the lands that was envisaged as part Great Armenia was much greater than the Armenian population. Tsarist Russia’s International Affairs Minister Sergey Sazonov remarked that even before the First World War, except for a few great trade centres, Armenians did not represent the majority either in the Russian Armenia or in the Turkish cities. In this respect, the Russian statesman considered the other nationalities that separated from Ottoman state and established independent states to be a different case. And the reason of this was that “there is no land where Armenians can consider as theirs”.⁵⁴ The Russian military historian and general Korsun, who served in the Caucasian front, mentioned that Muslim population was five times higher than the population of Armenians before the relocation in his book “Turkey”, which is used in the military geography lessons in the Red Army Military Academy.⁵⁵

On the other hand, after the October Revolution, a report in the archives of the International Affairs Department of the Kolchak government that was created by Russian armies in Omsk with the support of the Allies, recorded that the Armenian population in Anatolia was 800,000. For this reason, according to the Kolchak government, it would have been nonsensical to establish even a principedom for the Armenians.⁵⁶

Massacre and Looting Policy of the Armenian Volunteers

The actions of the volunteer militias are key for understanding the Armenian incidents during the First World War. Boryan explicitly revealed the reasons why these troops were organised: Volunteered militias were organised to invade lands which were called “Great Armenia” and wipe out the Turkish and Kurdish population in those lands during the First World War.⁵⁷

Karinyan, who directly witnessed those days, states that the Russian successes right after the start of the First World War, especially the invasion of Van and Erzurum had emboldened the Dashnaks tremendously and continues as follows:

53 *Karibi, Gürcü Devleti'nin Kırmızı Kitabı*, p. 25-26.

54 S. Sazanov, *Kader Yılları* (İstanbul: Derin Yayınları, 2002), p. 162-163.

55 N.G. Korsun, *Turtsiya: Kurs Lektsii Po Voyennoi Geografii, Chitannyykh v Voyennoi Akademii RKKK* (Moskva: Vysshii Voyenny Redaktsionny Sovyet, 1923), p. 37.

56 “Rossiya, Turtsiya i Armeniya”, *Vestnik Narodnogo Komissariata Inostrannykh Del*, March 15, 1921, No. 1-2: p. 62. Also, in the “Armenian Issue” article of *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* printed in 1926 and in the quotations of Karinyan above, it is emphasized that the numbers of the Muslim population were much higher.

57 Perinçek, *Ermeni Devlet Adamı...*, p. 60.

“They were not hiding their secret goals anymore; they were also not seeing any reason to hide their hate against non-Christian groups in Turkish Armenia any further. Volunteers, who have found morale from Russian victories, were doing anything they could to establish their influence and were applying the method of wiping out the population which was not Armenian when they enter an invaded area.”⁵⁸

In regard to this issue, Karinyan highlighted another fact. He emphasized that the statement in the first program of the Dashnak Party, “Turkish Armenia is a part of constitutional Ottoman state with broad domestic autonomy” evolved into “independent state” after successes at the front, revealing the following which remains valid for today’s arguments:

“The mixed population in the Turkish Armenia and the rarity of the Armenian population in ‘6 cities’ were the biggest obstacles for the establishment of relevant ideal. Armenians only had modest majority in a few areas in the region. But numbers of all the other groups, especially the groups who were bound to Islam, were incommensurably high. For this reason, with the initiatives of Dashnaktsutyun Party, the previously mentioned method was enacted against the related population.

As it can be seen from the reports and orders of the Russian military offices, Armenian volunteered troops mostly focused on massacring the non-Christian civil population. Volunteered militias, who were systematically murdering the Turks and Kurds, were practicing the Dashnak program that consists of cleansing of Muslims from Armenian soil. This program was practiced so insistently that most of the time it created discomfort among officers of the Russian Army.”⁵⁹

Lalayan explicitly explained the volunteer militia’s culpability in the massacres against the Muslim public. Armenian volunteers were tasked to massacre Turkish population without mercy. Lalayan argues the results of this campaign amounted to the following:

“Speciality of this volunteer movement was that Dashnaks with the leadership of blood thirsty hmbapets (Andranik Pasha, Amazasp and etc.) have shown maximum ‘heroism’ in totally massacring Turkish women, children, old and sick. Turkish villages that were invaded by Dashnak troops were cleaned from thriving humans and turned into wrecks. (...)

For that matter, one of the results of the Dashnak movement was the massacre of thousands of Turkish labourers.”⁶⁰

58 Karinyan, *Ermeni Milliyetçi Akımları*, p. 86-87.

59 Karinyan, *Ermeni Milliyetçi Akımları*, p. 87-88.

60 Lalayan, *Taşnak Partisi'nin Karşıdevrimci...*, p. 45-46.

Volunteer militias, since before the start of the Relocation, had massacred the villages of Turks and Kurds, including the war prisoners. The lootings and massacres of the Dashnaks had even horrified the Russian officers who were using them against Ottomans. The reports of the massacres of Muslim women, children, and the elderly by Armenian volunteers were directly reported by Tsarist officials in person and many written instructions were sent to the Armenian volunteers to prevent this. In the telegram sent from Przhivalsky, Commander in chief of Russian Army's Caucasian front to the military governor in Tbilisi, it was stated that Armenian immigrants from Russia were getting ready for massacring the Turks in the following days and orders for the prevention of such thing to occur.⁶¹ In the Tsarist reports, it can also be found that the immigrant Russian citizen-Armenians were located in Pasin plains from the behind of the front and they were seizing the residences of the public and military as well as the agricultural areas of Turks by arbitrarily expelling them.⁶²

The massacre and looting attacks by Armenians exhausted the patience of the Tsarist officials. In the report written by the military deputy governor of the Kars region to the military governor of Kars before the Relocation on 4 January 1915, it is stated that some officers and soldiers were charged to be fully responsible of protecting the Muslim villages from the attacks of the Armenians.⁶³ The telegram sent from Military Governor Podgursky to the commanders of the Sarikamiş, Oltu, and Kağızman regions are is as follows:

“Take any decisive precaution to prevent the attempts of looting and rapine against Muslim population by Christian population. Scare them with heavy penalties and let them know that they will be taken to military court; arrest, disarm, take the criminals to court. Deliver the low ranked ones to their troops. Notify me of the developments.”⁶⁴

While the report written to the Russian commander of the Kars Castle on 19 January 1915 indicated that the local Greek and Armenians looted the Kurdish villages and raped the women,⁶⁵ another telegram on 15 February 1915 states that these kinds of activities were naturally generating hate within Muslims.⁶⁶

Kurdish tribes that were cooperating with Russian had also suffered great damage from the massacres and lootings of the Armenian troops. There are many reports that were sent to Russian offices from pro-Russian Kurdish tribes that reveals these lootings and massacres.⁶⁷ There also are many Russian

61 RGVA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 94 list 2.

62 RGVA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 1191 list 40, 40 ob.

63 RGVA fond 2100 opis 2 delo 460 list 36, 36 ob.

64 RGVA fond 2100 opis 2 delo 460 list 75.

65 RGVA fond 2100 opis 2 delo 460 list 110.

66 RGVA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 558 list 207.

67 For example, please see: RGVA fond 2168 opis 1 delo 264 list 11, 14, 14 ob., 15, 15 ob.; RGVA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 604.

reports about Kurdish tribes that stopped cooperating with Russians and sided with Turks due to cruelties inflicted by Armenian troops. Moreover, Mshak, the newspaper of Armenian nationalists had written that Kurds, against the Armenians and Russians, had lost three out of four of their population and hundreds of their villages were ruined during World War I.⁶⁸

There were many complaints about Armenian volunteers. There was not an end to the lootings and individual and mass murders. General Nikolayev states that Armenian volunteers had even fired upon Russian troops who were trying to stop them while they were carrying off the goods that they had looted. The orders requesting that Armenian volunteers should not be let out of their stations without a document signed by their leader and that the volunteers should be disarmed and held under check until their identity was confirmed were made widely known.⁶⁹

The telegram of Ilya Zurabovich Odishelizde, Commander of the Russian Caucasian Armies, is important since it contains the witness account of a commander of an army which was fighting with Ottoman government. Armenian troops had attempted “massive brutality” while Russian armies were withdrawing:

“Armenian units, which stand now against Turkish armies, appeared to be quite unfitting for the action even against predatory Kurd gangs and absolutely unstable against Turkish regular armies by not obeying military orders once the Russian armies once they left: they collapse easily, what is described with their not being punished at all for their massive brutality over unarmed Turkish population, not excluding women and children. (...) If the army and twelve thousand Armenian citizens are forced to go back to this desert which was created by leaving Russian revolutionary troops, then they will become more brutal because of hunger, and it is hard to consider what will happen to neighbouring villages and the troops themselves.”⁷⁰

In the letter from the Ottoman Army Caucasian Front Commander Vehbi Pasha to Russian Army Caucasian Front Commander in Chief General Przhevalsky on 22 January 1918 (which is accessible in the Russian archives), the contents point to the atrocity caused by the retreat of Russian armies from another perspective:

“I sincerely thank you for your exact order to the responsible officers to withstand the atrocity against Ottoman citizen Muslims from the Armenians in the cities invaded by Russian armies and for taking strict and concrete precautions to prevent any possible inappropriate action.

68 For example, please see: Mehmet Perinçek, *Sovyet Devlet Kaynaklarında Kürt İsyanları* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, Kasım 2011), p. 35-52, 219-224.

69 RGVIA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 982 list 33; RGVIA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 982 list 3-5.

70 RGVIA fond 2100 opis 1 delo 698 list 4-5.

Caucasian Armies Commander General Odishelidze is informed by me with the request to end these actions in regard to the latest events. Unfortunately, I find it necessary and beneficial to inform your highness too about the latest events that I learned. Especially in Erzincan, after the retreat of the Russian army corps, Armenian atrocities have expanded from attacks in houses and murdering men around nooks into obvious attacks on villages, the rape of women, the murder of the male population, and the burning down of villages.”⁷¹

In the detailed report of the Russian Caucasian Army Chief of Staff L.M. Bolkhovitinov on 11 December 1915, he stated that Armenian volunteer militias had attempted to slaughter the Muslim population, stoke racist feelings, and murder or exile the population with disregard for gender and age, and wreck villages and loot goods in the regions invaded during the First World War. These practices had systematically started before the Armenian Relocation.⁷²

Erzurum 2nd Armenian-Russian Castle Artillery Regiment Commander Colonel Tverdokhlebov had witnessed, in person, the terror practiced by the Armenian troops in Erzurum and Erzincan during the end of 1917 and initial months of 1918. In the documents Tverdokhlebov talks about what he saw and witnessed, reveals the atrocities of Armenian troops perpetrated against the old, young, and female Muslim population.⁷³

Dashnak documents also contain massacre stories of Dashnaks who were under the command of the Tsarist Russia and Western imperial powers. In the 34th instruction, sent from Van regiment commander of Russian Armies to the Van Governor Aram on 22 June 1915, after the invasion of Van, it requests the Armenians in the region not to attack the Kurdish population in the region nor to loot villages. Aram, in protesting the instruction, states that the orders are not going to be followed and “criminals”⁷⁴ are going to be punished in the strictest way to make an example for the Muslims living in uninvaded territories.⁷⁵

Beyond these incidents, however, many Armenian privates, officers, and volunteers were on trial in the military courts of the Russian Caucasian Armies for massacre and looting against the Muslim population and sentenced with heavy sanctions that included the death penalty.

71 *Dokumenty i Materialy Po Vneshney Politike Zakavkazya i Gruzii* (Tiflis, 1919), p. 42-43.

72 For the whole of the report, please see: L.M. Bolkhovitinov, *Resmi Ermeni Raporu*, 5. Basım, Ed. Mehmet Perinçek (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, Kasım 2014).

73 Tverdohlebov, *I Witnessed and Lived Through (Erzurum 1917-1918)* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2007).

74 Muslim people of the region opposing the violence and pressure being exerted by the Armenian groups were branded as criminals by Governor Aram.

75 Bolhovitinov, *Resmi Ermeni Raporu*, p. 107-113.

The massacres and murders of civilians from court records attract particular attention. For example, the army courts of Azerbaijan-Van Troops had found Armenian volunteer defendants from 3rd and 4th Armenian Volunteer Troops guilty of raping Kurdish women and girls, intentionally torturing 26 women and children and killing them. Defendants Martiros Akopov, Karnik Babinyats, Maksud Jezmejiyan (Cesbadi), Seno Arutunyan, Kerob Mikhitarov Manukov, Haik (Hai) Okhanyan, Sakhak Olikyan (Sakhak Holikyan), and Karapet Jamkojian (Karapetusyants-Kojin) were sentenced to death by hanging. However, due to other issues, their punishments were reduced.⁷⁶

The murders of 18 Turks by Armenians in the Trabzon's villages Taner, Kalamas, Soğütdağ, Etsesa etc. after the retreat of Turkish army also resulted in judgements.⁷⁷

According to another military judicial document, Nagobet Grigoryants, who was registered to Ali Calo village in Yeni Beyazıt and a volunteer in 2nd Armenian Volunteer Troops, had gone to Kinar village of Karakilise during daytime on 31 January 1916, stepped into one of the Kurdish houses, saw 8 and 11 years old girl and boy lying down in the room and killed them on purpose with bayonet.⁷⁸

In another judicial claim file concerning some soldiers of the 28th Caucasian Hunter Regiment, it indicated that the army privates had attempted lootings and rapes along with the Armenians, who committed murder in the Dersim region. Also, it was recorded in the claim file that none of the precautions had been effective in halting the atrocities.⁷⁹

Reports documented individual incidents in detail. A private of the 15th Turkistan Hunter Regiment (Saveliy Bagrinyants) first raped Sariye Feryuzkızı and Fikriye İsmail Kızı, who were Turks, and afterwards killed them with a gun and sharp object on the morning of 18 June 1917 near the Gurme village of Bayburt.⁸⁰

Hatchatur Saakyants, a private of 103th Petrozavod Regiment, with Ivan Zinchenko, a member of the Russian army, and unidentified two people had pre-planned and broken into the house of Şadan Razvanoğlu on the night of 11 January 1917 in Erzurum, killed Se⁸¹ Şadankızı, Ali Aytrifoğlu, Hüseyin Şadanoğlu along with the owner of the house, seriously wounded Hazminur

76 RGVIA fond 2100 opis 2 delo 1094 list I, 4, 4 ob., 7-9, 7 ob.-9 ob.

77 For the file of the 5. Army Corps Caucasian Army Prosecution Office under the date of 19 – 23 December 1917, please see: RGVIA fond 2303 opis 2 delo 314 list 1-3.

78 RGVIA fond 2300 opis 1 delo 498 list 12 ve 12 ob.; fond 2300 opis 2 delo 119 list 1-15.

79 For the writing of 1. Army Corps of Russian Caucasian Army under the date of 6 May 1917, please see: RGVIA fond 2295 opis 1 delo 616 list 19.

80 RGVIA fond 2295 opis 3 delo 772 list 1 and 3.

81 The rest of it cannot be read in the source material.

Amrokızı and Ahmet Şadanoglu. Afterwards, they had taken valuable goods and fled.⁸²

In another incident that resulted in court martial judgement, Pogos Markosyants, a soldier of the 22nd Caucasus Hunter Regiment, deliberately killed Base Alikızı who refused to hand over her ox, with two gunshots in the Lower Toros village in Erzincan on 8 October 1916.⁸³

On the other hand, according to records from the Russian military courts, there also were cases about lynch incidents, village raids and loots, and attacks against Muslim soldiers by the Russian army.⁸⁴

Also, the reports reflect the political reality that these massacres and lootings were motivated by racist hatred. The assumption is strongly plausible, as the violent massacres were carried out against civilian populations without distinguishing gender and age, and subsequently the masses were provoked into lynching. Victims were not targeted because of their political or military status but were only selected because of being Muslim (Turkish or Kurdish). Also, some of the victims were even Muslims who had cooperated with or served in the Russian armies. This issue was not only about being on the opposite, hostile side. One must wonder why those who participated and were prosecuted for these massacres and lootings were, in the main, Ottoman Armenians. Russian military and administrative officials had taken strict precautions to protect the Muslim population from these massacres and looting, yet, because of the prevailing disturbing socio-political environment at the time, the precautions intended to stem the violence and killings never took hold.

International Court Decisions

When the dates of these events in these documents are examined, it becomes apparent that most of them occurred before the Relocation and Resettlement (Tr. Sevk ve İskan) Law adopted on 27 May 1915. Documents from the Russian archives suggest that the decision and practice of relocation was intended as a precaution of war. This decision is an element of customary law that became codified in the 17th article of the Second Protocol as an appendix to the present Geneva Conventions.⁸⁵ Under the wartime considerations of those times (1915), today codified by the Second Protocol, relocation was and is justified in terms of self-defence and is therefore legal.

Also, recent international court decisions are compatible with this, such as the following:

82 RGVA fond 2295 opis 3 delo 757 list 2 ve 2 ob.

83 RGVA fond 2295 opis 3 delo 542 list 1 ve 1 ob.

84 For examples, please see: Mehmet Perinçek, *Ermeni Milliyetçiliğinin Serüveni: Taşnaklardan ASALA'ya Yeni Belgelerle, 2. Basım* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, Mart 2015), p. 133-145.

85 "Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)," *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocolii.aspx>

- The International Court of Justice on 3 February 2015 ruled in a case opened by Croatia against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, claiming that it had violated the Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948.⁸⁶ Later on, Serbia had become a party in the case directing similar claims to Croatia. According to this key decision, the Genocide Convention cannot be applied retroactively. Furthermore, controversies about the claims on the violation of common laws about genocide are out of the jurisdiction of international courts unless they fall under the jurisdiction of the Genocide Convention. Also, the International Court of Justice maintained the threshold level for determining jurisdiction and the criteria of proof for the existence of a genocide that had been set by the Court during the Bosnia-Herzegovina-Serbia case. As such, it did not take step backwards after facing criticism for setting a very high threshold for determining genocide.

Within the terms of both Croatia's genocide claims and Serbia's "counter-genocide" claims, the International Court of Justice determined that actions as outlined in the Genocide Convention indeed had been committed, but the Court also determined that it was not proven that these actions were committed "in order to exterminate partly or wholly" the Croat or Serbian populations. Thus, the Court decided that the "specific intent" did not exist in the incidents under scrutiny to accept that the crime of genocide had been committed.

The Court articulated significant guidelines about the crime, the intent, and the proof of genocide, some of which are taken from the Court's earlier verdict of 2007. The intent of genocide and the existence of a plan about the carrying out of genocide must be proven demonstratively, referring to particular circumstances. Aiming to homogenise a special region ethnically, in operations for this purpose, cannot be automatically be called genocide. Exiling or relocating people of a specific group is not the legal equivalent of systematically destroying that specified group and it cannot by itself create similar results. The responsibility for undeniably proving a claim of genocide rests on the shoulders of the claimant.

- The decision taken by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) Grand Chamber about the Perinçek-Switzerland case in 9 July 2015 and announced on 15 October 2015 has affirmed the freedom for the expression of statements that "there was no Armenian Genocide" in Europe.⁸⁷ The ECtHR Grand Chamber found the penalisation of Doğu Perinçek in Switzerland for stating

86 "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia) - Summary of the Judgment of 3 February 2015," *International Court of Justice*, verdict summary, February 3, 2015, <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/118/18450.pdf>; "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia) - The Court rejects Croatia's claim and Serbia's counter-claim," *International Court of Justice*, press release, February 3, 2015, <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/118/18448.pdf>

87 "Grand Chamber - Case of Perinçek v. Switzerland (Application No. 27510/08) – Judgment," *European Court of Human Rights*, Grand Chamber judgement, October 15, 2015, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/app/conversion/docx/pdf?library=ECHR&id=001-158235&filename=CASE%20OF%20PER%C4%B0N%C3%87EK%20v.%20SWITZERLAND.pdf&logEvent=False>

that “Armenian Genocide is an imperialist lie” violated the Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. ECtHR did not only limit its decision to considerations of freedom of thought, but also attracted attention for the realities surrounding how to determine whether an incident constitutes genocide. The ECtHR Grand Chamber stated that it did not have the jurisdiction to adjudicate cases in which genocide has been claimed and outlined the relevant provisions of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention. According to this Convention, only the courts of the respective country where the alleged crime has taken place and international courts designated by involved parties have jurisdiction in such cases. Thus, only Turkey’s judiciaries and designated international courts can decide legally whether the incidents of 1915 rise to the status of genocide. No other court can adjudicate on this matter.

There is no valid court verdict concerning the status of incidents of 1915. The ECtHR’s verdict as such serves as a reminder that the recognition of “Armenian Genocide” by some national parliaments and various governmental offices have no legal validity and that such recognitions violate international legal norms about the legal concept of genocide.

The first instance court of the ECtHR that dealt with this case, the Second Chamber, viewed the incidents of 1915 to be legally distinct from the Holocaust that took place during the Second World War.⁸⁸ By determining that 1915 incidents were distinct in character from the Holocaust, even though indirectly, the Second Chamber suggested that there was no international legal basis for classifying the 1915 events as the “Armenian Genocide”.

Finally, the ECtHR emphasized that one cannot sustain a legitimate claim for the existence of racist hatred in denying the 1915 incidents constitute genocide, but accusations of racist hatred could be distinctively confirmed for statements about the Holocaust.⁸⁹

- The ECtHR, right after the Perincek-Switzerland case, ruled that no claim can be sustained for the right to express denying the Holocaust. The Court found the French comedian Dieudonne M’bla, who had made anti-Semitic statements and denied the Holocaust, liable for his expression.⁹⁰ Dieudonne had invited Robert Faurisson, who is known for denying the Holocaust, to one of his Paris shows in 2008. Racist jokes about Jews were made during the show. Afterwards, a French court levied a fine of 10,000 euros against Dieudonne,

88 “Second Section - Case of Perinçek v. Switzerland (Application No. 27510/08) – Judgment,” *European Court of Human Rights*, Second Chamber judgment, December 17, 2013, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22%3A%22001-139724%22%7D>

89 “Q&A - Grand Chamber judgment in the case of Perinçek v. Switzerland (application no. 27510/08),” *European Court of Human Rights*, Q&A document issued by the Press Unit of the Court.

90 “European Convention on Human Rights does not protect negationist and anti-Semitic performances,” *European Court of Human Rights*, press release, November 10, 2015, <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/app/conversion/pdf?library=ECHR&id=003-5219244-6470067&filename=Decision%20M%27Bala%20M%27Bala%20v.%20France%20-%20ECHR%20does%20not%20protect%20negationist%20and%20anti-Semitic%20performances.pdf>

who filed an appeal in 2013 with the ECtHR. He claimed the show was intended as “black humour” and that his jokes were not “anti-Semitic”. Yet, the Court disagreed, ruling that Dieudonné’s discourse constituted hate speech, which did not fall under the protection of freedom of expression, as outlined in the Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court stated that the comedian’s use of freedom of expression typified a contradictory ideology to values of the Convention. Thus, the ECtHR’s verdict showcases that the claims regarding the 1915 Events and the Holocaust are being juridically distinguished from each other.

- The Constitutional Council of France highlighted the difference between the Holocaust and 1915 events again in a verdict issued January 8, 2016.⁹¹ The court that levied a penalty against a French citizen for rejecting the Holocaust refused this time the application of Armenian groups to have legal standing in the case. Also, the decision gave way to the French Council of State for removing Armenian allegations of genocide from history textbooks. As a result, the Constitutional Council specified that the Gaysot Law complies with the Constitution of France. It allowed Holocaust claims to be adjudicated while denying similar legal standing for the Armenian events. Therefore, the Constitutional Council delivered a verdict in line with ECtHR’s Perinçek-Switzerland case decision and allocated 6 of the 33 pages of the verdict to the legal rationale established by the ECtHR precedent. Besides the Gaysot Law approved by the Constitutional Council that subjects the denial of the genocide to punishment in the fight against racism, the Constitutional Council also cited the precedent decision of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg.

Conclusion

Considering Armenian volunteers’ actions in accordance with Russian archival documents and recent international court judgements, it is plausible to conclude the impact of the Armenian issue in the case of relocation:

Massacres on both sides occurred before and after First World War, resulting in civil chaos. Considering that more than 200,000 Armenian soldiers had fought with Tsarist Russia, many soldiers lost their lives. Second, because Armenian troops had cooperated with foreign states and had initiated actions of ethnic cleansing, there had been significant casualties on both sides of the Ottoman/Turkish State battles. Third, outside of the battlefronts between troops, violence was propelled between Armenian and Muslim populations (Turks and Kurds), with many people losing their lives during war hostilities in significant numbers on both sides.

91 Maxime Gauin, “Stopping the Censors: The Final Defeat of Armenian Nationalism at the French Constitutional Council in January 2017,” *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 36 (2017): 75-112.

Documents as cited extensively confirm that Armenian groups pursued a systematic slaughter targeting Turks and Kurds in East Anatolia, starting before the Armenian Relocation.

The sole responsibilities for both the war between states and the killings between Muslims-Armenians fall with Western imperialist powers and Tsarist Russia. The Great Powers, wanting to split the soils of the Ottoman Empire, propelled the extremist nationalist Armenian groups into war by provoking them. The Ottoman Empire and Muslim people took strategic precautions in that case in the hopes of suppressing the rebelling Armenian troops. Regrettably, some would manipulate the professional objective of historical inquiry to obscure the evidence which indicates that the precautions taken were not part of a deliberate genocidal campaign but of a nation's attempts to secure a fair fight in its self-defence.

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EVOLVING ARMENIAN IMAGE IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE*

(RUS EDEBİYATINDA EVRİLEN ERMENİ İMGESİ)

Res. Asst. Gülsün YILMAZ GÖKKİS**

Abstract: *In this study, eight works of major and influential poets and authors of Russian literature (A.S. Pushkin, A.S. Griboyedov, A.P. Chekhov, N.A. Teffi, O.E. Mandelshtam and A.G. Bitov) are examined within the context of the Armenian image. The time frame of the conducted research has been limited to the years 1821-1969. The aim of this work is to show how the Armenian image that had been created in Russian literature evolved over time. A.S. Pushkin, A.S. Griboyedov, A.P. Chekhov, N.A. Teffi are compared with those of O.E. Mandelshtam and A.G. Bitov. The works have been analyzed using the text-based analysis method. In addition, a bibliography has been prepared in order to show the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the interest shown to the Armenian Question in Russian literature. This list has been added to the article as an attachment before the bibliography for the perusal of the reader.*

Keywords: *Russian Literature, Armenian image, O.E. Mandelshtam, A.G. Bitov, evolving*

Öz: *Bu çalışmada Rus edebiyatının büyük ve etkili şair ve yazarlarının (A.S. Puşkin, A.S. Griboyedov, A.P. Çehov, N.A. Teffi, O.E. Mandelştam ve A.G.*

* This is the translation by Ahmet Can Öktem of a Turkish-language article authored by Gülsün Yılmaz Gökkis titled “Rus Edebiyatında Evrilen Ermeni İmgesi” that was originally published in the *Ermeni Araştırmaları* journal. The original article was prepared by adding new sources to a chapter of Gülsün Yılmaz Gökkis’ master’s degree thesis supervised by Prof. Dr. Birsen Karaca titled “Türk, Rus ve Ermeni Edebiyatlarında Ermeni İmgesi” (“Armenian Image in Turkish, Russian, and Armenian Literature”). To view the original article: Gülsün Yılmaz Gökkis, “Rus Edebiyatında Evrilen Ermeni İmgesi,” *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 59 (2018): 143-172.

** ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3442-3434>

Department of Armenian Language and Culture, Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara University

Bitov'un) sekiz eseri Ermeni imgesi baēlamında incelenmektedir. Yapılan arařtırmanın zaman çerçevesi 1821-1969 yılları ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, Rus edebiyatında yaratılan Ermeni imgesinin zaman içinde nasıl evrildiğini somut verilerle göstermektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda A. S. Puşkin, A. S. Griboyedov, A. Çehov, N. A. Teffi'nin eserleri O.E. Mandelştam ve A.G. Bitov'un eserleriyle karşılaştırılmaktadır. Eserler metne baēlı analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, Rus edebiyatında Ermeni Sorununa duyulan ilginin nitelik ve niceliğini gösterebilmek amacıyla bir bibliyografya hazırlanmış ve kaynakçadan önce okurun ilgisine ek olarak sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rus Edebiyatı, Ermeni imgesi, O.E. Mandelştam, A.G. Bitov, evrilme

The aim of this article is to demonstrate, in light of the data we have, the Armenian image in Russian literature, the evolution of this image from the past to the present, and the sources that cultivate this image. The works we have chosen to review in the framework of this aim are the products of authors who have influenced Russian literature or have succeeded to make themselves heard in Russian literature.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the knowledge and perception level of Russian men of culture regarding Armenian culture and literature had the following characteristic:

The 20th century was an important period regarding the Eastern Armenian literature's development in the USSR. In this century, the Soviet people discovered the Armenian literature and scholars began substantially examining Armenian literary history. With the motivation borne out of the developments that had taken place during the first quarter of this century, Armenians had entered the Russians' field of interest along with the other Soviet peoples: This interest was in the form of the people in the Soviet Union being motivated to present their own cultural values to the other "fellow peoples" in Russian. However, there were also these developments in the past of this interest: In the meeting of the Armenian Committee of Moscow on 15 October 1914 under the presidency of Stepanos Mamikonyan, it was decided to collect about 1 million Rubles that would be spent on national culture-related expenses. A large portion of this number would be reserved for the preparation of an Armenian poem anthology by the famous Russian poet Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov.¹ Maxim Gorky's *Collection of Armenian Literature* (*Сборник армянской литературы*; 1916) titled work that was written during the same period also aimed to present Armenian culture. Along with Veselovski, Bryusov, and Gorky; Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Blok, Konstantin Dmitriyevich Balmont, Ivan Aleksiyevich Bunin and many other authors that had an esteemed place in the world of Russian literature were persuaded to present Armenian literature through translation. The only problem was that, none of these authors knew Armenian but Veselovski. Bryusov, the redactor of the anthology titled *Poetry of Armenia* (*Поэзия Армении*) printed in 1916, had stated his thoughts in the work's preface; "I had not guessed that a work like this would grant me things of value."² The fact that he expressed that he had refused the offer the first time he was consulted to prepare an anthology, resulting in the intervention of M. Gorky, points to the fact that Armenian literature was not known in the Russian literature world during the mentioned periods.³

1 For more detail regarding the subject, please see: Вирсен Караджа, "В. Я. Брюсов как Переводчик Армянской Поэзии," (Диссертация, Москва: Московский Государственный Университет им. М. В. Ломоносова, Филологический Факультет, 1999), 61.

2 *Поэзия Армении*, ред: Валерия Брюсов (Московского Армянского Комитета, 1916), 4; Birsen Karaca, *Ermeni Edebiyatı Seçkisi* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2001), 17.

3 For more detail regarding the subject: Birsen Karaca, *Ermeni Edebiyatı Seçkisi*, 12-13.

After this point, in order to portray the evolution regarding the Armenian image mentioned in the beginning of the article, we will go back to the first half of the 19th century and examine the works in order of their date of writing.

The first work that we will examine with this aim is “Gavriiliada”,⁴ which is among Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin’s (1799-1837)⁵ early works. The work, which is written in the form of a verse novel, was completed in 1821 but was not published due to censorship. The full text of the work was published for the first time in Russian between 1918-1922.⁶ However, this work was accidentally published with the title “Gavriliada”.⁷ The work was first published in Turkish in 2012.⁸ The work is formed of 39 stanzas, the number of verses in the stanzas vary.

The main character of “Gavriiliada” is the angel Gavriil.⁹ The subject of the work was taken from the old testament. However, before Pushkin, French poet Evariste de Parny (1753-1814) had discussed the subject in his work titled *The War of The Gods* (1799). Young Pushkin may have possibly been influenced by de Parny.¹⁰

In the verse novel, events that are assumed to have occurred between a young Jewish girl Mariya (Mary), God, God’s messenger angel Gavriil and the Devil are described. In the narration of the events, the motifs of love, sexuality, and ambition stand out. The reason why “Gavriiliada” is of interest to us is Pushkin’s line which expresses that he had learned of the things he mentions in the work from an Armenian myth.

“<...>

Then, calling his favorite, Gavriil,
He expressed his love in plain language.
Their church hid their conversations from us,

4 “Гавриилиада” *Русская Виртуальная Библиотека*, accessed March 15, 2018
<http://rvb.ru/pushkin/01text/02poems/01poems/0786.htm>

5 The Armenian image in Pushkin’s works has been presented in detail as a presentation titled “The Armenian Image in the Works of A. S. Pushkin” in the international symposium conducted in April 21, 2018 by TEBAREN on the subject of “Ermeni Mezalimin 100. Yılında Tarihi Gerçekler” (“Historical Facts on the 100. Year of the Armenian Atrocity”).

6 “Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор”*, accessed July 18, 2013,
<http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm>

7 The real name of the work is “Gavriiliada”. The faulty print mentioned above has one “i” missing.

8 Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin, *Poemalar*. Translated by: Kayhan Yükseler (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2012).

9 God’s messenger angel. Its Turkish equivalent is Cebrail, its English equivalent is Gabriel.

10 “Évariste de Parny”, *Wikipedia*, accessed July 18, 2013,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89variste_de_Parny

The Evangelist¹¹ made a little mistake!
But an **Armenian myth** says the following,
The lord of heaven, without waiting for praises,
Chose archangel as the Mercury¹²
Noticing in him the mind and the talent, -
And in the evening sent him to Mariya.
It was another honor that passed through the archangel's heart:
He was often happy with the emissary tasks;
To carry little bitty notes and news
Though the work was profitable, he possessed honor.
And the son who was fond of glory, hiding what lay in his heart,
Became the complaisant sycophant by obligation
Lord of the heavens ... but procurer of the earth.
<...>

(Translated from Russian to Turkish by: Birsen Karaca)

There are various views regarding Pushkin expressing an Armenian myth in “Gavriliada”:¹³ Even though S.M. Shvartsband claims that the “Armenian myth” is word game completely attributable to Pushkin¹⁴, M.P. Alekseyev is of the belief that the myth is not simple fiction.¹⁵ The only source that we can find which addresses the “Armenian myth” mentioned in “Gavriliada” is M.F. Muryanov’s work titled *From Commentaries about Pushkin’s Works (Из комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям)*.¹⁶ According to Muryanov,

11 Evangelism, which means to “turn towards the holy book”, is based on the belief that born-again Christians will be brought to heaven and be rewarded with great joy/ecstasy as a part of the will of God. *Dergipark*, accessed July 17, 2013, <http://journals.istanbul.edu.tr/tr/index.php/iktisatsosyoloji/article/view/4774/4337>

12 In the work titled *Poemalar*, Kayhan Yükseler translated the word *Меркурий* in the verse novel with the template “В Меркурии” by its meaning in the astronomy field. Whereas in old times, the word *Меркурий* meant messenger of the gods. Словари и энциклопедии на Академике, accessed May 3, 2018, https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic_fwords/42435/МЕРКУРИЙ. This error made by Yükseler has led to a semantic shift in the work. There are similar errors in the translation.

13 For views on this, please see: “Ужель загадку разрешила?..,” *Журнальный зал*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/79/ko49.html> ; “Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор*,” accessed July 18, 2013, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm> ; “Заметки о «Гавриилиаде»,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор*,” accessed July 18, 2013, http://feb-web.ru/feb/classics/critics/alekseev_m/a72/a72-281.htm

14 “Ужель загадку разрешила?..,” *Журнальный зал*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/79/ko49.html>

15 “Заметки о «Гавриилиаде»,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор*,” accessed July 18, 2013, http://feb-web.ru/feb/classics/critics/alekseev_m/a72/a72-281.htm

16 “Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор*,” accessed July 18, 2013, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm>

the myth Pushkin mentioned lives on in Armenian culture.¹⁷ In addition, the same researcher states that the studies conducted on the myth have not yet succeeded in producing results. In Muryanov's article, the Armenians' process of accepting Christianity is examined: According to the information provided by the researcher, the permission for the publishing of the Holy Book in Armenian in the Russian Empire was granted in 1817, meaning a very late period. This was because the Armenian church's stance, which did not accept the decisions adopted at the Chalcedon Council¹⁸ (Kadıköy Council¹⁹, 451) and all subsequent world councils convened regarding Christianity, was considered to be a monophysitic deviance. "*The Armenian church, which did not complete its own dogmatic evolution and had separated from the universal church -its mother, remained as a premature (child) that did not have full consciousness of faith.*"²⁰

Discussions aside, in this work of Pushkin,²¹ it is interesting that he refers to an "Armenian Myth" while explaining his skeptical approach towards Christianity.

The second work that we will examine according to the chronological order is the work of A.S. Gribojedov²² titled the "Yerevan Journey" ("Эриванский поход"). This work is formed of A.S. Gribojedov's journey to Yerevan between 12 May-1 July 1827 and his notes in the style of a diary. The author, whose trip began with arriving to Kars from St. Petersburg, noted information regarding the quality of the camps he stayed at, the people he met and formed relations with, what he saw throughout the journey, the places he passed, and his daily experiences. Gribojedov also mentions the Armenian priests he had seen along the way. The author, who subsequently passed by the Georgian gate, mentions the Alagöz settlement which is currently inside Armenian borders. Afterwards, he mentions Ağrı Mountain (Mount Ararat), Aras River, Aştarak (Ashtarak) Village, Etchmiadzin, Erevan (Yerevan), Arpaçay (Arpachay River). During this journey, the author went all the way to Nakhchivan.²³

17 "Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям," *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека "Русская Литература и Фольклор"*, accessed July 18, 2013, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm>

18 Словари и энциклопедии на Академике, accessed July 18, 2013, http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/brokgauz_efron/109651/%D0%A5%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9

19 "Kalkedon Konsili," *İncil Tarihi*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://inciltarihi.com/hristianlik-tarihi/konsiller-donemi/kalkedon-konsili/>

20 "Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям," *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека "Русская Литература и Фольклор"*, accessed July 18, 2013, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm>

21 In his youth years, Pushkin displays a skeptical approach towards religion. "Пушкин и религия," *Журнальный зал*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://magazines.russ.ru/voplit/2004/3/ras4.html>

22 For detailed information about the author: А.С. Грибоедов, *Грибоедов.net*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.griboedov.net>

23 For the entire work, please see: А.С. Грибоедов, *Грибоедов.net*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.griboedov.net/proizvedeniya/put10.shtml>

A third work we will examine also belongs to Pushkin. “Tazit”²⁴ is a verse novel that the author had written in between the end of 1829 and the beginning of 1830, after his trip to Caucasia. This work was published in parts in 1837 by Jukovski in the *Sovremennik* journal under the title “Galub”.²⁵ Today, this verse novel of Pushkin is being printed and referred to with the main character’s name Tazit.²⁶ The first Turkish print of the verse novel was made in 2012.²⁷

This is roughly the subject of “Tazit”: The son of an old Circassian named Gasub was killed by the enemy. At the funeral, an old man brings to Gasub his other son Tazit, which Gasub had brought to him thirteen years ago in order for him to “create a brave Chechenian”. Gasub hopes to find solace in his son Tazit’s presence. For Gasub, Tazit is the only son who can avenge his dead son. However, Tazit lets Gasub’s hopes down. Tazit is a withdrawn, “lazy” and “rebellious” youngster who constantly runs to the mountains and does not return for days. He had seen his brother’s killer wounded in the mountains, but did not avenge his brother, just like the Hamlet character created by Shakespeare. Gasub curses Tazit because of this behavior and throws him out of the house.

The reason why this verse novel of Pushkin is in our review is because of the Armenian image it presents. The Armenian image portrayed in the dialogues between one of the work’s characters Gasub and his son Tazit is as follows:

Father:

Where were you, son?

Son:

In the rocky canyon,
In the place were rocky shore splits
And where the road opens to Daryal [Darial].

24 “Тазит,” *Русская Виртуальная Библиотека*, accessed March 15, 2018, <http://rvb.ru/pushkin/01text/02poems/01poems/0792.htm>

25 In the verse novel, the name of the protagonist Tazit’s father is Gasub. The reason it is written as Galub is probably due to Jukovski’s misreading. See: “Гасуб, а Не Галуб,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор,”* accessed July 21, 2013, http://feb-web.ru/feb/classics/critics/bondi_s/bon/bon-054-.htm

26 Mark Altshuler, “Motif in Sir Walter Scott’s The Fair Maid of Perth and Aleksandr Puskin’s Tazit,” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/308925?uid=2134&uid=4582702647&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3&uid=4582702637&uid=60&sid=21102172417603>

27 Pushkin, *Poemalar*; 195-209.

Father:

What were you doing there?

Son:

I was listening to Terek.

Father:

So, you did not see any Georgians or Russians?

Son:

I saw an Armenian
Riding to Tiflis [Tbilisi] with his merchandise.

Father:

Did he have guards?

Son:

No, he was alone.

Father:

Why did you not think of felling him
To the ground with a surprise blow?
And why did you not spring out from the cliff?
The Circassian's son cast his eyes down
Unable to give any reply.

<...>

Tazit again gets on his horse.
Disappears for two days and two nights.
On the third day he returns home,
Pale like death.
Seeing him, his father asks:
“Where have you been?”

Son:

Close to the edge of the forest
Around the Village of Kuban.

Father:

Who did you see?

Son:

The enemy.

Father:

Who? Who?

Son:

My brother's murderer.

Father:

My son's murderer!

Come closer!.. Where is his head?

Tazit!.. I require that head.

Give it so that I can look at it to my heart's content!

Son:

The murderer

He was alone, wounded, unarmed.

Father:

You've not forgotten the debt of blood!...

You knocked the enemy down on his back,

Is it not true? You drew your sword,

You thrust the steel into his throat

And silently twisted it thrice,

You passed out from his moans

His snake-like death...

Where is his head?.. Give it... I've no strength left...

The son, however, casting down his eyes, fell silent.

And Gasub became like a black night

And shouted at his son in rage:

“Get out - You're no son of mine

You're no Chechen - you're an old woman,

You're a coward, a slave, you're an Armenian.”

In the verses above, it is striking that Gasub associates the negative traits that he sees in Tazit to the Armenian image he has in his mind. On the other hand, Gasub's words to his son Tazit in a moment of anger provides evidence of how deeply the young Pushkin had observed the people and communities he had communicated with in his visit to Caucasia. From a different angle, these words enable us to evaluate the sense of courage and fear maintained in the social memory of the people in Caucasia.

The other work of Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin that is subject to our article is *Journey to Erzurum (Путешествие в Арзрум)*. In the second chapter of this work which is formed of four chapters, Pushkin informs on Armenia's appearance, climate, a village which he did not name, and the Ağrı Mountain. During his journey spanning to Erzurum, Pushkin also visited Kars. An Armenian family whose home he stayed in for a night was also referred to in Pushkin's work. Pushkin expresses this family's little son Artemi's interest for war and defined him with the sentence "<...> on a Turkish stallion, with a flexible Kurdish lance in his hand, with a dagger in his waistband, he was galloping next to me talking of Turks and war."²⁸ In this work, the Armenians' interest towards Turks and war was presented as an information in between the lines.

In Anton Chekhov's long story titled *In the Ravine* written in 1899, a reference is made to the Armenians' physical features. Anisim of the work's characters states this when describing Samorodov: "<...> You would not believe it. We call him the headman, because he looks like an Armenian, he is pitch-black. <...>"²⁹

Our next study is N.A. Teffi's story titled "From Unwritten Diaries" ("Из дневников ненаписанных").³⁰ Teffi fled her country in 1917 during the October Revolution and went to Paris via Istanbul. In the "From Unwritten Diaries", Teffi describes in an ironic manner the aristocrats who were living in Paris and who thought they were going abroad temporarily with the 1917 Revolution.³¹

In the work, three nationalities that were continuing their lives in Paris are mentioned: the French, Russians and Armenians. The author states that the living conditions in Paris were quite difficult for the Russian aristocrats, however, the Armenians were living prosperous lives. The dinners that an Armenian oilman would host in his home is one the work's topic. In fact, Teffi uses the statement "<...> they had rubbed some mustard even onto their

28 А. Пушкин, "Путешествие в Арзрум," *Золотой Том, Собрание Сочинений*, (Москва: ИМИДЖ, 1993), 666.

29 Anton Çehov, *Ateşler/Çukurda*, Translated by: Birsen Karaca (İstanbul: Dünya Kitapları, 2008), 67.

30 N.A. Teffi, "Yazılmamış Günlüklerden," Translated by: Birsen Karaca, *Patika Kültür, Sanat, Edebiyat Dergisi*, 69, 2010, 12-13.

31 N.A. Teffi, "Yazılmamış Günlüklerden," 12-13.

servants” to imply that the offerings were plenty and the guests were hosted well. A year after beginning to write her work, she continues to use the same statement for the Armenians. Towards the end of her work, Teffi mentions an Armenian named Sh-ian. Without breaking the prosperous Armenian image that has been formed, she continues her ironic approach in the following way:

“They say that the Armenians had again started rubbing mustard even onto their servants. Someone is saying that a large villa in Sh-ian mansion is being assigned to dogs. Fourteen dogs: all have passports, visas and diplomas. The dogs are apparently roaming around in raincoats, shoe covers and hoods during bad weather. They are feeding the dogs with meatballs made of chicken meat.

Our George wishes to go to Sh-ian and ask him to take him instead of the dogs. But all of these are useless, nothing will probably come out of it. Why should he take him in? George is an ordinary nobleman, he does not even have a title.”³²

In the works that we have examined in our article up to this point, we have seen that the authors did not have any concern for creating a special Armenian image and only presented their observations to the reader. However, the last two works that we will be examining have a different characteristic than the other works: These are Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam’s work titled “Journey to Armenia” (“Путешествие в Армению”)³³ and Andrei Georgiyevich Bitov’s work titled “Lessons of Armenia” (“Уроки Армении”)³⁴. Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam and Andrei Georgiyevich Bitov were specifically commissioned to write these two works for the advertisement of Armenia.

What made Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam’s work important for us was Andrei Bitov’s work titled “Lessons of Armenia”. Bitov, who was born during the years Mandelshtam had written his work, completed his work about 35 years after his predecessor poet Mandelshtam. Bitov’s “Lessons of Armenia” and Mandelshtam’s “Journey to Armenia” show similarity in terms of structure and content and the two authors were sent to Armenia for almost the same reason. This naturally caught our attention and we thought that it was necessary to examine these two works successively.

The first work we will examine within this context is Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam’s³⁵ work titled “Journey to Armenia”.

32 N.A. Teffi, “Yazılmamış Günlüklerden,” 12-13.

33 Мандельштам, О.Э., “Путешествие в Армению,” *Собрание сочинений в четырех томах*. Том 3. (Москва: 1994), *Lib.Ru: Библиотека Максима Мошкова*, accessed May 4, 2018, <http://lib.ru/%3E%3C/POEZIQ/MANDELSHTAM/armenia.txt>

34 Битов, Андрей. “Уроки Армении (Путешествие в небольшую страну),” *Воскресный День*. (Москва: Советская Россия, 1980).

35 3 January 1891-27 December 1938.

In 1929, Nikolay Ivanovich Buharin³⁶ asked the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia's People's Commissioner Chairman Ter Gabrielyan that famous poet Mandelshtam be sent to Armenia to conduct any work in the field of art and literature. A positive response to Buharin's request came ten days later from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia's People's Commissioner for Education A.A. Mravyan. Mravyan offered the poet to give lectures at a university on Russian and the history of Russian literature. However, with the People's Commissioner passing away on November 1929, this plan was postponed for a year.³⁷ In 1930, with Buharin's help, the poet was sent to Armenia to write a work that described Armenia to earn his livelihood. This work in the form of an essay was serialized in 1933 in the *Star (Звезда)* journal.

"Journey to Armenia" is formed of eight parts:

The first part of the work is titled "Sevan" ("Севан"). Sevan was the first stop in the Armenia trip Osip Mandelshtam had made with his wife. The Russian poet and his wife stayed at the monastery close to the Sevan Lake. In this part, detailed descriptions are made regarding the Sevan Lake. This part also provides information on Armenian culture.

The title of the second part is "Ashot Ovanesyanyan" ("Ашот Ованесьян"). Mandelshtam refers to a person named Ashot Ovanesyanyan in this part. This person is an academic. While the Russian poet is expressing Ovanesyanyan's physical traits and providing information about his character, he attributes Ovanesyanyan's features to the whole of Armenian people as well. Moreover, in this part information is given regarding the Eastern Peoples' Institute where Ovanesyanyan was working.

"Moscow" ("Москва") is the title of the third and longest part of the work. Under the title "Moscow", the poet makes a comparison of the USSR's capital Moscow with the places he visited in Armenia. Information is given on the university he visited in Armenia and the educators he has met. Moreover, in this part, it is stated that Mandelshtam had been to Armenia before, therefore the aforementioned trip was not his first one.

The fourth part is titled "Sukhum" ("Сухум"). Sukhum, also known as Sukhumi, is a settlement that is the capital of the Republic of Abkhazia and which has a coast on the Black Sea. Mandelshtam's Sukhum is described as "a city of mourning, tobacco, and scented oils". Moreover, in this part, information is given regarding the structure and difficulty of the Abkhaz language and other languages in Caucasia.

36 For detailed information of the person: "Николай Иванович Бухарин," *Словари и энциклопедии на Академике*, accessed May 3, 2018, http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc_biography/14673/%D0%91%D1%83%D1%85%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD

37 For detailed information on the subject, please see: "Проблемный очерк: «Четвертая проза» и путевой очерк: «Путешествие в Армению»," accessed October 10, 2013, <http://do.gendocs.ru/docs/index-88465.html?page=4>

In the part titled “French” (“Французь”), Mandelshtam’s interest is focused on the world-renowned painters: Such as Renuar, Van Gogh, Picasso, and Claude Monet. Additionally, in this part, the poet mentions approaches regarding beliefs.

“Naturalist Circles” (“Вокруг натуралистов”) is a part in which the poet continues to write on the approaches regarding beliefs. In this part, Mandelshtam brings forward the “theory evolution” and writes his observations on animals. Furthermore, he makes references to artists and litterateurs who are among the world classics.

“Ashtarak” (“Аштарак”) is the seventh part of Mandelshtam’s work. Ashtarak is a residential area inside the current borders of Armenia. In his essay, the Russian poet allocates a broad part for a description of the Ashtarak city. It seems that the poet had taken it upon himself to watch Ağrı Mountain from there. Mandelshtam emphasizes that Ashtarak is more ancient than many European cities. He also states in this essay that the city is famous for its bards and harvest festivals. In this part, it seems that Mandelshtam had found an interesting game for himself: He shares with his readers the pleasure he gets from saying words in Armenian that were forbidden to said in Russian during the USSR period.

The last essay in the work is titled “Mount Alagöz” (“Алагез”). In this part, the poet mentions a settlement called Byurakan. Byurakan will be discussed later in our article where we will examine Bitov’s “Lessons of Armenia”.

In this essay compilation titled “Journey to Armenia”, there are 30 characters in total. Almost all of these characters are Armenian. All of them, who are middle-aged and mostly male, are portrayed positively.

The most salient feature in the work is the effort displayed by Osip Mandelshtam in creating an Armenian type. We can list the general features of this type as: intelligent, handsome or beautiful, educated, and having a good profession.

Moving onto to the other work, “Lessons of Armenia” is a 125-page travel essay written by Andrei Bitov between 1967-1969. The author was sent to Armenia for ten days by the newspaper he was working to write on Armenia. The Armenia impressions that were meant to be prepared for the newspaper were published about a year later in the form of travel notes similar to Mandelshtam’s “Journey to Armenia”.³⁸

The work is formed of 8 parts, just like Mandelshtam’s “Journey to Armenia”.

38 Birsen Karaca, “Ermeni Sorunu ile İlgili Olarak Toplumsal Bellek Oluşturmak Yönünde Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarının Oynadığı Rol,” Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, *Journal of Social Sciences* 7, (2003): 57-64, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/154818>

In the first part titled “Language Lesson” (“Урок языка”), the author states his first impressions of Armenia’s capital Yerevan and provides information on Matenadaran, the biggest library in Armenia.³⁹ Additionally, Bitov shares the meanings of some Armenian words with the reader.

In the second part titled “History Lesson” (“Урок истории”), Bitov informs the reader on a famous historian of the Armenians, Leo, and the country’s borders. In this part (in the section titled “The Book”), the author provides information by opening a random page from an academic book⁴⁰ that he states he had found by coincidence. It seems that the author was engaged in Armenian propaganda, as the said section contains the following accusations towards Turkey and the Turks:⁴¹

“Residents were killed in some of the villages, -others were only pillaged. Many people, together with priests, were forcefully converted to Islam, churches were converted to mosques.

Most of the Hizan village was pillaged and was condemned to death. Girls and women were raped, many families were forcefully converted to Islam. <...> The city of Siirt was condemned to death; shops and houses pillaged-”.⁴²

The subsequent five parts of the work are as follows:

In the part titled “Geography Lesson” (“Урок географии”), information is given on the structure of the city, Mount Masis, the Sevan Lake and the Ağrı Mountain.

“A Captive of the Caucasus” (“Кавказский пленник”) is the part which explains the Armenian traditions and a residential area called Aparan.

“Geghard” (“Гехард”) is a part written specifically for the Gehard Monastery and Garni Temple.

In the part titled “Passions of a City Planner (“Страсти градостроителя”), Andrei Bitov openly emulates Mandelshtam and compares St. Petersburg and Yerevan. At this point, St. Petersburg is the aspect that saves Andrei Bitov from mimicking Mandelshtam; as Mandelshtam had chosen Moscow to make a comparison. Another aspect that catches our attention in this part is the character who is presented to the reader as a city planner. This person is the

39 For detailed information: ՄԱՏԵՆԱԴԱՐԱՆ Մ.Մաշտոցի անվան հին ձեռագրերի գիտահետազոտական ինստիտուտ, accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.matenadaran.am/v2_2/

40 For the book’s name, please see: Андрей Битов, “Уроки Армении (Путешествие в небольшую страну),” *Воскресный День*, 289.

41 For another article of the author regarding this subject in a different source: “Битов Андрей Георгиевич/Уроки Армении,” Армянская энциклопедия фонда «Хайазг», accessed May 3, 2018, http://ru.hayazg.info/Битов_Андрей_Георгиевич/Уроки_Армении

42 Андрей Битов, “Уроки Армении (Путешествие в небольшую страну),” *Воскресный День*, 289.

ideal Armenian type. The author highlights how this person is physically very attractive, green-eyed, and well-groomed. The city planner has an idiosyncratic way of speaking and has a modern appearance, is modest and, according to the author, he is “the representative of Armenians”.

In the part titled “The Patriarch” (“У старца”), there is praise to an Armenian old man. The part also relays the information that Bitov could not go to the city of Byurakan (the one that Mandelshtam had talked about).

“Memories About Agartsin” (“Воспоминание об Агарцине”) is a part written three years after the trip to Armenia. Moreover, information is given on the Agartsin Monastery.

There are close to forty characters mentioned in the work. The reason why we cannot give an exact number is that the number of people in some of the groups that Bitov spent time with is not given exactly. Almost all of these people are Armenian. The person who is constantly mentioned in the work by the author as “friend” is Hrant Matevosyan, who he had met in the scriptwriting course mentioned above.⁴³ Throughout his Armenia trip, Bitov was Matevosyan’s guest.

The numeric distribution of the men and women mentioned in “Lessons of Armenia” is almost the same. The women mentioned in the work are beautiful, while the men are handsome and kind. Bitov does not provide information regarding the educational background of the people he describes.

As we have mentioned above, Bitov is disposed to propagate Armenian propaganda in his work titled “Lessons of Armenia”.

At this point, in order to clarify the picture we have drawn above, we have prepared a table for comparing the famous poet Osip Mandelshtam’s work “Journey to Armenia” to Bitov’s “Lessons of Armenia”.

43 See: “Грант Матевосян,” *LiveLib*, accessed May 3, 2018, <https://www.livelib.ru/author/311885-grant-matevosyan>

<p>“Journey to Armenia” (Osip Emiliyevich Mandelshtam)</p>	<p>“Lessons of Armenia” (Andrei Bitov)</p>
<p>The work is formed of 8 parts.</p>	<p>The work is formed of 8 parts.</p>
<p>Mandelshtam was sent to Armenia with the aid of Buharin. The aim was for him to conduct research on Armenia, learn Armenian, and write an article on Armenia and the Armenians.</p>	<p>Bitov was sent to Armenia by the newspaper he was working for. The aim was for him to write a piece for the newspaper on Armenia and the Armenians.</p>
<p>After returning from Armenia, Mandelshtam published the essays, which was a product of this work, in the journal titled Star (Звезда) in the form of a series.</p>	<p>Upon returning from Armenia, Bitov was unable to publish the travel pieces that his newspaper had requested. He received criticism for this issue. One year later, he published his experiences traveling to Armenia in a work titled Bitov’s “Lessons of Armenia”.</p>
<p>The work contains about 30 characters.</p>	<p>The work contains more than 30 characters.</p>
<p>Almost all the characters in the work are Armenian.</p>	<p>Almost all the characters in the work are Armenian.</p>
<p>All of the characters in the work are portrayed in a positive light.</p>	<p>All of the characters in the work are portrayed in a positive light.</p>
<p>There is excessive praise towards some Armenian people.</p>	<p>There is excessive praise towards some Armenian people.</p>
<p>There is admiration for the Armenian language.</p>	<p>There is intense admiration for the Armenian language.</p>
<p>Information is provided on Armenia’s physical and geographical features and educators.</p>	<p>Information is provided on Armenia’s physical and geographical features and architecture.</p>
<p>There is a comparison with the USSR in the work. (Cities, cultures, etc.)</p>	<p>There is a comparison with the USSR in the work. (Cities, architecture, cultures, etc.)</p>
<p>The work propagates Armenian propaganda.</p>	<p>The work propagates Armenian propaganda against Turks.</p>
<p>No implications are made regarding genocide claims in the work.</p>	<p>The author uses statements in the work that support the genocide claims.</p>

In this article, eight works written between 1821-1969 by six authors that belong to the Russian literature were examined in the context of the Armenian image. The first of our reference points while examining the works were the years in which the works were written. This is because it has caught our attention that amongst the works analyzed in our article, the one written after the Second World War (“Lessons of Armenia”) creates an Armenian image that utilizes the genocide claims and the “victim” identity that Armenians use to introduce themselves. This gave us the idea to compare the Armenian image that the author Andrei Georgiyevich Bitov presents in “Lessons of Armenia”

with the Armenian image presented in works that were written before this work. Moreover, due to Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam's work being written before "Lessons of Armenia" and being a source for the Armenian image created by Andrei Bitov, we decided to highlight both of these works.

Unlike the Chechenians in Pushkin's work "Tazit" who were known for their bravery, a denigrated Armenian image is presented through an Armenian who is considered equal to an old woman, a coward, and a slave. By contrast, this image becomes one that is worthy of praise from beginning to end in Mandelshtam's and Bitov's works. Once again, it is not possible to see in Mandelshtam's and Bitov's works the Armenian image presented in Pushkin's work; ambitious for war and hostile towards Turks. Even for the Armenian propaganda propagated in his work, Andrei Bitov learns of the atrocity he mentions not from listening to an Armenian, but from a history book he had randomly obtained. By this way, he does not draw an Armenian image that harbors negative feelings against Turkey. As such, he does not tarnish the Armenian image he presents as being perfect.

The Armenian who is pitch-black and counterfeiter in Chekhov's work turns into a handsome man in Mandelshtam's and Bitov's works. In fact, the "very attractive, green-eyed, and well-groomed" city planner mentioned in Bitov's work is considered to be the "the representative of Armenians" according to the writer.

Lastly, we will point to Teffi's work. In Teffi's narrative titled "From Unwritten Diaries"; in an ironic approach, the Armenian image is presented as one who is very rich but graceless. In Osip Mandelshtam's and Andrei Bitov's works, this Armenian image becomes one that stands out as being victimized, more modest, kind, educated, and an owner of a good profession.

As a result of our comparison work, Andrei Georgiyevich Bitov draws attention as the author who is the representative of the transformation regarding the creations of an Armenian image in Russian literature. The deed that makes Bitov get ahead of Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam is Bitov's propagation of Armenian propaganda in his work titled "Lessons of Armenia".

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BOOK REVIEW / KİTAP İNCELEMESİ

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Dr. Pulat TACAR*

SOME NOTES ON HANS-LUKAS KIESER’S BIOGRAPHY ON TALAAT PASHA AND DR. YÜCEL GÜÇLÜ’S CRITICISMS ON THE BOOK**

(HANS-LUKAS KİESER’İN TALAT PAŞA BİYOGRAFİSİ
ÜZERİNE BAZI NOTLAR VE DR. YÜCEL GÜÇLÜ’NÜN
BU KİTABA YÖNELİK ELEŞTİRİLERİ)

Author: Hans-Lukas Kieser

Title: Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide

Published: Woodstock/Oxfordshire (UK), Princeton University Press, 2018

Language: English

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Number of Pages: 552

In the last decade, the books published by Princeton University Press examining the fateful period of the Turkish-Armenian relations in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire have been extraordinarily one-sided and have been written by scholars who are part of the same network. The latest example of this disturbing trend is the extremely lopsided biography of Talat Pasha by Swiss author Hans-Lukas Kieser.

In his book, Hans-Lukas Kieser presents the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman State Talat Pasha as a merciless politician who maintained power through

* Ambassador (R)

** This is the revised English translation by Ahmet Can Öktem of a book review by Pulat Tacar titled “Hans-Lukas Kieser’in Talat Paşa Biyografisi Üzerine Bazı Notlar ve Dr. Yücel Güçlü’nün Bu Kitaba Yönelik Eleştirileri” that was originally published in the *Ermeni Araştırmaları* journal. To view the original book review: Pulat Tacar, “Hans-Lukas Kieser’in Talat Paşa Biyografisi Üzerine Bazı Notlar ve Dr. Yücel Güçlü’nün Bu Kitaba Yönelik Eleştirileri,” *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 61 (2018): 297-305.

a potent blend of Turkish ethno-nationalism, the political Islam employed by former Sultan Abdulhamid II, and a willingness to resort to radical solutions and violence; such as allegedly committing genocide against the non-Muslim citizens of the Ottoman State. According to Mr. Kieser, Talat was the architect of the “Armenian Genocide”, which allegedly resulted in the systematic extermination of more than a million people, and which apparently set the stage for a century that would witness atrocities on a scale never imagined.

In a lengthy review published in the latest issue of *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (Volume 38, Issue 3, 2018, pp. 441-450), Turkish historian Yücel Güçlü provided a detailed critique of Kieser’s book on Talat Pasha and enumerated several mistakes and shortcomings.

As Yücel Güçlü notes in his book review, Talat Pasha was an important figure in Ottoman history:

“Ninety-seven years after his death, Talaat Pasha continues to evoke passion. In many parts of the world attitudes toward him reveal much about contemporary political stances. Talaat Pasha was an extraordinary man and he was clearly capable of giving strong direction to policy during his tenure of office. Of the other Ottoman leaders of the period, it is no exaggeration to say, he stood out among all. No one could escape the charm of his sympathetic and attractive personality. A standard work on the last Ottoman grand viziers portrays Talaat Pasha as a powerful statesman who had an unusual ability to analyze the complicated situation that obtained in the country during the First World War. In December 1908 he was elected a deputy to the new Ottoman Parliament for his home province of Edirne. His colleagues quickly recognized his talents, and in 1909, he was elected vice president of the Chamber of Deputies, and later he was appointed minister of the interior and afterwards minister of posts and telegraphs. In the cabinet of Said Halim Pasha, he held the portfolio of the interior. On the resignation of Said Halim Pasha in 1917, he assumed the position of grand vizier.” (p. 441)

Hans Lukas Kieser’s biography on Talat Pasha interested me for personal reasons, because his wife Hayriye was the aunt of my mother. My mother Münevver had stayed in Talat Pasha’s house in 1920/1921. So, my mother was in Berlin when Talat Pasha was assassinated in cold blood by Soghomon Tehlirian in 1921. As it is written in the biography, Hayriye and Talat did not have children and Münevver -being an orphan- was considered by them as their daughter.

After returning to Turkey, my mother continued to have close contacts with her aunt. I also often visited her. During those visits, I had the opportunity to ask Hayriye Hanım many questions about Talat Pasha, about the time he was Minister of Interior and Grand Vizier; as well as their “Berlin days”. According to my mother and Hayriye Hanım, Talat Pasha was a very gentle,

honest, and admirable person; they also praised his humanist qualities. On this subject, Dr. Kieser writes the following: “Talaat’s charm was sometimes combined with a melancholy that mollified even angry people in his presence” (P. 329); “his genuineness and plainness increased the deference vis-s-vis him” (p. 330); “Many Germans regarded Talaat as not only a successful statesman but also an honest, kind, and admirable person”; and “No one could escape the charm of his sympathetic and attractive personality...” (p. 331); “The German speaking press (except Swiss) praised Talaat as the savior of imperial Turkey, a model for progressive politics...” (p. 335); and “Most times Talaat enjoyed good press, particularly [by the] Jewish press...” (p. 304, 314).

However, according to Mr. Kieser, Talaat had another face; one akin to the “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” situation. According to Kieser, Talaat was in fact a monster who was able to dupe and mislead everybody. On this, Mr. Kieser writes: “Many Germans had not understood, or did not want to understand, even at the end of the war, that Talaat was the architect of genocide...” (p. 333); “He was suspicious of all non-Muslim groups ...” (p. 10); “Talaat was seduced by the idea of an Islamic-Jewish alliance of sorts, opposite Europe” (p. 305); “The collective targeting of Armenians released and spurred anti-Christian hate and cupidity in broad parts of society..” (p. 10); “there was no (Armenian) conspiracy; but in Talaat’s calculated conspiracy theory, which was spread during spring 1915, there was” (p. 10); and his “chauvinism merged with daredevilry...” (p. 12).

As can be seen, Mr. Kieser depicts Talat Pasha as a comedian who was able to deceive everyone. Kieser also gives conflicting information about Talat Pasha and, at one point, he cannot control his apparent hostility for Talat and claims that “... several weeks of daily contacts with European statesmen in Brest-Litovsk, Berlin and Vienna has stimulated Talaat and permitted him to catch up the education that he lacked...” (p. 357).

In many instances in his book, Mr. Kieser alleges that Talat Pasha was the forerunner of the 20th century despots who reigned in Europe and he even extends this description to Atatürk: “After Talaat’s fall, Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler led empires. All claimed to be backed by domestic majorities- the people, the working class... In this way they justified systematic persecution of ostracized domestic groups...” (p. 29); “Atatürk revolution of the 1920’s did not make a break from, but built on, the demolitionist groundwork of its predecessors...” (p. 30); Talat was “a prototypical revolutionist for the post-Ottoman world; a partisan statesman whose legacy is traceable not only in Turkey...” (p. 30); “Atatürk... followed the former legacy and obeyed its logic to a considerable extent and relied on Talaat’s team...” (p. 31); “...Talaat’s inaugural speech of 15 February 1917, its rhetoric and contents could almost verbally be from Atatürk” (p. 325); “General Mustafa Kemal, started to inherit Talaat’s political role, including his staff and finally his post-1918 organization of Turkish nationalism...” (p. 319).

Mr. Kieser depreciates the legal reforms carried out under the Republic of Turkey and even uses the term “so-called” to describe them: “Atatürk’s so-called Law Revolution.”

According to Mr. Kieser, “The synergy of Islamism and Turkish ethno-nationalism, an aggressive pattern of power concentration did not die off after the World War II” (p. 354).

Mr. Kieser does not conceal his lopsided views on the Treaty of Lausanne either and goes on to misrepresent them as well. Was it the Ankara Government who suggested the exchange of populations based on religion? According to Mr. Kieser:

“We must see why generations of diplomats had come to believe that the 1923 Near East Treaty of Lausanne had solved the late Ottoman questions, although endorsing Talaat’s legacy it evidently failed to do so in a constructive way... The Peace of Lausanne endorsed authoritarian rule and the unmixing of population according to religion. It seemed to have opened a new chapter for the post-Ottoman world, but instead it perpetuated patterns and principles of Talaat’s governance, even making them part of an attractive paradigm for law-breaking radical solutions far beyond Turkey.” (p. 34)

Mr. Kieser also accuses Mustafa Kemal of committing genocide against Pontic Greeks: “This time the target was the Rum of Pontus... As soon as he (Mustafa Kemal) landed in Samsun on 19 May 1919, Talaat’s heir, Kemal was to continue the destruction of this Christian minority... Led by Kemal’s general Nureddin Pasha... (a notorious fanatic) action, was the first military action... of the ‘Turkish war of salvation.’” (p.355); “Mustafa Kemal resumed Talaat’s Pontus policy of 1916-17,” “this involved collective physical annihilation of the Rum of Pontus at the Black Sea” (p.320).

Mr. Kieser accuses Turkish authorities of genocide denial. It seems that Kieser could not accept the fact that Doğu Perinçek, convicted by the Swiss Courts for saying “Armenian Genocide is an international lie,” successfully sued Switzerland and won his case at the European Court of Human Rights: “Successors ... of Talaat on a continuous basis supported the denial of the 1915 genocide. This was and is an unethical opportunism that trivializes genocide denial” (p.309).

When reading Kieser’s books, a passage which led me to lose all respect for his study reads as follows: “[Talaat’s] striking emphasis on honesty, modest property and a limited amount of money... may suggest a strategic lie... He may have taken important assets with him that allowed him to agitate in and from Berlin...” (p. 382). Kieser’s allegations are completely baseless. I had listened to the relevant facts first hand from Hayriye Hanım and my mother who had lived through such tragic times. In Berlin, the family had to endure

great financial difficulties and had to live on by selling Hayriye Hanım's jewellery. Kieser's baseless accusations of Talat Pasha in this regard leads us to the conclusion that the historian used his pen to reflect his political views rather than presenting an academic study.

The information provided by Mr. Kieser regarding Hayriye Hanım is also misleading. Kieser alleges that Hayriye Hanım was from Yanya and came from a "modest" Albanian family. In fact, Hayriye Hanım was from Konitsa and was the daughter of a local notable family and not of a modest one.

I reach the following conclusions on Mr. Kieser's study: Many Turkish and non-Turkish academics have already disproved the accusations and claims reflected in Kieser's study as well as proving the unreliable nature of Kieser's sources. One can assume that Kieser wrote his study to pay his debts to those who ordered it from him in the first instance. Disguised under a scholarly outlook with footnotes and lengthy discussions, the book in fact carries resemblance more to a political manifesto, written with the specific purpose of bashing Talat Pasha, the Republic of Turkey, and Atatürk. The author's condescending attitude seeks to put the Ottoman Empire and its peoples, its institutions, the Republic of Turkey, and Atatürk into the strict shapes defined by the author and does not take into consideration the flow of events and the existential threats that the Ottoman Empire had faced. He also fails to take into consideration the existing legal norms of the events described in his biography and instead anachronistically passes judgments on the basis of norms which did not exist at the time.

Coming back to Yücel Güçlü's analysis of Mr. Kieser's book in question, Güçlü notes that Kieser's distortions of the record start with the subtitle of his book wherein Talat Pasha was described by Kieser as "the father of modern Turkey", when in fact this is an assertion based not on reality but Kieser's creative imagination. As Mr. Güçlü notes, it is "common knowledge and a universally accepted fact that the 'Father of Modern Turkey' is Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), founder and the first President of the Turkish Republic" (p. 441) and not Talat Pasha.

Mr. Güçlü correctly observes that Mr. Kieser offers "few arguments or insights that are original. More problematic is author's tendency to reach beyond his supporting evidence in sweeping condemnations of Talaat Pasha and his policies" (p. 442). According to Güçlü, Kieser exaggerates the role of the 1915 events in Raphael Lemkin's career, trying to portray 1915 as the main reason why Lemkin decided to pursue a legal career when in fact in his 700-page book titled *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin does not even mention the Armenians or Talat Pasha.

Similarly, according to Mr. Güçlü, while Mr. Kieser accuses Talat Pasha for large-scale removal of Kurds from Eastern Anatolia, but Kieser "provides no evidence nor does he elaborate [further]" (p. 442). Likewise, Kieser tries to

cover the fact that Talat Pasha tried to prevent the abuses committed against the Armenians and attempts to downplay Talat's efforts to punish the criminals. Kieser alleges that "there was not one officially filed case for crimes against Armenians," when in fact:

"...more than a thousand people belonging to gendarmerie, army, judiciary, fiscal and other civilian administrations who mistreated the Armenians were tried and condemned... some 1,376 people were given varying degrees of penalties for offenses ... In mid-1916 fifty-one Ottoman soldiers, convicted of mistreating Armenians expelled from the province of Van, had been executed... Government employees found guilty of similar abuses had been deprived of their offices and delivered to the military courts for trial." (Güçlü, p. 442)

According to Mr. Güçlü, an additional problem with Mr. Kieser's account is his use of propagandistic sources such as the memoirs and letters of American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau. Morgenthau's accounts had a strong propagandistic motive, "to uncover or manufacture news that would goad the United States into joining the war against Germany" (Güçlü, p. 443).

Mr. Kieser's discussion of the 1909 Adana events presents similar problems. According to Mr. Güçlü, Kieser overlooks the extensive arming among the Armenians of Adana which contributed to the outbreak of violence in the region. This was so serious that even an American missionary admitted that "even in missionary schools one had difficulty in keeping revolvers, daggers, etc. out of the hands of Armenian students" (p. 444).

Similarly, Mr. Kieser misrepresents the discussions in the Ottoman parliament, alleging that from April to July 1909, the government in İstanbul and most deputies, including those in the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), took "at face value the report of the vali (governor) of Adana, Mehmed Cevad" (p. 444). The reality, however, was much more different. Not only the members of the parliament and cabinet questioned the governor's version of events but, according to Mr. Güçlü, many deputies even requested the dismissal of the governor. In addition, Kieser fails to mention that "that the mufti of Bahçe, İsmail Hakkı, and his brother were hanged by the military court-martial for their crimes of massacres of April 1909" (p. 445). A further 25 persons connected to the violence in the province were also hanged by the government. None of these are mentioned by Kieser.

Mr. Kieser likewise ignores the efforts of Ahmet Cemal Bey (later Pasha) to help the victims of the Adana catastrophe of 1909. During his governorship of the province of Adana in 1909–1911, "Ahmet Cemal took several measures to alleviate distress among the Turks and Armenians. Ruined towns and villages were reconstructed. Many of the burned streets were rebuilt, new streets were opened up, old streets widened" (p. 445). During Ahmet Cemal's tenure in the province, trade boomed, attracting a large volume of business and "thousands

of parentless children were being cared for under conditions that were better than they had ever before known, Armenians built their lives anew” (p. 445). All of these were done with the active support and assistance of the CUP and Talat Pasha, yet these are entirely ignored by Kieser.

Mr. Güçlü also takes issues with Mr. Kieser’s flawed use of the term genocide for the Armenian experience of 1915. Noting that “genocide” is a legal term defined by international law that can only be determined by competent tribunal, Güçlü questions Kieser’s expertise in the legal field and reminds the readers that “court decision exists for the Holocaust and for Rwanda but not for the Armenian suffering” (p. 446).

In constructing his narrative, Mr. Kieser relies “mainly on memoirs, diaries, letters, and an array of secondary literature” (p. 446). He uses archival sources selectively and only occasionally. Major and crucial collections of the Ottoman archives are left out. Similarly, holdings of the ATASE (General Staff Archives) are neglected. Relevant French and American archives are also not consulted by Kieser.

Finally, Kieser’s study suffers from an unusually high number of factual errors. To quote Mr. Güçlü on this point:

“...the Central Committee of the CUP had its headquarters in Şeref Street not in Nur-i Osmaniye Street in İstanbul (p. 2); Joseph Pomiankowski, the Austrian Military Attaché in İstanbul from 1909 to 1918 was not a General but a Lieutenant Field Marshal (p. 12); Midhat Şükrü (Bleda) was not a Dr., having no doctoral degree in any field of study (p. 46); in 1909, Gabriel Noradunghian was not the minister of economy and culture but minister of commerce and public works (p. 82). No post of minister of economy and culture existed at the time; the name of the social club in the Beyoğlu area of İstanbul in 1913 was not Club d’Orient but Circle d’Orient (p. 149); Cemal Pasha was not the military governor of Syria but the commander of the Fourth Army and governor general for Syria, Palestine and Sinai in 1914–17 (p. 253); the grand vizier who was assassinated on 11 June 1913 was Mahmud Shevket Pasha and not Mahmud Cevdet Pasha (p. 303); not five but seven Unionist leaders left İstanbul on the night of 1 November 1918. Dr. Rüsuhi and Cemal Azmi were also included (p. 381); Talaat Pasha did not flee but left Turkey (pp. 381 and 418). Because he did not hold any office nor had any official duty at that date, he did not need the prior permission or consent of any authority to depart from the country; there was no government investigation nor any legal proceedings against Talaat Pasha that would compel him to continue residing on Turkish territory; the translation into Turkish of Oriental Club is not Şark Kulübesi but Şark Kulübü (p. 385); it was not the Ambassador Franz von Papen but the German Consul in İstanbul and not the Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu but his representative who attended the burial

procession of Talaat Pasha's remains on the Hill of Eternal Liberty in Istanbul on 25 February 1943 (p. 420); the remains of no other member of the CUP were brought back to the Hill of Eternal Liberty for reburial after those of Enver Pasha's near Belcivan in the present-day Republic of Tajikistan on 4 August 1996 (p. 420). Cemal Pasha's soul continues to rest on the grounds of Kars Kapı military graveyard in Erzurum and those of Bahaettin Şakir and Cemal Azmi at the Muslim cemetery in Berlin. It is the earnest hope of the present reviewer that their bones are disinterred and transferred to the Hill of Eternal Liberty where their comrades are laid to the ground; Celal Bayar was not born in 1893 but in 1883 (p. 453 n157); the subtitle of Celal Bayar's memoirs is not *Milli Mücadeleye Giriş*, but *Milli Mücadeleye Gidiş*, (p. 491)." (p. 448).

Mr. Güçlü concludes that Mr. Kieser's study fails to make an important and impartial contribution to the literature. The Swiss author did not bring new material about Talat Pasha, his origins, his upbringing, his political career, and family life. His inquiry does not supply a correct evaluation. Ninety-seven years since Talat Pasha's death, Kieser's study represents an empirically and interpretively flawed account, thus leading many readers to "wonder how Princeton University Press published it" (Güçlü, p. 449) as a scholarly historical work.

CORRIGENDUM

The article titled “Review Essay: Killing Orders: Talat Pasha’s Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide” authored by Ömer Engin Lütem and Yiğit Alpogan, which was published in Issue 37 of our journal, contains the following passage and quote:

According to Akçam, one of Orel and Yuca’s main assertions to conclude that Naim-Andonian documents were forgeries was “has to do with the paper on which they are written. They claim that the fact that one of them is written on lined paper is proof of it being a forgery” (p. 98). Akçam goes on to quote Orel and Yuca as stating the following in their book:

"One of these ‘documents’ was written on a piece of paper bearing the document number 76 but does not bear any official mark. Such a piece of paper, which more greatly resembles the type used in calligraphic lessons at French schools, cannot be expected to be found in use as official stationery in Ottoman [administrative] offices.” (p. 98)

This passage and quote mistakenly attributed to relevant parts to page 98 of Taner Akçam’s book, whereas it should have been page 96.

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