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ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

RELICS OF THE ORAL TRADITION OF THE ARTSAKH-ARMENIANS EMIGRATED TO PYATIGORSK

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Abstract

In the summer of 1964, the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia had sent me on an academic mission to the town of Pyatigorsk in the territory of Stavropol, Russia to study the lifestyle and folklore of the Armenian ethnic group living there.

When I arrived at Pyatigorsk, I was informed that Armenians emigrated from Karabakh (Artsakh) were living in a separate district. In those years Karabakh was inaccessible for the armenologist-intellectuals. The Azeri authorities did not allow the Armenian archaeologists to go there and make excavations, inasmuch as they were terrified from the fact that they would bring to light numerous and irrefutable proofs testifying that that marvelous territory, bestowed on them in 1921, was of a native Armenian origin.

But for me, as a folklorist-ethnographer, it was interesting to know when and whence they had migrated to Pyatigorsk, what changes they had undergone under the conditions of coexistence with the native people, whether they remained sincere to the traditions of their cradle, etc.

Keywords: Pyatigorsk, Karabagh, Artsakh, Russia, narrator, oral tradition, epic, lyric and saying folklore, Armenian dialect

The Artsakhtsi Narrators of Pyatigorsk

Among the representatives of the Armenian community, living in a separate quarter of the town of Pyatigorsk, the first to attract my attention were the elderly Artsakh-Armenian women seated at the doors of their cottages, the spindle in their hands, who spun wool in order to knit colored and beautiful rugs, according to the tradition of their cradle. They were wearing the distinctive Karabakh costume, in black and green, also with a harmonious combination of black and violet. Their frontal ornaments were adorned with silver coins, and the sleeves of their blouses and costumes were fitted in figured silver small bells. These elderly women wore around their waist silver belts which constantly kept tight the posture of even the aged women. My very first impression was pleasing and reassuring. I was thinking that these women who had externally maintained the local shade of their cradle would, undoubtedly, have also kept in the abysses of their soul and mind, the spiritual values bequeathed by their ancestors.

During our heart-to-heart talk, it became evident that many of them had emigrated from Gandzak and Artsakh still in 1905-1906, as a consequence of Tatar-Azerbaijani encroaching, interracial clashes and, subsequently, in 1921, when the authorities of the Soviet Union granted Nakhidjevan and Karabakh to Azerbaijan, the situation of the Armenians began to deteriorate with every passing day, giving rise to new waves of exodus. Although the display of national discrimination was excluded by the Soviet constitution, however, the fact was that, as a consequence of the Armenian-hating policy, conducted by the Azeris, the territories of Nakhidjevan and Artsakh were gradually being deprived of Armenians. In the hope of finding work and conditions of safe life, many Armenians migrated to Baku, Sumgayit, as well as Russia. That well-planned and attractive Armenian district in the neighborhood of Pyatigorsk the natives called "Armenian New York."

Still in the second half of the XIX century there existed in Pyatigorsk an Armenian community. The Armenian St. Translators' Church was built. The Armenian population was engaged primarily in commerce.

While already in the second half of the XX century, in 1964, when I made their acquaintance, the Artsakh-Armenian emigrants lived there modestly, but with an honorable Armenian-spirited life. They lived assembled, they avoided mixed marriages, although some cases were observed. Though the children studied at the nearby Russian school, however, the spoken language at home continued to be the powerful Artsakh dialect. The men worked at the local factories or at the collective farms, hence my narrators were exclusively housewives of the senior generation, aged from 70 to 90 years old, as an exception were the 3-year-old *Margarita* and *Angela Avagiants* twin sisters who were babbling in the Artsakh dialect.

In the 20 days of the scientific expedition I had the opportunity to get acquainted and to take notes from 12 narrators of the senior generation whose concise biography and particular details of their verbal skill (100 units) I have written down, noting the day and place of the recording.

My 12 narrators, who were born in Karabakh (Artsakh) and were living in Pyatigorsk, are the following:

ANNA BAGDASSAROVNA AKOPOVA (b. 1876), 88 years old,

MOTHER MAYKO (b. 1897), 67 years old,

VARSENIK POGHOSSIAN (b. 1904), 60 years old,

AREVHAT VARDANIAN (b. 1905), 59 years old,

LOUSSIK SARGSIAN (b. 1904), 60 years old,

SONIA DANIELIAN (b. 1904), 60 years old,

VARDANOUSH GRIGORIAN (b. 1904), 60 years old,

TANKE (TANKAGIN) SARGSIAN (b. 1903), 61 years old,

ASHKHEN MOUSSAYEL VANILOVA (b. 1904), 60 years old,

MARGARIT ROUBEN AVAGIANTS (b. 1961), 3 years old,

ANGELA ROUBEN AVAGIANTS (b. 1961), 3 years old.



Woman from Artsakh (Karabagh)

The Genre and Thematic Peculiarities of the Folklore of the Artsakh-Armenians Emigrated to Pyatigorsk

In only 20 days I have written down from the 2.000 Armenian community of Pyatigorsk, folklore materials in their dialectal nuances.¹

The said materials are of **epic**, **lyric** and **saying** characters:

I. Epic Folklore – *Fantastic fairy tales* (6), *Realistic fairy tales* (4), *fables* (2),

II. Lyric Folklore – *Lullabies* (10), *Love songs* (20), *Festive songs* (3), *Wedding ceremony and song* (1), *Labor songs* (4), *Comic songs* (3), *Patriotic and Soldier songs* (10),

III. Saying Folklore – *Baby talk* (2), *Riddles* (7), *Proverbs* (12), *Tongue-twisters* (4), *Wishes* (5), *Benedictions* (7).

¹ The dialectal nuances of the folklore materials were proven by **Rouben Grigoryan** – the journalist, poet of Artsakh origin.

I. In the section of **Epic Folklore**, the *fantastic* and the *realistic fairy tales* with their subject content and their motive system, have a significant bearing on the Armenian folk tales of historic Armenia and Cilicia.² Inasmuch as the migration of Armenians from the Armenian-inhabited localities of Greater Armenia, also from Artsakh, in the 11th-13th centuries, to Cilicia had attained huge proportions,³ the following fairy tales “*The snake boy*” (Օխց տղան), “*The water of immortality*” (Անմահական ճօճը), “*The fairy tale of the three brothers*” (Իրեք ախպոր հեքիաթը), “*The King’s daughter*” (Թաքավերեն ախշիզը), “*The hunter Piroum*” (Օվշի Փիրուսը), etc., are noteworthy in this respect, which have also their parallel in the tales of Mother Armenia.

The *fantastic fairy tales* of the Armenians of Artsakh usually started with the traditional phrase “*Once upon a time*” (Ի՛շ Լ ա, չի՛շ Ը), however, they not always ended with the conclusive expression “*Three apples fell from the sky*” (Երկնքից ընկավ երեք խնձոր), but more tersely, with any action, such as, “*They tied that boy to the horse’s tail and let them free in the open fields*” (Էն տղեն կապըմ ըն ծիանը հ՛ք քյվան, պեց թողըմ հ՛ք ըզ՛ք Կ դաշտերը) or shorter, like “*That is all*” (Վոն ի վոյր), by the Russian expression. Undoubtedly, this is the influence of the new Russian environment which has also been the cause, to a considerable extent, of the permeation of loanwords and expressions, for instance, “*moment*”-«մոմենտ» (moment), “*stol*”-«ստոլ» (table), “*ouzhe*”-«ռժե» (already), “*campania*”-«կամպանիա» (company), “*kukla*”-«կոկլա» (doll), “*kakraz*”-«կակռազ» (that very), “*predanié*”-«պրեդանիե» (dowry), “*yeli-yeli*”-«յելի-յելի» (hardly), “*magharich*”-«մաղարիչ» (gift), “*karaoul*”-«կառաուլ» (watchman), etc. Similar permeations are natural, particularly, in the daily lifestyle and linguistic culture of peoples living in coexistence during long years.

Remarkable among the *realistic fairy tales* is chiefly, “*The gray-haired old man’s answer to Shah Abas*” (Յընվերի պաղասխանը Շահ Աբասին). On the way back from his predatory invasions, Shah Abas made fun of the gray-haired old man, who was planting a palm-tree, saying that he would not live long to taste the fruit of the planted tree, since his death, was not far away. The gray-haired Artsakhtsi gives a wise answer: “*Hey, brother! Now I shall make fun of you myself. Our ancestors have planted those trees and we eat the fruits. Now, we plant the trees and our descendants will eat the fruits*” (Ա՛յ, ախպե՛ր, մըհենզ էլ ես ծըծաղըմ քեզ յրա: Մըր պապերը ծառ ըն տնգալ, մոնք բարը կերալ ընք: Մհենզ էլ մոնք բրդի տնգիկը, հանցո՛ւ մըր հետազաները օտին).

The recorded two *fables*, such as “*The skunk and the mouse*” (Վըրթեսն ու մոկոկոնը) and “*The aunt skunk*” (Վըրթես մոքիրը) are well-known all-Armenian topics, in which only the animal characters have changed, in other words, they have been localized and adapted to the fauna of Artsakh.

II. The assortment of the **Lytic Folklore** is also multifarious in character and is consonant with the pan-Armenian nature. The motives in this section relate to the

² A series of fantastic and realistic fairy tales of Artsakh has been also published in the 5-7 academic volumes of “*Armenian Folk Tales*” (Yerevan, 1966-1979), including: “*Artsakh-Outik*” (Shoushi, Artsakh, Gandzak). 1973. “*Armenian Folk Tales*.” Compiled by Nazinian A., Svazlian V., Vol. 6, Yerevan: Publishing House of AS ASSR (in Arm.).

³ Svazlian 1994: 11-12.

nature, lullabies, love, nuptial, ritual, emigration, labor songs, comic songs, as well as patriotic and soldier's songs.

In these lyric songs, the beauties of the nature of the Homeland, the various aspects of the daily life and demeanor are artistically depicted:

«Քնի՛ր ու աճի՛ր,	“Sleep and grow up
Շուտ արա, բալե՛ւ,	Rapidly, my child,
Կռուկներն էկան,	The cranes came
Թողին մըր երկիր	And left our country
Սև ամպով պատած:	Overcast by black clouds.

Քնի՛ր ու աճի՛ր,	Sleep and grow up,
Դարդերս քշիր,	Drive off my worries
Շուտ արա, բալե՛ւ:	Rapidly, my child,
Հովուկնք եմ կապել,	I have tied glass beads
Կախել օրոցքից,	To your cradle,
Քո զար աչքերից	In order that your beautiful eyes
Որ հեռու մնա	Be saved from the foe's evil eye.”
Թշնամու աչքից»:	

It is noteworthy that the character of the enemy has been reflected even in the infant **lullaby**, when the mother frightened the baby, who failed to sleep, with the image of the fierce Khan:

«Լա՛յ-լա՛յ-լա՛յ արա, քո՛ն իլ,	“Bye, bye, bye, sleep my dear,
Ձելիմ խանը կիկյա՝ քեզ տանե.	The Zelim Khan will come and take you away.
Բա՛յ, բալա՛, բա՛յ, կուկլա բալա,	Bye, bye, bye, my dear koukla,
Բա՛յ, բալա ջան, բա՛յ, ջա՛ն, բալա՛»:	Bye, dear baby, bye, dear baby!”

While the refrain with the words “*koukla*” (doll – in Russ.) and “*Bye*” (hushaby – in Russ.) in the lullaby reveals the Russian influence.

Here is an example of the **love song**:

«Նազի՛կ, Նազի՛կ, նազ մի՛ անի,	“Nazik, Nazik, don't put on airs,
Չուխեդ քաշի, թոզ մի՛ անի»:	Put on your mantle, don't be so haughty.”

The following lines of the love song recorded unwillingly reminds us the similar picture of the dance song of Cilician Kessab:⁴

«Ամա՛ն, իշգե՛յն, ծիր վաթանը յօ՞ գըննւօ.	“Hey, young girl, where is your
Շյուդ մը՛ ժգըղվա չախշօրիտ մըրօդ գըննւօ»: ⁵	homeland?
	Don't move that much, your hem will
	get dusty.”

This similarity testifies about the same popular roots.

⁴ Kessab – An Armenian-populated town in Syria.

⁵ Svazlian 1994: 127. Cholakian 1998: 497-498.

The Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk remembered and sang also the **festive song** “We wish you a Happy Shrovetide, and you wish us a Happy Easter” (*Ձեզի՝ Բարեկենդան, մեզ՝ բարի Չառիկ*). Although the ritual holidays were no longer thoroughly celebrated as in the past.

Whereas, they remembered and performed a few quatrains sung on **Ascension Day**, the analogous variants of which are present in the Armenian folkloric art:

«Ախչի, ո՛ւր ես, դուն հուր ես,	“You, pretty girl, where are you, you are passionate,
Ես ծարավ եմ, դուն ջուր ես,	I am thirsty, and you are the water I need,
Համբարձում օրը ո՛ւր ես,	Where will you be on Ascension Day,
Արի ըստեղ պար բռնենք:	Come, let’s dance right here.
Հայլո՛ ջան, հայլո՛,	Haylo! Dear haylo!
Համբարձում, հայլո՛»:	It’s Ascension Day, haylo!”

The Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk nostalgically recalled their patrimonial song and dance performed hand in hand in their native cradle during Ascension Day. They yearned for them, since they no longer performed similar collective celebrations in their new environment.

The **wedding ritual** in narrow circles still retained some traditional shades, such as strewing sugar, dried fruits or coins over the bride’s head or the custom of breaking a plate under the bride’s foot, etc. I have written down the ritual ceremony in detail, quoting also the related songs. Stirring is the bride’s parting song in her paternal home:

«Վա՛յ, ազի ջա՛ն, տանըմ ըն,	“Oh, dear mother, they are taking me away,
Հորաս, մորաս հանըմ ըն,	They’re taking me away from my father and mother,
Վա՛յ, ազի ջա՛ն, տանըմ ըն,	Oh, dear mother, they are taking me away,
Ազիզ մորաս հանըմ ըն...»:	They are taking me away from my dear mother...”

In Artsakh, when the bride trod on the doorstep of the bridegroom’s home, they performed a candle-lighting rite and presented it to the bridegroom, singing:

«Վա՛յ, ազի ջան, աշքը լձօս,	“Oh, dear mother, congratulations,
Տղեղ պերենք, հարսդ պերենք,	We brought you your son and daughter-in-law,
Եկած պարեկամներիդ աշքը լձօս»:	Congratulations to all the relatives.”

The narrator Anna Akopova has told: “In Artsakh they sit round the festive dinner table, they eat and drink, the musician plays, and the bridegroom’s relatives present their gifts, such as: furniture, wooden trunks, pots, household utensils and money, about which the drummer announces in a loud voice. When the bride enters, they break a plate under her feet and drink to the health of the newly-weds and of the in-laws...”

The **labor songs** are also, on the whole, of a pan-Armenian, traditional nature: “Draw, my dear ox!” (*Ձիզ տուր, քաշի, ա՛յ եզն*), “Freshen up, dear Jeyran!” (*Հո՛ւ պրա, Ջեյրան ջա՛ն*) or the song of the butter churning “*Motal⁶ butter, motal butter, dear motal!*” (*Մոթա՛ւ, մոթա՛ւ, ջա՛ն մոթա՛ւ*).

⁶ Motal - Cheese prepared by a special method.

The process of the daily bread-baking has been interwoven with the emigration of the sweetheart:

«Հաց ըմ թըխալ՝ կյարի ա, Իմյարս սափարի ա,	"I have baked bread from the barley,
Սափար երթալիդ մըռնիսմ,	My sweetheart is a refugee,
Խոսքերքդ շաքարի ա»:	When in need, rely on me,
	Your speech is sweet as honey."

In one of the songs recorded, there is, in all probability, an allusion to the strained interracial relations:

«Ա՛յ տղա, տոն արի,	"Hey, boy, come home,
Վըռններդ շաղովն արի,	Beaming proudly, return home,
Էս թաղը դըմըղալ ա,	There is a commotion in this quarter,
Երե թաղովն արի»:	Come home by the upper quarter."

In Artsakh, the relatives did not encourage the males to migrate, especially to the oil-processing center Baku, where a great number of Armenians, worried about their daily bread, went to look for a job:

«Ծառի տակը լաքի յա,	"Grass has grown under the bush,
Իմյարը Բաքի յա,	My sweetheart is in Baku,
Բաքվա սարը թող շուռ գա,	Let the mount of Baku fall into ruin,
Գուցե իմյարը տուն գա»:	Perhaps my beloved will come home therein."

In the repertoire of the Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk were present also popular songs, in literary language, dedicated to the contemporary **collective farm** life, such as:

«Ծլել է արտս, ծփում է արտս,	"My field has sprouted, my field is waving,
Կորել է դարդս, ջան,	My worries are over, my dear,
Եկել է նորը, ինդոլթյան օրը,	The new thing has come, the day of joy has come,
Գյոգալ տրակտորը, ջան...»:	The lovely tractor has come, my dear!"

One of the modern original songs of the Soviet period is the following song dedicated to the **Women's International Day, March 8**.

«Լաչակդ բա՛ց, ա՛յ նանի,	"Take off your kerchief, hey, grandmother!
Քիթկալդ բա՛ց, ա՛յ նանի,	Take off your nose-kerchief, hey, grandmother!
Թող արև տա, չորանա	Let the sun shine and dry,
Արցունք ու լաց, ա՛յ նանի:	Your tears and weep, hey, granny!

Էնքան չ՝ ն՝ դ կապ մնաց,	Your jaw has remained tied so much,
Տափակել ա, ա՛յ նանի,	It has flattened, hey, grandmother!
Քիթ-բերանդ ծռմուկել,	Your nose and mouth have been distorted,
Տե՛ս վիճակդ, ա՛յ նանի:	Look at your state, hey, granny!

Հոկտեմբերը քեզ համար	The October Revolution brought you
Նոր կյանք բերավ, ա՛յ նանի,	New life, hey, grandmother!

<i>Ցուրտ ձմեռը վերացավ,</i>	The cold winter is over,
<i>Գարուն դարձավ, ա՛յ նանի:</i>	It turned into spring, hey, granny!
<i>Ականջներդ բա՛ց արա,</i>	Prick up your ears!
<i>Էսօր Մարտի 8-ն ա,</i>	Today is the 8 th of March,
<i>Շաբաշ կանչի, ծափ արա,</i>	Call the musicians, clap your hands,
<i>Կանանց տոնն ա, ա՛յ նանի»:</i>	It's the Women's day, hey, granny!"

At first glance, the symbol of the feeling of real world life, of the awakening of spring, of the victory over the frosty winter weather is summed up in this song, expressing a new meaning and content. Endowed with numerous functions in the traditional folklore, the Armenian Grandmother, appealing to the women to free themselves of the old superfluous outfit deteriorating the female attractiveness, reestablishes the awakening of spring with songs, dances and feasts and their willingness to welcome the new lifestyle and the Women's Day. It is, at the same time, noticeable here the indissoluble tie with and approach to the nature of the patriarchal Armenian woman, who has regained self-consciousness and has experienced awakening.

In Pyatigorsk one of the widespread **comic songs** is the following:

<i>«Քույրիկիս՝ տուփի, կալոշ,</i>	"Shoes and galoshes for my sister,
<i>Մայրիկիս՝ կոշիկներ,</i>	A pair of pumps for my mother,
<i>Իսկ հայրիկիս՝ մի զույգ տրեխ,</i>	For my father a pair of moccasins,
<i>Էն էլ փոկեր չունենա...»:</i>	Of which the straps are lacking..."

The above-mentioned song, composed with various ludicrous pictures, which was widespread among the Western and, particularly, the Constantinople Armenians,⁷ was also sung by the Artsakh-Armenian young men.

The Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk decidedly satirized those features, which were alien and incoherent with their traditional way of life and sang the following song:

<i>«Կիսավորդսկի օրիորդները</i>	"The young ladies of Kislovodsk,
<i>Ժամը տասին ըն գարթնում,</i>	Wake up at ten in the morning,
<i>Մաշքը կոտրած կատվի նման</i>	Like a cat with a broken backbone
<i>Ման ըն կյ՞ լի բուլվարում»:</i>	They stroll along the boulevard."

The new Russian environment and the new human relationships also brought about new innovations.

<i>«Ծիտը ծառին տիտիկ արավ,</i>	"The bird perched on the tree,
<i>Ախտոնիկը ուբիտ արավ,</i>	The hunter shot it,
<i>Վըեննան փռնավ, դամոյ տարավ,</i>	He caught it and took it home,
<i>Ժարովնիկում ժարիտ արավ,</i>	He fried it in the frying-pan,
<i>Նստեց, մի լավ կուշիտ արավ.</i>	He sat and ate it up:
<i>Ա՛խ, ա՛խ, ա՛խ, ա՛խ, ա՛խ, ա՛խ»:</i>	Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!"

⁷ Svazlian 2000: 427-428.

Some words mixed with Russian words and phrases, were gradually included in their lexicon. However, the Artsakh-Armenians who emigrated to Pyatigorsk did not admit that they were unwillingly influenced by the linguistic loans and told that, on the contrary, they spoke pure Armenian.

Though the lexical structure of the Artsakh-Armenians emigrated to Pyatigorsk had already undergone appreciable influences, in 1964, from the Russian language, however, they continued to hold in high respect their national identity and the dignity of the Artsakh-Armenian. This circumstance has found its artistic reflection, in particular, in the **songs** dedicated to the **Patriotism** and to the **Soldier**.

In the days of my visit, I succeeded in writing down also from the Artsakh-Armenians a fragment of the song dedicated to the important historic event occurred in 1905, in the gorge of Askeran, where it is told, that a cavalry, composed of a huge number of Tatar-Azeri slaughterers, armed with two vanloads of booty, plundered from the Shoushi Armenians, approached Khojalu. Seeing that the place was utterly calm, they decided that they could safely pass through the Askeran gorge; whereas the Armenian warriors, lying in ambush according to the wise strategy elaborated by Hamazasp and under the leadership of the brave Vardan, encircled them and annihilated more than 200 Tatar-Azeris.⁸

«Ինչպես կորյուն քաջ Վարդանը,
Համազասպը քաջանուն
Ասկերանի բերդի միջից
Կոտորեցին թշնամուն»:

“Like lion whelps, the brave Vardan
And the famous Hamazasp
Defeated the enemy
At the Askeran fortress.”

Thus, owing to the victorious battle waged on August 17-21, 1905, under the leadership of Hamazasp, the Artsakh self-defensive forces succeeded in keeping impregnable the gorge of Askeran, having an important strategic significance, and in halting the attacks of the Tatar invaders toward Shoushi.⁹

The following song is a distinctive sample of the soldier's song, where Armenia's heroic past and the Artsakh youth's willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for the nation are mentioned:

«Սուլեթս տո՛ւր, մայրի՛կ
Սոսինս տո՛ւր, քույրի՛կ,
Հանուն ազգիս թե՛ չզոհվեմ,
Հապա ինչո՞ւ ծնվեցի ես»:

“Give me my sword, mother!
Give me my rifle, sister!
If I do not make the supreme sacrifice
For my nation, then why was I born for?”

The songs created in the years of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) have also their particular place in the repertoire of Artsakh-Armenians:

«Նեմե՛ց, նեմե՛ց, կու՛ղա՛ տի,
Գիդացել ես, թե՛ Բըդըդորսկը
Հավի բու՛ղ ա՛. դե՛ մին նազադ,
Բոմբը կտամ կնդազադ»:

“German, German, where do you intend to go?
Do you think that Pyatigorsk is a chicken thigh?
Hurry up, go back home,
Otherwise I'll knock you down with a bomb!”

⁸ Stepanian 2016: 110-111.

⁹ Ibid.

Or:

«Առավոտյան ժամը ութին	“At eight o’clock in the morning
Ինձ վայելկոմատ կանչեցին,	They summoned me to the conscription center,
Վեշ մեշոկը շալակս տվին,	They attached a knapsack on my back
Դեպի Կերչը հուղարկեցին:	And sent me to Kerch.
Երբ որ մտանք Կերչի հողը,	When we reached the land of Kerch,
Սիրոս մտավ մահվան դռը...»:	I was horrified to death...”

At the end of this longish song, the helpless and desperate moribund Armenian soldier requests with his last breath:

«Ընկերներ ջան, հավաքվեցեք,	“Dear friends, join together,
Դուդուկները փչիլ տվեք,	Let the duduks ¹⁰ blow,
Գերեզմանիս քարի վրեն	Let the songs of Sayat-Nova ¹¹
Սայաթ-Նովեն երգիլ տվեք»:	Resound over my grave-stone!”

And he whispers with his last breath.

«Չե՛մ մոռանա Մայր Հայաստա՛ն»:	“I won’t forget my Mother Armenia!”
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The yearning for Mother Armenia and the native cradle Artsakh has always accompanied the Armenians living in foreign countries, including those Armenians of Artsakh emigrated to Pyatigorsk. Among them were also self-educated creators, such as the 60-year-old Ashkhen Moussayel Vanilova. She expressed her meditations in poetic rhyming and melodious performance. In the concise lines of the *elegy* she sang the unutterable sufferings of the Artsakh-Armenians had endured, and their coercive migration from the native cradle to Pyatigorsk were condensed:

«Դ՛՛ րդոտ, կարոտ էս կյանքի մեջ	“In this life full of grief and anguish
Տանջվեցինք մոռն անհանգիստ,	We suffered restlessly a great deal,
Դադված, Էրված ջիգյարներով	With burned and hurt hearts
Մնացինք մոռն անհանգիստ:	We were left ill at ease.
Մոռն շատ մընձ ցեղ ունեինք,	We had a large extended family,
Բոլորին էլ կորցրորինք.	Alas, we lost them all.
Էկանք-հասանք Պըտիգորսկ,	We then moved to Pyatigorsk,
Նեռլժե՛լի մոռն կարել չընք	Won’t we be able
Հանգիստ մանք տանջանքից:	To put an end to our torture?
Բավական է, մեր ծնողներն	Our poor parents already
Ինչքա՛ն արյուն թափեցին,	Have shed too much blood,
Ժողովրդին մեր փչացրին,	They exterminated our people
Մընք տնավեր արեցին:	And demolished our houses.

¹⁰ Duduk – Armenian national musical instrument.

¹¹ Sayat-Nova – (Haroutyoun Sayadian, b. 1712, Tiflis - 1795, Haghpat) Armenian poet-bard, founder of the popular bardic new school.

Մենք պիտի կռվենք
 Ինչքան ուժ ունենք,
 Մեր լո՛խ կորուստները
 Փառքով ե՛տ բերենք»:

We will fight
 With all our power,
 To bring back all our losses
 With glory and honor!"

The end of this individual creation is optimistic and bright, something which is typical of every Artsakh-Armenian, as if it were a prayer to God. It is also a wish addressed to all mankind.

«Թող մեր անգին Յայոց ազգին
 Էն ուժն ու պատիվն ինի,
 Որ իլ՛՝ լ ա հին-հին վախտից,
 Թող փրկի Տերը սաղ աշխարհին,
 Լոխ էլ ապրին խաղաղ, երջանիկ»:

"Let the power and honor,
 Which our Armenian nation had
 Since ancient times,
 Be returned back to it,
 May the Lord save the whole world,
 And everybody live in peace and happy!"

III. In the **Section of Saying-Folklore**, the *childish baby-talk* I have recorded from the three-year-old Angela and Margarita Avagiants twin sisters is remarkable. When I asked little Angela her name, she answered in the form of a *tongue-twister*:

«Փըլքմլեցի դեդո Կևանեն ծոռն ըմ, "I am the great-granddaughter of grandfather Kevan of
 Փըլքմլեցի Ղազարեն ծոռն ըմ, Peljmel¹²,
 Փըլքմլեցի Անդրեյեն թոռն ըմ»: I am the great-granddaughter of Ghazare of Peljmel,
 I am the granddaughter of Andrey of Peljmel."

And when I asked her twin sister:

«- Մայրդ որտե՞ղ է աշխատում: "Where does your mother work?
 Նա պատասխանեց. - Ռոդդոմը: She answered: 'At the maternity hospital.'
 - Ի՞նչ է անում: 'What does she do there?'
 - Խոխա ա պըռնըմ»: 'She catches babies,' was the answer."

To the *riddles* of Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk is peculiar the artistic reflection of the fauna and flora of their cradle, where the appurtenances distinctive of the life and demeanor of the Artsakh people appear in a ciphered form. The prototype of the formulation of the riddles is particularly distinctive:

«Մըեզ մինն օնիւք՝ կըկընանչի,
 Կըծաղկի սիպտակ, կըկյիրմիրի,
 Ետնան ալ կթուխի»:

"We have something that is green at first,
 Then it blossoms in white, then reddens,
 At last it blackens".

(Մռ)

(Blackberry)

Or:

«Մըեզ մինն օնիւք՝
 Աշխարքս շոռ ա կյ՞՝ լիս,
 Ուր äöqj äölnը կյ՞՝ մ ա,

"We have something,
 Which wanders around the world
 And comes in the evening

¹² Place.

Տնանը վրեր ընգնում»:

To rest at the doorstep.”

(Տոտի)

(Moccasin)

Notable are the Armenian-spirited **sayings** expressing an allegoric meaning:

«Աշխատած հացն ա հալալ»:

“The earned living is righteous.”

Or:

«Սարը սարին պտահում չի,

“A mountain cannot meet another mountain,

Մարթը մարթին պտահում ա»:

But a man may come across another man.”

Or else:

«Վըշխարեն տմական օ տըմ չըմ,

“I don’t eat the fatty tail of a sheep,

Քմական մոտե ա»:

Since it is close to the buttocks.”

And finally:

«Աշխարքը շոռ ա եկալ՝

“He traveled the world

Դրախտը ուրան վըեղըմը քթալ»:

And found paradise in his land.”

The sayings of the Artsakh-Armenians, with their dialectal pronunciation, acquire a particular fascination, becoming new local variants.

The **benedictions** are endowed with optimism:

«Ազատ, Էրզան կյանք ունենաս»:

“May you have a free and long life!”

Remarkable here is the priority of the idea of freedom, which is very typical of the freedom-loving and optimistic citizens of Artsakh.

«Հինչ տեղութին քաշըմ ըս,

“You are having trouble now,

Վերջըս բարի թըղ ինի»:

May you have a better life tomorrow!”

The Artsakh-Armenian **wishes** peace and prosperity to the mankind of the whole world:

«Երկրագունդը թըղ բարի ըրագավ ապրի»:

“May the world live in a happy dream!”



Woman from Artsakh (Karabagh)
(Fund of the History Museum of Armenia)

Conclusion

My personal ethnographic recordings and observations, made in 1964, among the Artsakh-Armenians emigrated to Pyatigorsk, provide grounds to conclude that:

1. The folklore of the Artsakh-Armenians is identical by its roots to the cultural precepts of the Armenians of Western Armenia and Cilicia, a circumstance, which testifies to the identity and Armenianness of their traditional national sources.

2. In Pyatigorsk, in the 1960s, the linguistic tendencies of the Artsakh-Armenians, integrating into the new, Russian environment, have already made themselves felt in their speech.

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Translated from the Armenian by Tigran Tsoulikian

HISTORY

**THE EUPHRATES CONTACT ZONE
IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE XIII CENTURY
(Before the Crisis)**

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Abstract

Contact zones represent those geographical segments of mankind where civilizing units meet each other and cooperate in different levels. At the same time permanent contacts create economic, political, and cultural background which secures the emergence of new civilizing qualities and progress. Exactly in such zones emerged the so-called "daughter-civilizations" (or "secondary civilizations") which by the time expanded into the "barbarian periphery". Among Near Eastern contact zones it is worth to mention that which begins from the Upper Euphrates and reaches the "Fertile crescent" in the south (the bordering territory between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq). This zone had played important role in the history of early state formations of the Armenian Highland.

Keywords: Contact zone, Armenian Highland, Near Eastern world-system, Hayaša, Azzi

Definition of the Contact Zone

Much has been written about contact zones and their civilizing role.¹ These regions were and until now represent those geographical segments of mankind where civilizing units meet each other and cooperate in different levels. At the same time permanent contacts create economic, political, and cultural background which secures the emergence of new civilizing qualities and progress. Exactly in such zones emerged the so-called "daughter-civilizations" (or "secondary civilizations") which by the time expanded into the "barbarian periphery".

Near East is one of the earliest centers where mankind had made its first steps in achieving much of its civilizing values. Due to the diversity in terms of relief and climate it consists of numerous contact zones, thus making it easy the transfer of these values into neighboring "barbarian" regions. Among these it is worth to mention the Euphrates contact zone. The southern part of it partially includes the "Fertile crescent" which is well studied in the archaeological literature. In the north this zone starts from the big bend of the Euphrates (the region of modern Kemakh-Malatya) and continues until the borderland between Turkey, Syria and Iraq in the south. Thus, this zone from one side

¹ Wallerstein 1974-1989; Parker 2006 (with references to special literature); Margaryan 2012: 67ff.; and Margaryan 2016 (ed.) etc.

borders Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia and western, south-western parts of the Armenian Highland.

Taking into account historical realities of the ancient Near East, the eastern extremity of this zone along the southern limits of the Armenian Taurus until the Lake Urmiya could be regarded as its inseparable part. To such treatment of the Euphrates contact zone, besides the political, economic, and cultural considerations based on written sources², point also archaeological studies which prove that the regions to the north and south of the zone used to have close contacts at least going back to Chalcolithic period if not earlier.³

In the present article we shall discuss the period of ancient Near Eastern history which concludes the Late Bronze age civilizations, followed by the devastating long-lasting crisis.

Near Eastern world-system in the second half of the XIII century

The second half of the II millennium BC, especially the XIV-XIII centuries was one of the most significant periods of the Near Eastern political history. During this period the Near Eastern political scenery had undergone substantial changes. Particularly in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Asia Minor the political and economic development of statehoods had culminated in the establishment of extensive kingdoms/empires. In Asia Minor the New Hittite kingdom had come into existence on the basis of numerous small city-states (Kuššar, Purušhanda, Neša, Hattušaš etc.), later to be incorporated into the Old Kingdom (XVII century BC) and Early Empire/New kingdom⁴ (XV century BC). In Mesopotamia the process of political unification first was carried out under the hegemony of the Amorite Aššur and Babylonia, then was formed the bipolar political system - Middle Assyrian kingdom and Kassite Babylonia. The background of Mittani comprise numerous Hurrian principalities of Northern Mesopotamia, whose "buffer" position between Mesopotamia proper, Syria, Asia Minor, and Armenian Highland was the main obstacle in the process of creating strong political and economic basis for centralized statehood. The core of Mittani lays along the crossroads of the "Fertile Crescent", in the place where passes east-west and north-south strategic and trade roots. As to Egypt, only after the disintegration of the Middle Kingdom and the Hyksos rule here was established the New kingdom under the leadership of the pharaohs of Thebe.

² Here it is worth to mention contacts fixed still in the XXIV-XXIII centuries BC cuneiform texts of the Akkadian Empire which were continued well into the II millennium BC and later.

³ Different close contacts between Mesopotamia and societies of the southern limits of the Armenian Highland are elucidated by numerous archaeological materials (see Matney, Roaf, MacGinnis, McDonald 2002; Matney et al. 2003; Parker 2003; Creekmore 2007 etc.).

⁴ The term "Early Empire" was introduced by S.De Martino (De Martino 2010: 186).

Already in the XV century BC took place the polarization of political space where Egypt, Mittani, and the Hittite Early New kingdom were main actors. After the Hittite conquest in 1330's Mittani was withdrawn from this line-up and replaced by the Middle Assyrian kingdom. Each of these great polities was supplemented with a number of satellite states. The following two centuries, until the late XIII century BC the Near Eastern world-system is characterized by the dominance of these states.

How could be characterized the XV-XIII centuries BC world-system and their driving forces, which allow them to survive and hold their position about two centuries, despite several political events which threaten their territorial integrity and even existence. Let us sum up the possible causes.

1. These "super" powers had succeeded to conquer and keep under their control all neighboring political entities which could threaten their existence. Actually, there were no contact zones between these states. All principalities between Mesopotamia and Egypt, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, Egypt and Asia Minor comprised vassal states of this or that great power and were attached to them through vassal/non-parity treaties. Except Assyria whose relations with conquered countries were not regulated by means of such treaties. Assyrians introduced the system of vassal treaties only in the VIII-VII centuries BC, about a century before the fall of their statehood.⁵

In this geopolitical space none of the existing states was able to keep intact more than its own relatively independent status.⁶ This situation could be characterized as "stable equilibrium" where confrontation rarely turned into military conflicts. In the period under study only twice were registered wars.⁷ Usually armed conflicts took place on the territory of vassal states, in order to extend the spheres of influence, although, without significant territorial achievements.

2. The cases of "Stable equilibrium" seemingly satisfied all conflicting sides; probably, except Assyria whose need of material resources and the lack of trade routes forced it to extend the spheres of influence.⁸ This desire of Assyria began to expand significantly in 1260-1230's when Shalmaneser I and his successor Tukulti-Ninurta I initiated campaigns directed mostly against the eastern and south-eastern Hittite-bound countries.⁹ The next direction of Assyrian expansion was targeted against the weakened Babylonia whose last chance to survive was the Hittite empire.¹⁰

⁵ See Parpola and Watanabe 1988.

⁶ Mittani was a loose political organization consisting of numerous city-states under the domination of Indo-Iranian elite. Its multiethnic population (different Semitic peoples, Hurrians etc.) could not be regarded as reliable support for central authorities (On the state structure of Mittani see, particularly Kühne 1999).

⁷ The campaigns of Ramesses II against the Northern Syrian region which to that date was under the Hittite rule and which culminated in the 1274 BC battle near Qadesh against the Hittite king Muwatalliš II, the 1234/3 BC northern campaign and the battle of Nihriya (see on this event Singer 1985).

⁸ The main material resources of Assyria, particularly metals, besides trading activities were obtained in the Taurus mountains, where Assyrian texts refer to the existence of many small political organizations (tribal units) with whom were established trading activities, although sometimes their relations were more than strained.

⁹ For example, during the western campaign of Shalmaneser I against Mittani, when the Hittite appanage kingdom had suffered serious blow; Assyrian army reached until the River Euphrates, opposite Carchemish but Assyrians did not

During this troublesome period was organized the anti-Assyrian coalition, probably initiated by the Hittite king Tudhaliyaš IV. The main actors of this coalition were Hatti and Egypt; the two empires remained loyal to the principles of the 1259 BC treaty signed between Muwatalliš II and Ramesses II.¹¹ Due to this treaty, in the Syrian-Palestinian region was installed *status quo*, which stabilized not only the situation of the 200 years long confrontation between two empires but makes possible to establish restraining mechanisms against the ambitions of Assyria. Among the allies Hatti desires such support, taking into account its economic problems, i.e. the import of grain from Egypt.¹²

In the second half of the XIII century BC, until the first wave of the advance of the "Sea Peoples" towards the northern borders of Egypt during the early reign of pharaoh Merenptah, seemingly nothing threatens Egypt from outside, unlike Hatti where the situation was much more serious. The troublesome decades lasting at least beginning from the reign of Hattušiliš III and continued during Tudhaliyaš IV were marked by wars against the vassal states of Western Asia Minor who from time to time were supported by Ahhiyawa (Mycenaean Greece or its part).¹³ These external problems were combined with the long-lasting struggle between two branches of the Hittite ruling dynasty. With the bifurcation of Hittite statehood still during Hattušiliš III¹⁴ when was established the appanage kingdom of Tarhuntašša, emerged one more threat for the rulers of Hattušaš.

During the reign of Tudhaliyaš IV the situation in Hatti was becoming more and more critical, especially in the face of several sources of external threat (Western Anatolian vassal states plus Ahhiyawa, Assyria, the Upper Euphrates countries). In the treaty signed between Tudhaliyaš and Šaušgamuwa, the vassal king of Amurru (in Phoenicia) the Hittite king warns him to hold off from any contacts with Ahhiyawa and

proceed further, evidently well beware of the possibility of Hittite counter-attack (Grayson 1987: 183f. [text N. A.O.77.1]). This policy continued his son Tukulti-Ninurta I, but this time Assyrians targeted the countries located in the north, in the Taurus mountainous region (Grayson 1987: 275f. [A.O.78.24]). But even after the victorious 1234/3 BC battle against the Hittites the Assyrians did not succeed much.

¹⁰ The correspondence between the Hittite and Babylonian kings points on the existence of allied relations and depleted resources of Babylonia as well (Otten 1959-1960: 39-46).

¹¹ The significance of the "Eternal treaty" signed between the Hittite Empire and Egypt could be illustrated by the letter of Nofretari, the Egyptian queen (chief wife of Ramesses II) sent to Puduhepa, Hittite queen. "Egypt and Hatti should become a single country" (KUB XXI 38 V 13 f.). The same idea is expressed in another letter: "(The Sun-god) shall perpetuate the beautiful brotherhood of the Great king, king of Egypt and his brother – king of Hatti" (KBo I 29, 8-11).

¹² See, in particular, Klengel 1974: 165-174.

¹³ Numerous studies deal with this problem (Bryce 1985: 13-23; Bryce 1986: 1-12; Bryce 1989: 297-310; Bryce 1991: 1-21; Güterbock 1983: 133-138; Güterbock 1986: 33-44; Singer 1983 etc.).

¹⁴ The creation of this kingdom became a benchmark for the bifurcation of the Hittite ruling dynasty *de jure*, the process which had begun still during the reign of Muwatalliš II when Hatti was divided into two kingdoms (indeed, under some hegemony of the rulers of Hattušaš). After the dethronement of Muršiliš III (Urhi-Tešub) Hattušiliš III put on the throne Ulmi-Tešub, the brother of the latter in Tarhuntašša with hereditary rights (on details of this undertaking see Otten 1988; Singer 1996; Bryce 2005: 268-271 etc.).

Assyria.¹⁵ This is a fair testimony of problems existing in the Near Eastern political map. The policy of "continental blockade" directed against two hostile powers which was introduced by the Hittite ruler, the *coup-d'état* of Kurunta, king of Tarhuntašša against Tudhaliyaš IV who had succeeded to temporarily capture Hattušaš,¹⁶ is the best evidence of the existing problems. Tarhuntašša was not the only dangerous internal factor for the territorial integrity of Hatti. It is not excluded that Kurunta was relying upon considerable part of the Hittite ruling dynasty and aristocracy.¹⁷

The world-system which has been drawn above in regard to the second half of the XIII century BC in the Near East had culminated towards the end of the same century and this vast geographical area appeared in the deep and long-termed crisis. Before we shall try to answer the questions "why" and "how" let us point on some current concepts regarding the problem of the end of the Late Bronze age in the Near East.

The transitional period from the Late Bronze age to Early Iron age which has been formulated as the "XII century BC crisis",¹⁸ was not limited with this period but continued well at least into the next two centuries.¹⁹ When the curtain is raised again, the Near Eastern and Aegean societies appear in fundamentally different color. The ethnic-cultural content, political and social-economic structure of the states are quite different,²⁰ several Late Bronze age polities had ceased to exist, including the Hittite empire. Instead, in the place of the Hittite empire, the former leading actor of the preceding period came into existence numerous small political entities. The disintegration of the Late Bronze age societies, the long period of their revival (about two centuries) and, finally, the scarcity of the contemporary written sources were the reasons for the rise of a widely accepted term "Dark Ages" still in the mid-XX century.

¹⁵ The treaty signed between Tudhaliyaš IV and Šaušgamuwa, king of Amurru, probably shows that a coalition really could have existed (Kühne und Otten 1971), where Assyria and Ahhiyawa are named as potential enemies.

¹⁶ On the confrontation of Tudhaliyaš IV and Kurunta of Tarhuntašša and the *coup d'état* see Singer 1996; Dinçol, Yakar, Dinçol, and Taffnet 2000, 160; Van den Hout 2001, 215ff.; Bryce 2005: 319ff. etc. Until now scholars fail to come into consensus regarding the coup of Kurunta. According to some (Hawkins 1994: 91), Kurunta had succeeded to capture Hattušaš, but some had suggested a dual kingship in the Hittite Empire, saying that Tudhaliyaš IV ruled in Hattušaš and Kurunta in Tarhuntašša, both claiming the title "Great king" (Singer 2000: 26; Collins 2008: 70f. etc.).

¹⁷ The Hittite text which represents of the category of texts entitled as "Judicial process" is mentioned the failed conspiracy of the prince Hešni against Tudhaliyaš (KUB XXXI 68, see Werner 1967: 64ff.; Tani 2001). Whether Hešni's attempt to dethrone Tudhaliyaš was in some way connected with Kurunta's activities is difficult to say. Among the supporters of Hešni it is worth to mention the king of Išuwa. Anyway, it seems that inner problems were in no way inferior to that of external.

¹⁸ The term first was introduced by the present author (Kosyan 1999). Other authors usually call this period "Crisis" without further specification (for example, Ward, Sharp Joukowski 1989).

¹⁹ In the Aegean basin, particularly in the territory of Mycenaean states this period extended well into the X-IX centuries BC which probably could be explained by the less expressed continuity with the preceding period, like that in the Near East.

²⁰ The history of this period has been studied by many scholars (Hawkins 1982; Kosyan 1994; 1999: 140-167; Jasink 1995).

This term usually is used until now in regard to the history of Asia Minor in the XII-X centuries BC,²¹ and the XI-IX centuries BC in regard to Continental Greece.²²

However, the situation which was briefly described above does not mean that in this extensive geopolitical space the main actors who were responsible for the creation of the Late Bronze civilization had ceased to exist. Regardless the destructive factors of the disintegration of the political system, it will be wrong to speak about the disappearance of the population of urban centers and even the essential quantitative losses. At best, one can postulate with some shift of local population groups and the influx of alien invading population from outside (mostly that of the "barbarian periphery"). Particularly, the Mesopotamian urban centers continue their existence, which means that they had preserved their traditional lifestyle. The same is true for the regions of inland Syria. Here the continuity is evident.

That in the XII century BC really took place some political and other events which in some cases had led to catastrophic outcome, could not be questioned since the unprecedented political, economic, and cultural development of the XV-XIII centuries BC which is well documented by contemporary written sources and material culture, at first sight unexpectedly was replaced by absolutely new situation. The polities which had survived the crisis had lost significantly their economic and military potential (Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia), international trading activity had been drastically reduced, many flourishing urban centers had lost their importance, instead came into existence new centers, sometimes with less economic potential. And, finally, throughout the Near East and the Aegean world is observed significant mobility of different peoples (ethnic movements) which in some regions brought to catastrophic consequences ("Sea Peoples", north Balkanic peoples, Aramaeans, Jewish tribes, Mushkians etc.).

The Euphrates contact zone in the second half of the XIII century

In the second half of the XIII century BC the Hittite cuneiform sources report on numerous small political formations in the Euphrates contact zone which occupy the territory extending from the upper stream of the Euphrates until southern slopes of the Armenian Taurus mountains, in the region where the river flows into the Syrian-Mesopotamian plain. Among these cuneiform sources (besides Hittite also Assyrian) should be mentioned a number of political entities which are generally known especially to Hittites under the collective name Išuwa.²³ The information contained in these texts show that the central part of Išuwa corresponds to the territory of modern Elâzığ (Tsopk' of medieval Armenian sources), to the east of Malatya towards the Lake Van.²⁴

²¹ Barnett 1967: 3.

²² Snodgrass 1971: 2; Desborough 1972: 11.

²³ In the treaty/instruction of the Hittite king Arnuwandaš I with the Upper Euphrates "countries" compiled around 1400 BC is preserved their list (KUB XXIII 72+, complete edition see in Kosyan 2006; Kosyan et al. 2018).

²⁴ References on Išuwa and opinions regarding its location see in Del Monte und Tischler 1978: 154ff.; Kosyan 2004: 61-63.

To the south of Išuwa, in the neighborhood of modern Lake Hazar (Arm. Tsovk') where begins the River Tigris, lays another well known country of Alzi (Arm. Aghdznik'),²⁵ which had played an important role still in the XV-XIV centuries in the context of confrontation of Mittani with the Hittite empire (see below).

As to other players of the contact zone, two political formations are of special interest – Hayaša and Azzi, whose location until now remains problematic.²⁶ According to the present author, they should not be looked to the north of the upper flow of the Euphrates, somewhere close to the Black Sea, as it is postulated by many scholars,²⁷ but to the north-east of Išuwa, probably in the plain of Erznka.²⁸

Besides these four, there were also some other formations whose names are preserved in Assyrian texts compiled in the context of northern campaigns of Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I.²⁹

Indeed, here in this part of the Armenian Highland hardly is possible to speak about the existence of large and stable political formations, as it could be deduced from the information contained in the Assyrian texts. Probably, the reason should be looked in the truncated mountainous terrain of the Armenian Taurus. None of the local tribal units did possess with strong economic potential and appropriate political system for expansion in order to achieve an upper arm on its neighbors. These formations which appear in the Assyrian sources under the names of Uruatri and Nairi, both had collective background and they could be regarded as loose confederation of tribes. Regardless the proposed locations of these two groups of polities, one is free to assume that we deal with small tribal organizations located along the Taurus mountain system.³⁰

The history of the western part of the contact zone is reconstructed mostly due to the information contained in the Hittite sources; some late Middle Assyrian texts also are useful for this purpose. It is worth to mention that they mostly deal with Išuwa. In this late period neither Hayaša, nor Azzi appear in the texts.

Išuwa which had an important role in the context of the late XV-XIV century eastern policy of Hatti,³¹ most probably in the middle part of the XIII century, during the reign of Hattušiliš III had become a Hittite appanage kingdom, thus performing the role of buffer in the traditionally turbulent Upper Euphrates region against Assyria and

²⁵ For cuneiform texts and location see Del Monte und Tischler 1978: 10; Golovleva 1978; Kosyan 2004: 33-34.

²⁶ For the location of these two countries see Kosyan 2004: 44-45, 48-50; also Forlanini 2017 (locates in the plain of Erznka).

²⁷ For opinions see Kosyan 2004: 44-45, 48-50.

²⁸ But see Kosyan 2013; 2015 where it was suggested have been located to the east of Išuwa, in the region between Išuwa and the Lake Van.

²⁹ On these tribal units see Harutyunyan 1970: 12-29; 1985.

³⁰ For the location of these "states" see Kessler 1980 (by entries); Nashef 1982: 274-275; Harutyunyan 1985: 148-149. This part of the contact zone should be presented in our forthcoming study.

³¹ The study of Hittite texts in regard to Išuwa and political processes see Klengel 1968; Torri 2005; Devecchi 2017; Kosyan et al. 2018: 108-143 etc.

Hayaša at the same time. Between the Hittite ruling dynasty and Išuwa were established close relations; the queen of Ari-Šarruma, the first king of Išuwa was the daughter of Puduhepa, the Hittite queen.³² Ari-Šarruma and his successor Ehli-Šarruma regularly participated in the political and religious life of the Empire. It is worth to mention that in the treaty signed between Hattušiliš III and Ulmi-Tešub, king of Tarhuntašša, Ari-Šarruma is mentioned as one of the witnesses. During the next generation Ehli-Šarruma became witness to the treaty of Tudhaliyaš IV with Kurunta, the next king of the same Tarhuntašša.

In one Hittite oracle text, probably compiled by the order of a Hittite king, the king of Išuwa is listed as one of the candidates who could lead the Hittite army against Hayaša.³³ During this period the kingdom of Išuwa has privileged status in the system of Hittite vassal states (along with Kargamiš, Tarhuntašša, Amurru, Šeha River country, and Tummanna).

But already at some point in the second half of the XIII century BC the Hittite sources tell that the loyalty of Išuwa show cracks, probably connected with instability in Hatti itself, namely the struggle between Tudhaliyaš IV and Kurunta of Tarhuntašša, and the Hešni-conspiracy (see above).

It has been suggested by some that Kurunta even had temporarily captured Hattuša. As to the prince Hešni, among his arrested supporters is mentioned an unnamed king of Išuwa (probably, Ari-Šarruma)(see above). The next demonstration of the disloyalty of Išuwa (this time also the name is lost in the text) is connected with the battle of Nihriya at the beginning of Tudhaliyaš IV's reign. The ruler of Išuwa did not perform his obligation to assist the Hittite king with military contingent against the Assyrian army. Two texts deal with this affair - KBo IV 14³⁴ and KBo VIII 23.³⁵ According to these sources, the troops of Išuwa did not participate in the battle which resulted in the defeat of the Hittite army.

The disloyalty of Išuwa in the period of this event, indeed, did not lead to its cessation from the Hittite empire, but anyway it shows that the relations between the two were no more the same as they were before.

The relations with Hayaša and Azzi³⁶ also seem to have been strained if not hostile. Actually during the whole XIII century BC almost all Hittite texts unequivocally testify that these countries, particularly Azzi (in the XIII century BC the term Hayaša is not mentioned) was regarded as hostile. The text of Tudhaliyaš IV which comprises

³² See Güterbock 1973: 135ff.; De Roos 1987: 74ff.; also Kosyan 1997/1: 178-179.

³³ IBoT I 32 (yet unpublished).

³⁴ The treaty of the Hittite king signed with Išuwa (Stefanini 1965: 39ff.).

³⁵ This is a letter sent to the Hittite king by some Hittite official (for some details of the battle see Singer 1985: 116ff.). Possibly, this official was the same person who was the commander of the Hittite troops at Nihriya.

³⁶ The location and status of Hayaša and Azzi, as well as their relations with the Hittite Empire has been thoroughly discussed in our previous studies (Kosyan 2008; 2013; 2015; 2016: 108-151).

“Instructions”³⁷ addressed to the governors of bordering provinces of Hatti Azzi is mentioned as a country which needed to keep an eye on its possible hostile actions.

At the end of the XIII century BC political formations of the Armenian Highland, which comprise part of the contemporary Near Eastern geopolitical space could not avoid the consequences of contemporary developments, i.e. the crisis which severely affected the whole Late Bronze age civilizations. Although existing written sources, particularly Hittite, fail to contain any direct evidence as to what could happen in the Upper Euphrates region, archaeological studies and Assyrian texts compiled during the reigns of Tiglathpileser I and his successor Aššurbelkala allow us to assume that this region of the Armenian Highland also had suffered the destructive influence of the crisis. Manifestations of the crisis are the next:

1. Significant increase in the mobility of population. This could be deduced by the texts of Tiglathpileser I where it is said that 50 years before his accession on the throne several tribes entered and captured first Alzi, then proceeded further to Northern Mesopotamia (Muški, Kašku, and Apišlu).³⁸ These sources did not clarify from where this migration had started. But even with this gap it becomes clear that the reason for this population movement most probably was the deterioration of political and economic situation in the primary area of these migrants. However, the entrance of new population into Alzi and Northern Mesopotamia could not but negatively affect also the population of Alzi.

2. Archaeological excavations conducted on several sites of Išuwa³⁹ show that compared with the well-developed Late Bronze age period during the existence of the kingdom of Išuwa, the small settlements of the post-Hittite period represent a primitive society, in no way comparable with the architecture of the Hittite period (for example, Noršuntepe and Korucutepe).

Currently it is a difficult task to guess about the possible course of events which took place in the western part of the Armenian Highland after the disintegration of Hatti. One could suggest fundamental changes in demography, political, social, economic, and cultural spheres.

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³⁷ Schuler von 1956: 8ff.

³⁸ Grayson 1991: 14ff. (N. A.O.87.1), 33f. (N. A.O.87.2), 42 (N. A.O.87.4) etc.; see also Harutyunyan 1970: 29ff.

³⁹ The results of excavations had been discussed in Kosyan 1997; 1998.

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Abbreviations

- AnSt – Anatolian Studies, London.
- AoF – Altorientalische Forschungen, Berlin.
- PBH – Patmabanasiraan hands, Yerevan.
- IBoT - Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Bulunan Boğazköy Tabletlerinden Seçme Metinler
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- StBoT - Studien zu den Boghazkoy-Texten, Wiesbaden.

THE REACTIONS AND DECISIONS OF TRANSCAUCASIAN AND ARMENIAN PARTIES ON THE DECLARATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA¹

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Abstract

As a result of various military and political developments and upheavals, the 1917 Bolshevik revolution led to the declaration of independence of Transcaucasia, and the region was confronted with the emergence of independent republics. At the height of the Turkish invasion, particularly after the fall of Kars and Alexandrapol, Bolshevik Russia was hostile towards the fact of independence of Transcaucasia, especially the emergence of independent national republics. The difficult domestic situation in Russia, the ongoing uncompromising struggle for power and the consequent unleashing of civil war did not make the sovietization of Transcaucasia possible for the moment. The best proof of that is that the government of Lenin could not or “did not want” to help the Baku commune.

Keywords: A.Kulebyakin, B.Baykov, Hay HZhK (Armenian People’s party), HHD, Social-revolutionaries, Andranik, Leo, Irkutsk, Voronezh, Moscow

As a result of various military and political developments and upheavals, the 1917 Bolshevik revolution led to the declaration of independence of Transcaucasia, and the region was confronted with the emergence of independent republics. On May 28, 1918, the independence of the Republic of Armenia was declared.

That epoch-making event, which was not equivocally accepted, also had reactions discussed below.

In his analytical work “Armenia’s military problems” *A. Kulebyakin*, the famous pro-Armenian General of the Caucasian front, touched upon the issue of independence as well².

He approached the existing issue from the point of view of separating the desired from the possible. According to him, the answer to the desired was definitely “Yes”. The General mentioned: “If you ask a nation that has escaped from the bloody clutches of a centuries-old oppressor “Can you begin an independent existence?” they will definitely say - Yes, yes, yes! I can. I want to. I cannot do otherwise! I have been waiting for this opportunity for centuries. The Armenian people have just got to the threshold of their plundered homeland. And the Armenian people will say yes, I want to, because I have made many sacrifices for liberation. And I need help and protection only because I have

¹ This study has been carried out within the framework of the joint grant received from the State Committee of Science, Republic of Armenia and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (grant N. 20RF-103).

² See NAA, f. 196, l. 1, f. 12, p. 1.

been deceived, I have lost a lot, I am surrounded by dangers, which I cannot overcome alone.

Is it desirable, is it permissible for other states, near and far (meaning Soviet Russia – V. M.)? And we will see that in this case the question is posed favorably. Turkey is against the Armenian independence, but Armenia was liberated from it in order to save the people. The issue of recognition of that independence by other states of the former German coalition is now automatically being pushed out...”³. First, it becomes clear that the undated material was written after the defeat of the Triple alliance. At the same time, it should be noted that, probably in the autumn of 1918, the pro-state, hence the pro-Armenian Russian General still viewed the reality of Armenia’s independence at least in the context of the achievements of the February Revolution. From this point of view, he probably did not want to see that Russia was no longer the same, that it had become Bolshevik. Moreover, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was a complete tragedy for the tsarist, patriotic Russian General. From the subtext of A. Kulebyakin’s ideas it can be assumed that Russia would never want to lose Transcaucasia and Armenia, so for now, Armenia’s “independence” did not pose a great threat to Russia’s future prospects.

We got acquainted with **Russian Cadet party figure B. Baykov’s** views on the occasion of the independence of Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Expressing the interests of the party of the Russian bourgeoisie - the Constitutional Democratic Party, B. Baykov unconditionally insisted that the peoples living in Transcaucasia had no grounds for national aspirations and expression of identity. As the first substantiation of his thesis, he mentioned the problem of the mixed population of Caucasian nations and he linked with it the issue of not establishing *zemstvos*⁴ (local self-government bodies – V. M.) in the region⁵.

He considered that the “self-determination” movement would nonetheless start in Russia only because that policy was dictated from the center, from those Russian political bodies that played a leading role during the revolution. He attributed the decisive and crucial role in that process to the Petrograd Soviet, which, proclaiming the principle of “self-determination of peoples”, hung it around its own neck and around the neck of the weaker Provisional Government. Hence, B. Baykov concluded that “taking into account the weakness of the central government the representatives of the political adventurism of different peoples of Transcaucasia felt more confident, since the establishment of new states was presented in the form of satisfying personal ambition. There was another reason to secede from Russia and end the previous connection - to keep the region and themselves from the consequences of Russia’s political collapse, Bolshevism, and the inevitable economic downturn by selfishly severing ties with Russia⁶.

³ See NAA, f. 196, l. 1, f. 12, p. 1.

⁴ See in detail Melikyan 2010: 125-145.

⁵ Baykov 1923: 190.

⁶ Baykov 1923: 191.

It is clear that the Cadet was speaking - the supporter of the centralized Russian state that had never tolerated the idea of self-determination of nations. At the same time, his analysis is pro-Armenian, as he considered Georgian social-democrat Mensheviks to be the pioneers in the process of secession of Transcaucasia from Russia⁷.

According to B. Baykov, during the whole course of the Russian revolution, Armenians did not hide their loyalty to Russia seeing in it the only natural defender that would save them from physical destruction. Referring to the March 1918 events in Baku, he concluded that the very instinct of self-defense was at the core of not opposing Russian Bolshevism, and sometimes of cooperating with it.

Baykov stated: ***“With the secession from Russia and with Azerbaijan declaring independence, small Armenia, having a small population of less than 2 million, encased by the Muslim world from all sides, had to declare its independence counting on the support from the Entente Powers and America”***⁸ (emphasis added by us - V. M.).

The Armenian Populist Party (APP) did not accept the proclamation of either Transcaucasia or independent states.

“It was a huge mistake, at least for us - Armenians, accepting the independence of Transcaucasia and its secession from Russia, and then it was a bigger mistake accepting the erasure of that independence and the division of Transcaucasia into three parts”⁹, – newspaper “Mshak” wrote.

In our opinion, the APP also shortsightedly clung to the prospect of the acceptance of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and was not correctly assessing the factor of Bolshevik Russia’s intervention in Transcaucasia in the period of April-June, 1918. The whole blame was traditionally (starting from April 1917, when the APP was formed – V. M.) directed against the ARF Seim and the Armenian National Council. “Mshak” considered that “the management of the affairs of the Armenian people was and is in the hands of non-professionals: during the revolution (referring to the 1917 February Revolution – V. M.) we failed to produce political, prudent, and discreet figures; we destroyed our people and our future and we got a one-eyed, one-legged, barren and disabled country that will be called Armenia”¹⁰.

Comparing Armenia’s independence with the process in Georgia, the APP rightly singled out three essential features. **First:** since the eve of the World War the Georgian political field and figures without any partisan differences, had consistently pursued the ultimate goal of separating Georgia from Russia and achieving its independence. “Mshak” delicately noted that during the course of it, internationalist, socialist, Menshevik A. Chkhenkeli eventually became the speaker of the Georgian parliament.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Idem.

⁹ See Mshak, June 25, 1918, issue 120.

¹⁰ Idem.

Second: Georgian politicians with their craft and skill were able “to drag after themselves both the Armenian alleged socialists (referring to ARF – V. M.) and the Turks”¹¹. **Third:** due to the fact that all the Transcaucasian state (Russian) institutions were concentrated in Tbilisi, Georgia was able to capture them all with their property, which, according to “Mshak”, reached “probably billions”¹². At the same time, the APP believed that “Georgia’s independence is not guaranteed at all yet”¹³.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation - Dashnaktsutyun did not equivocally address the whole process, neither the issue of Armenia’s independence itself.

Listening to Kh. Karchikyan’s report on the situation and “examining the issue of organizing the government of independent Armenia”, the June 12 general meeting of the ARF Committee in Tbilisi adopted the following resolution: “... ARF – Dashnaktsutyun is the only competent party that should lead the Armenian life in the near future, before the elections to the Armenian Constituent Assembly”¹⁴. Moreover, the Dashnaktsutyun believed that **“there is no one among our parties and currents that has done a more positive job in the field of Armenian-Turkish solidarity and cooperation than the Dashnaktsutyun”**¹⁵ (emphasis added by us - V. M.).

By the way, organizational and structural changes took place within the party in the post-independence stage.

By the decision of the joint assembly of ARF Eastern Bureau, the Central Committee and the local Committee of Georgia, and on the initiative of the Central Committee, the Georgian ARF regional meeting was held in Tbilisi **on June 17-25**. According to the adopted decision and “Circular No. 1”, the Central Committees of Tbilisi and Batumi would be dissolved and an Interim Central Committee would be formed within the borders of the Republic of Georgia. This change of the previous organizational form of the ARF and the newly elected Central Committee had to get final approval from the general assembly, the ARF Supreme Body but taking into account “the political situation of Transcaucasia and in particular, of Armenian workers and finding that it is necessary to start the organization and socialist upbringing of Georgian-Armenian workers right now, the newly-elected Central Committee, receiving the consent and approval of the existing supreme body of the ARF, the Eastern Bureau, starts its work and will be called “Georgian ARF Central Committee”.

Let us introduce H. Qajaznuni’s opinion: “Should we have declared independence? Were we able to form and maintain our own state?”, - wrote the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. “These are inessential questions. Such questions could not be asked in the last days of May, 1918. There was no room for holding elections. History had brought us to a certain line. We had to have the courage

¹¹ Idem.

¹² Idem.

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Horizon, June 15, 1918, No 115.

¹⁵ Idem, June 19, No 118.

to cross it if we did not want to sink. We had to become masters of our Homeland, otherwise we would lose it - maybe irrevocably. If we hesitated, if we delayed our statement, Armenia would remain *res nullius* (something belonging to no one) and as such would be lost to the neighbors - Turks, Georgians, Azerbaijanis.

On May 28, late at night, the National Central Council decided to declare Armenia an independent republic and to declare itself the supreme authority of the Republic.

The Council had not received such authority from the National Assembly, but it did not stop in the face of this formal obstacle and later, no one thought to accuse it, since it was clear to everyone that there was no other way... This was a new era in the history of the Armenian people - a revival of the long-lost independent state life"¹⁶.

Simon Vratsyan considered that "having suffered a lot, on May 28, 1918, the Armenian people gave birth to the Republic of Armenia. ***The Republic of Armenia was a premature birth for independence. It was not prepared either with substantive conditions, or with subjective consciousness.*** The Armenian people had fought a long and persistent struggle for the freedom of Armenia in Turkey and by saying freedom they meant reforms or autonomy under the common roof of the Ottoman Empire, they did not even think of creating Armenia within the borders of Russia. And at the moment, the Republic of Armenia was being born in the Ararat Valley, on the land under Russian rule, and in impossible conditions. It was not surprising that the Armenian mind was confused and found it difficult to understand the situation and adopt a new political position... The Dashnaktsutyun faced an unprecedented responsibility to lay the foundations of the newborn state and to organize and run the Armenian state. The hesitation that reigned in the ranks of the Dashnaktsutyun is understandable. ***This hesitation also appeared during the declaration of Armenia's independence. Strangely, people who had dedicated their entire lives to the Armenian liberation war, voted against independence***"¹⁷ (emphasis added by us - V. M).

We do not share Vratsyan's main conclusion that the Republic of Armenia was "a premature birth for independence". In our opinion, independent national statehoods were not handed to the peoples on a silver platter. Certainly, S. Vratsyan's reasoning is understandable: he probably meant the losses suffered by the Armenian people during World War I, the Armenian Genocide, the upheavals of the Russian revolutions, the Turkish invasion, the anti-Armenian policy of the neighbors, etc. At the same time, the main guarantee of achieving independence is independent practice. What guarantees did the Finnish people have when, in December 1917, they "snatched" their independence from Lenin's newly established government only through a consistent, heroic struggle and assessment of the situation? We can bring dozens of examples. By the way, Georgia had no guarantees either; nor did the newly created Azerbaijan aspiring to Pan-Turkism.

¹⁶ Qajaznuni 1923: 30.

¹⁷ Vratsyan 1966: 12.

And there is a controversial theses belonging to **Ruben Ter-Minasyan** stating that **“the idea of creating Araratian Armenia was first dictated by the Turks”**¹⁸ (emphasis added by us – V. M.). In our opinion, this phrase is referred to by modern Turkish historiography, when it emphasizes the false thesis of giving us independence.

R. Ter-Minasyan states that this idea was first suggested by Bahaeddin Shakir, Omar Naji and Hilmi Bey, who were sent by Ittihat to Erzurum (Karin) as negotiators in late August 1914. They offered the ARF 9 committee formed there to unite some regions of Western Armenia and create Armenia with Ejmiatsin as its center.

“Practically, a united Armenia was offered by the Turks on the condition that we get tough with Russia and become the vanguard in Transcaucasia in the event of a Caucasian uprising and war”, - says Ruben. “Without going back to those official talks, **it is important to emphasize here that the offer of an independent and united Armenia was coming from the Turks**”¹⁹ (emphases added by us – V. M.).

Of course, it is difficult to be deeply sure of what Ruben meant. The proposal to create “United Armenia” in that context is not particularly understandable. Probably, it was meant that in case of Russia’s “defeat” in the World War, Russian Armenia and Turkish Armenia would be united. In any case, the Turks offered the ARF the same they offered Georgian politicians, i.e. in case of unleashing a war, they had to act against Russia, in other words, become a tool in the implementation of Pan-Turkism.

It is noteworthy that both in the reality of 1914 and in April-May 1918, the same Turkey promised independence to Transcaucasia and Armenia on the condition of anti-Russian attitude and struggle. The tsarist government promised almost the same thing, only promising autonomy to Armenia.

In general, we consider that Ruben’s statement fits into the series of “promises” of the Young Turks and nowadays it is used as a factor of “betrayal of Turkish-Armenians”, which, in their opinion, indirectly “justifies” the perpetration of the Armenian Genocide.

A totally different viewpoint was held by the newspaper “Ashkhatank”, an organ of the ARF in Yerevan, which was affected by the views of the Yerevan National Council and Aram Manukyan.

On May 16 (29), in an article entitled “With Faith In Victory”, speaking about the victories of Sardarapat and Greater Gharakilisa, the newspaper noted: “However, let us not become inebriated by our first victories, nor let our future defeats and casualties suppress our spirit of resistance. On the contrary, **realizing that the enemy was able to get from Yerznka to Alexandropol in a short time with very little force only because of our surrender**, let us redouble our efforts and prepare for new battles and new victories... **Henceforth our blows must be sharp and lethal, so that the enemy is completely shattered and steps back**”²⁰ (emphasis added by us – V. M.).

¹⁸ Ruben 1982: 127.

¹⁹ Idem.

²⁰ See Ashkhatanq, Yerevan, May 29, 1918, issue 3.

Parallel with this approach, in its July 11 editorial “Horizon” gave an alarming assessment of the future of the already established republic. “The ghost of the Armenian Genocide is so close”, - the editorial stated, - “it is enough, in fact, it is so eloquent, the past is so clear, and the future so obvious that, unfortunately, there is no need to hesitate. One of the two. If the Republic of Armenia was established to create a more or less prosperous life for our nation to a minimal degree and within the minimum limits, let that country be like a country and let the people stop being a wanderer at least for a while. **And if that republic has been created by the strongest of the world with the intention of temporarily hiding its devilish plans, make sure that the martyred people and their country know all that**”²¹ (emphasis added by us – V. M.).

These questions make the existence of disagreements and tactical differences within the ARF fully obvious. Thus, A. Manukyan’s wing was against the negotiation process only and was in favor of organizing resolute resistance.

The Armenian Social Democrat mensheviks criticized the Seim and its ARF faction for backing the Trabzon - Brest-Litovsk - Batumi course of the Turkish foreign policy accusing them of the process of secession from Russia and describing it as “assurances of peace and goodwill”²².

Gevorg Gharajyan (S.T. Arkomed – V. M.), theorist of Armenian Menshevism, considered the political line of the leaders of Georgian Menshevism - N. Zhordania, A. Chkhenkeli, I. Tsereteli, to be nationalistic, which in practice had actually completely deviated from the policy of social democracy in the national issue.

Not being absolutely against independence, he considered that “the transformation of our country into independent states creates new complications, opens the door to new disasters for our peoples”²³, besides, he added that this independence would not take place without the “dictation and pressure of external and internal reactionary forces”²⁴ without taking into account the self-determination of nations. G. Gharajyan considered that independence “could not definitely take place. The vast majority of the votes of Georgians and Armenians, as well as a considerable part of the Turks would not vote for the political contingent and condition that was created in our country after April 9 and May 26 of last 1918”²⁵.

The position of the **Armenian organization of the Socialist Revolutionary Party (the SR – V. M.)** towards Transcaucasia and the emergence of independent national states was negative, however, as SR Arsham Khondkaryan mentioned: “our party had to come to terms with this new situation”²⁶. He noted: “Our opposition and criticism is most of all and strongly against the April 9 (22) act, **and least of all against the**

²¹ Horizon, July 11, 1918, issue 135.

²² Gharajyan (Arkomed) 1919: 51.

²³ Idem.

²⁴ Idem.

²⁵ Gharajyan (Arkomed) 1919: 52.

²⁶ Khondkaryan 1933: 79.

Statement of the Armenian National Council dated May 30 and published on May 31²⁷ (emphasis added by us – V. M.).

He believed that it was no secret for the SRs that the issue of independence of Transcaucasia had been resolved by the elite of the Seim factions and that their ordinary members, especially the non-partisan masses, were against the act, and as far as the ARF was concerned, Khondkaryan considered that the Dashnaktsutyun “acted in this matter not out of conscience, but out of compulsion”²⁸.

In the reality of May 26, preferring the Georgian position, because of which “they separated from Transcaucasia and established themselves within their borders”, the outstanding Armenian SR figure saw a difference between the acts of April 9 and May 26 and concluded: “What was the attitude of our party members, Armenian or Russian, towards this new independence? **Negative**”²⁹. He weighed on the moral side of the issue, which in our opinion was mostly military and political. He justified the SR criticism of Georgian Menshevism by “the inhuman behavior of occupying a dominant position in the Transcaucasian government, acting on its fate almost autocratically and bringing this country to the brink of ruin, they considered it their right to abandon their associates at the most difficult moment and went to build their own home and think only about the salvation of their people”³⁰.

According to the Armenian SR, the statement of the Armenian National Council (ANC) not of May 30, but of May 31 “**was certainly not a declaration of Armenia’s independence**”³¹ (emphasis added by us – V. M.). It was also clear that the responsibility for the step taken did not fall on the ANC, as this step became inevitable after the decisions of the Georgians and Tatars, so the Armenian SRs had nothing else to say against that act.

At the same time, A. Khondkaryan clearly shows the difference between the acts of independence.

We will return to this issue in a separate section.

The position of the **Constituent Democratic Party**, according to our sources, was expressed at the May 21 session of the Central Council of Compatriotic Unions in Tbilisi.

Discussing the issue of the ANC perspective, Artak Darbinyan directly stated: “**There can be no talk of independence**”³². He considered that the **ANC should base its policy on the policy of adaptation, avoiding aggressive behavior and having no state authority**³³.

²⁷ Khondkaryan 1933: 81.

²⁸ Idem.

²⁹ Khondkaryan 1933: 84.

³⁰ Khondkaryan 1933: 84-85.

³¹ Khondkaryan 1933: 86.

³² See NAA, f. 244, l.1, f. 9, p. 18.

³³ Idem.

Gharabekyan considered that the ANC was the body that developed and conducted the foreign policy of the Armenian people³⁴.

Gharibi, a Georgian Menshevik author known for his extremist and anti-Armenian views, brought up the fable by Krylov in the context of the unification of the three nations in the Transcaucasian United Republic and the further course of the independences, noting that “when Tsereteli, the white swan of the Russian revolution, was taking the newly created Republic upwards, the Armenian crab was dragging it either towards the anarchy through the Bolsheviks, or towards self-governance through Denikin, and the Azerbaijani pikes dragged everyone to the Muslim ocean in order to drown there the Republic and all the nationalities”³⁵.

On May 31, 1918, **the Social-Democrat Hunchakian Party** in view of the call of the central board “Citizens-Armenians”, demanded that the National Council 1. relinquish all its powers and responsibilities that had been appropriated arbitrarily; 2. immediately form a new Provisional National Council from an equal number of representatives of all political, revolutionary and socialist organizations³⁶.

In the context of the re-election of the Armenian National Council, in other words, its dissolution, on May 31, the Social-Democrat Hunchakian Party in fact did not recognize Armenia’s independence.

The Central Board of the Hunchakians in Tbilisi headed by Arshak Babayan (A. the Iron) had spoken out against the secession of Armenia from Russia as well, i.e. the declaration of independence of Transcaucasia³⁷.

The central board of the Hunchakians announced its decision that it did not want to see the fate of Armenians separated from Bolshevik Russia. At the same time, G. Yeghikyan noted: “Everywhere outside Tbilisi the Hunchakians welcomed Armenia’s independence with joy and enthusiasm”³⁸. This circumstance once again testifies to the split between the two branches of the Social-Democrat Hunchakian party, the local and foreign national and socialist, and now the Bolshevik. It turns out that the Hunchakians’ national branch outside Transcaucasia recognized the independence of the Republic of Armenia.

By the way, in “My Memories” **A-Do** (Hovhannes Ter-Martirosyan) dated the ANC statement to May 31³⁹.

One of the assessments of **General Andranik** to the question of how the Republic of Armenia was formed, was the following: “It was literally a deception by the Turks and the Germans. Their goal was to leave Turkish Armenia altogether, to erase the case of Turkish Armenia from the agenda of European diplomacy and to create an Armenia

³⁴ Idem.

³⁵ Karibi 1920: 171-172.

³⁶ NAA, f. 4045, l. 1, f. 221, p. 1.

³⁷ Yeghikyan 1939: 142.

³⁸ Yeghikyan 1939: 143.

³⁹ A-Do 2015: 413.

within Russian Armenia. If Turkey and Germany had been victorious, they would have drowned the Republic in Lake Sevan. Otherwise, they knew very well that the fate of the Armenia they established would be decided by the Russian state”⁴⁰. Andranik certainly meant that Soviet Russia would not give up Transcaucasia, and would sooner or later recapture it.

Leo’s (Arakel Babakhanyan) opinion was as follows: “Why don’t we declare that we are part of the state that has signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (referring to Soviet Russia – V. M.)? Let that state fulfill the obligation it has signed, and we can be sure that the Turks will take only Batumi and Kars and will not dare to put their hands on Alexandropol, Yerevan and Tbilisi as well”⁴¹.

At first glance, on the legal basis of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, it should have been like that, if, of course, the Armenian parties and the National Council recognized Soviet Russia, and vice versa. Neither the Armenian side, nor Russia recognized the Transcaucasian authorities after the Bolshevik coup. It’s quite another thing, if at least in April 1918, a political agreement were reached when there was a victorious position in Baku and if St. Shahumyan’s program of sovietization of Transcaucasia and strengthening of the Armenian factor were realized.

In this regard, we consider it necessary to dwell on a complete archival package of the most important original document.

In early 1918 the Armenian Revolutionary Committee of the North Caucasus was formed in Armavir. On April 20, when the Baku Commune had already been formed, Sirak Grigoryan, the military commissar of the Committee turned to the Armenian Committee of Moscow⁴². The main task of the latter at that stage was to present a number of essential details related to the support of Baku from the North Caucasus and to the possible sovietization of Transcaucasia.

First, it turned out that S. Grigoryan and H. Ohanjanyan were in Rostov-on-Don, then in Armavir, and three days later H. Ohanjanyan returned to Tbilisi and military commissar S. Grigoryan - to Baku. In Rostov they had organized several consultations with S. Orjonikidze, Commissar Extraordinary of the Council of People’s Commissars.

Hence, it turned out that S. Orjonikidze organized Bolshevik military units in South Russia, of course, against anti-Bolshevik forces, and in particular, to protect Baku from external danger. S. Grigoryan considered that S. Orjonikidze “is unfamiliar with the developments in the Caucasus, but he is personally very supportive of us (the Armenian Military Union, the ARF – V. M.) and promises every support. ***Due to the fact that in Baku our people fought with the Bolsheviks against the Turks, and a very close activity has started between us, Shahumyan and the Bolsheviks, that circumstance has made them more confident in us.*** Work there with Teryan,

⁴⁰ Mihranyan 1921: 10.

⁴¹ Leo 2009: 368.

⁴² NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 51.

Hovhannisyan (referring to Vahan Teryan and Ashot Hovhannisyan – V. M.) and Karakhan to help us and instruct Orjonikidze.

In these two months we were able to establish good relations with the Bolsheviks in the North Caucasus: they support sending our echelons... In Baku, our people (referring to the ARF and Armenians in general – V. M.), ***together with the Bolsheviks have defeated the Turks; and now there is Soviet rule there. We must support that Baku get help from Astrakhan***⁴³ (emphasis added by us – V. M.).

Later, the Armenian National Committee of Armavir addressed the ANC, noting that they had purchased a significant amount of wheat, which was forbidden to be sent through Tuapse according to St. Shahumyan's order, so they requested the mediation of the Armenian National Council so that Shahumyan cancelled his order by telegram. It becomes clear that Sirak Grigoryan was already in Moscow and his goal was to get the money, clothes and cars promised by the Council of People's Commissars. It was once again emphasized that the relations of the Armenian National Committee of Armavir "with the Bolsheviks are good and are getting better: here they are dissatisfied with Transcaucasia, where their delegates and representatives are allegedly arrested". At the end of the telegram, the same question about the arrests of the Bolsheviks was repeated: another important fact became known that "one week ago Bekzadyan left Mineralnye Vody for Tsaritsin (Volgograd – V. M.) to transport bread to Baku... The connection with Petrovsk has been cut off"⁴⁴.

It can be assumed that if T. Bekzadyan was trying to provide Baku with bread, St. Shahumyan's ban on bread import to Transcaucasia through Tuapse is explained by the fact that the chairman of the Baku Commune was concerned that the wheat sent to Transcaucasia would not reach Armenians, but would be confiscated by the Seim, the Georgian Mensheviks.

And this is not just one episode of that cooperation. During April-July, 1918 in different regions of Russia, from Kharkov to Irkutsk, the branches of the Armenian National Council and the Armenian Military Union, the Moscow Committee for the Defense of Armenia carried out huge organizational work, mainly in sending the Armenian Armed Forces to Baku and Armenia.

Let us mention some of them: on May 3, 1918 Abraham Gyulkhandanyan, Chairman of the Armenian National Council of Baku, addressed the Armenian National Committee in Moscow informing that: "a group of Armenian volunteer soldiers (45 people), joining the Hashtarkhan (modern Astrakhan – V.M.) group (8 people), arrived in Baku in late April led by G. Mazmanyanyan"⁴⁵. We especially emphasize the following consideration: "We hope that in a short time the roads will open, and ***we will have the opportunity to move our military units to the west***"⁴⁶.

⁴³ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 52-53.

⁴⁴ NAA, f. 201, l. 1, f. 36, p. 117-118.

⁴⁵ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 30.

⁴⁶ Idem.

S. Gyulkhandanyan was referring to the realization of St. Shahumyan's plan to direct the Armenian military units of the victorious Baku to the province of Yerevan, and from there to Western Armenia. In this regard, of great importance is Rostom's letter from Baku addressed to "Tbilisi, Palace, to Karcikyan"⁴⁷.

In view of the ceasefire in Alexandropol and the Turkish ultimatum, Rostom presented the scenario of possible developments, focusing on a number of notable emphases.

In his opinion, the Turks might not violate the ceasefire yet, securing their western border by occupying Batumi, Kars, Ardahan and they might wait for the occupation of the Tabriz-Rasht-Batumi-Tbilisi-Baku-Rostov-Petrovsk line. After the entire Transcaucasia appeared in a blockade, every violation of the ceasefire, the introduction of new demands made it impossible to restore order in the Caucasus and establish a strong power. "The condition of non-interference is in itself the first step of intervention", - Rostom wrote⁴⁸. He believed that it would lead to a new fratricidal war, would weaken the fighting parties and relying on one of them would establish its dominance, as it happened in Finland, Ukraine, Rostov and other places. **"In the current situation the unification of the entire democracy of the Caucasus is an urgent need"**, - Rostom concluded⁴⁹ (emphasis added by us - V. M.). Then followed Rostom's practical suggestions. He requested to immediately send a delegation of the Seim to Baku and addressed a question to Kh. Karcikyan: "Is it possible to restore the railway communication for Armenians with your resources?"⁵⁰. Expressing full confidence and sympathy for the Soviet government, and obviously for St. Shahumyan, Rostom mentioned the following as fruits of the March victory: "Quba, Derbent, Petrovsk, Temirkhan-Shura, Lankaran and Salyan have been occupied by the Soviet troops. There is hope that the railway communication in the north will be restored soon"⁵¹, i.e. a connection will be established with the Soviet power in the North Caucasus.

Alexander Baghiryanyan, President of the Armenian Military Union of Kharkov, informed the head of the Moscow branch of the AMU that about 600 Armenian soldiers from Kharkov and surrounding villages had been sent to Armenia and arrived in Tbilisi and **"some of their outfit and weapons have been received from the Soviet authorities"**⁵² (emphasis added by us - V. M.). Money and Armenian soldiers provided with weapons were going to be sent from Rostov, Yekaterinoslav as well.

Bogdan Avanesov, the Armenian military commissar of Voronezh, reported that according to the April 19 order of the Moscow Council of Defense of Armenia, a mandatory general conscription of Armenians aged 18-32 was announced. They were

⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁸ Idem.

⁴⁹ Idem.

⁵⁰ Idem.

⁵¹ Idem.

⁵² NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p.24.

to enlist on May 14 and 15, and those who did not show up would be considered deserters and would be held accountable⁵³. And on May 31 he informed that **“none of the local Armenians showed up”** (emphasis added by us - V. M.) and only a detachment consisting of 12 people was formed and sent in the direction of Voronezh-Gryazi-Tsaritsin-Astrakhan-Baku-Tbilisi⁵⁴.

And on June 2, that very B. Avanesov informed Meburnutov, the Armenian military commissar of Moscow that the Persian-Armenians of Voronezh had declared their non-conscription⁵⁵.

On May 4, V. Janlatyan, the Chairman of the Armenian National Council of Irkutsk asked the Armenian National Committee of Moscow to report news on the defense of the Caucasus, especially Armenia⁵⁶.

He reported that the National Council, formed in Irkutsk on January 20, 1918, had sent two detachments to Tbilisi at the disposal of the AMU. The first group mainly consisted of Western Armenian prisoners of war that were in Siberia and Irkutsk military district, and the second group consisted of 50 volunteers that had come to Irkutsk from the Far East. The third detachment was in the process of formation. On behalf of the National Council V. Janlatyan asked for permission to send the detachment to Moscow or directly to Tbilisi at the disposal of the AMU⁵⁷.

Similar messages were sent by Mkrtych Melikyan, I. Khudinyan, Mandelyan – the heads of the Armenian National Councils of Kharkov⁵⁸, Nizhny Novgorod⁵⁹ and Syzran⁶⁰.

On May 13, Tonoyants, commissar of the Armenian Commissariat of Ukraine, Crimea and Moldova and Chief of Staff Ter-Danielyants turned to the Defense Council of Armenia in Moscow. The Commissariat, organized in early January 1918, united the territories of South-Western Romanian fronts and the military personnel, the respective republics, besides; it had branches in Iasi, Chisinau, Zhmerinis, Berdychiv, Simferopol, and Kharkov.

They reported that by working together with the Georgian Commissariat, the Armenian Commissariat had been able to gain the trust of the central Ukrainian government “despite the frequent changes in the latter and political upheavals”⁶¹. Before the Germans entered Kiev, the Armenian soldiers were being sent to Transcaucasia in full outfit. During four months (January-May) 5000 Armenian militants were sent and 4000 people were conscripted⁶².

⁵³ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 25.

⁵⁴ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 28.

⁵⁵ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 26.

⁵⁶ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 33.

⁵⁷ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 34-35.

⁵⁸ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 39, 61.

⁵⁹ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 41.

⁶⁰ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 27.

⁶¹ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 38.

⁶² Idem.

The example of this Commissariat reveals the functions of other Armenian national bodies as well. The Armenian Commissariat in Kiev solved not only strategic, but also political and national issues; it had undertaken to protect the interests and property of the Armenian population living in Ukraine. It is noteworthy that after the German occupation of Ukraine, the Armenian Commissariat operated “exclusively under the national flag”⁶³.

The National Committee of the Armenians of Petrograd, addressing the Defense Council of Armenia on April 25, announced its initiative to establish a medical and sanitary department for the Armenians wounded in the war. The head of the initiative was doctor **Levon Orbeli**, who petitioned the Northern Front and the All-Russian Zemstvo Council to provide medicine, disinfectants, linen, etc. on preferential terms⁶⁴.

On June 2, the Executive Committee of the Kislovodsk Armenian Compatriotic Union, under the chairmanship of A. Asribekyan turned to the ANC. They considered that at a historical, crucial stage, being mainly unaware of the situation in the Caucasus and Armenia, they “could make dangerous mistakes, so we ask you to regularly share information on the current political and historical developments, at the same time giving an idea of the main points of national policy in case of every important change in your policy. It is necessary to send a messenger for this purpose once a week”⁶⁵.

Then probably the most important thing came to light that the Armenian National Council “was immediately transferred to: **150.000 rubles – Levon Mantashyan, 25.000 rubles – Vladimir Mandinyan, 83.000 rubles transferred to Armavir for the needs of migrants. We have also received reliable bills of 1 million rubles from some of the persons subject to the National Tax that we will transport to you**”⁶⁶ (emphasis added by us - V. M.).

Finally, returning to our main topic, i.e. the issue of the possible support of the Soviet government in the anti-Turkish struggle, let us dwell on the telephone conversation between the National Councils in Tbilisi and Armavir and the issues raised there.

Secretary Ter-Harutyunyan spoke on behalf of the Armenian National Council. Speaking about the possible destruction threatening Armenia after the capture of Alexandropol, Ter-Harutyunyan was trying to find out from the Armavir National Council what the Soviet government was thinking: **“All of the Armenians have directed their gaze at the North”**. The answer from Armavir was that “only now, with the help of the Soviet power, we have broken the neck of our bourgeoisie and we think of helping the National Council soon”. The justification for the declaration of independence by the ANC is also noteworthy: “Our government (meaning the Seim – V. M.) consists mostly of Muslim beys and khans and Georgian nationalists. In Batumi the latter were persuaded

⁶³ Idem.

⁶⁴ NAA, f. 321, l. 1, f. 1, p. 31.

⁶⁵ NAA, f. 201, l. 1, f. 36, p. 113.

⁶⁶ Idem.

that ***Georgians would gain political autonomy if they introduced Turkish orientation in Transcaucasia. If the Armenian representatives joined that government it was only done not to provoke Armenian-Georgian conflicts***⁶⁷ (emphasis added by us - V. M.).

We managed to find out the person representing Armavir. Since he was representing the party and its central committee, we can conclude that it was the local Bolshevik revolutionary organization - the Armenian Revolutionary Committee of the North Caucasus and its leader, Sirak Grigoryan. This is confirmed by the connection between S. Grigoryan and H. Ohanjanyan as well. By the way, at the end of the conversation, he was inviting H. Ohanjanyan to join a call the next day for the purpose of resolving a number of issues and informed that he would leave for Moscow in two days⁶⁸.

Thus, the totality of the facts leads us to the conclusion that at the height of the Turkish invasion, particularly after the fall of Kars and Alexandropol, in a series of new political orientations besides the Turkish and German, the ANC and a part of the ARF were trying to use the possibility of support by Soviet Russia in the context of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. It is difficult to unequivocally assess the possibility of its positive result, despite the above-mentioned steps. However, one thing is clear that Bolshevik Russia was hostile towards the fact of independence of Transcaucasia, especially the emergence of independent national republics. The difficult domestic situation in Russia, the ongoing uncompromising struggle for power and the consequent unleashing of civil war did not make the sovietization of Transcaucasia possible for the moment. The best proof of that is that the government of Lenin could not or “did not want” to help the Baku commune.

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Translated from the Armenian by Syuzanna Chraghyan

DISCUSSIONS OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION AT THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN AND THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST¹

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Abstract

The Bolshevik authorities initially took steps to export the revolution to European countries, but after failing they directed their attention to the East. In 1919-1920 Soviet Russia took active steps to export the “socialist revolutions” to the eastern countries. The Bolsheviks re-established ties with former Young Turkish leaders of the Ottoman Empire and with former Young Turk Mustafa Kemal who had started the nationalist movement in Turkey. The Bolsheviks pinned their hopes on the Muslim East, believing that the latter could be “revolutionized” and directed primarily against Great Britain.

Keywords: Armenian question, Muslim East, Mustafa Kemal, Soviet Russia

The Bolshevik authorities initially took steps to export the revolution to European countries, but after failing they directed their attention to the East. In 1919-1920 Soviet Russia took active steps to export the “socialist revolutions” to the eastern countries. The Bolsheviks re-established ties with former Young Turkish leaders of the Ottoman Empire and with former Young Turk Mustafa Kemal who had started the nationalist movement in Turkey. The Bolsheviks pinned their hopes on the Muslim East, believing that the latter could be “revolutionized” and directed primarily against Great Britain, which led the other countries’ invasion of Russia.



Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938)

The “sovietization”² of Azerbaijan with the help of M. Kemal³ in April 1920, gave the Bolsheviks hope that they had “loyal” allies in the form of the Kemalists, but the Soviet government simultaneously used the former Young Turks⁴, namely Tala’at, Enver, Jemal⁵ and others, to carry out large-scale anti-British operations in the East. In their turn, both the Young Turks and the Kemalists wanted to take

¹ This study has been carried out within the framework of the joint grant received from the State Committee of Science, Republic of Armenia and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (grant N. 20RF-103).

² Kvashankin et al. 1996: 122.

³ The first attempt by the Kemalists to establish contact with the Bolsheviks was made back in the summer of 1919. See Aralov 1960: 18-19.

⁴ Back in 1918 Enver and his associates had established ties with Soviet Russia, seeking to use the Bolsheviks in the struggle against Great Britain. See Vasilev 2018: 66.

⁵ In August 1920, the Soviet leadership sent Jemal to Afghanistan on a reconnaissance mission. Emir Amanullah Khan entrusted him with the reorganization and command of the army on the border with India. See Kvashankin et al. 1996: 176.

advantage of the anti-British policy of the Russian government and restore the former borders of the empire, first of all to review the Treaty of Sèvres of August 10, 1920.

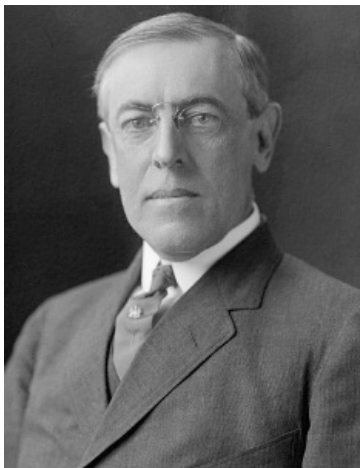


The grand opening of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern
(Petrograd, 1920)



The participants of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern
(Petrograd, 1920)

The Armenian question was discussed at the 2nd Congress of the Comintern in June-July 1920 where Armenia was represented by Avis Nurijanyan⁶ and Hmayak Nazaretyan⁷. The declaration adopted by the Comintern stated that the Turkish people wanted to abrogate the Treaty of Sèvres imposed on them. Moreover, by arming Greece, the British government wanted to bring the Ottoman Empire to its knees. As for Armenia, that country “was created without borders and without the opportunity to live”⁸. Hence, it can be inferred that it was openly stated that the Republic of Armenia had not been recognized by any state, it was in an uncertain military and political situation, its “revolutionization” was possible. At the same time, it was mentioned that US President W. Wilson refused to sponsor Armenia. In fact, the president was in favor of it, but the mandate given by the League of Nations was not accepted by the US Congress. As in other cases, here also we will see that the leadership of the Comintern sometimes resorted to blatant falsifications.



Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924)



Hmayak Nazaretyan



Avis Nurijanyan



**Vagharshak Ter-Vahanyan (1896-1936),
Delegate of the 2nd Congress of the
Comintern. Painter – I. Brodsky**



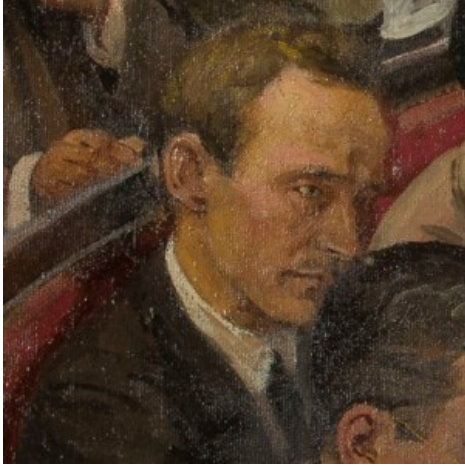
**V. Lenin at the 3rd Congress of the
Comintern. On the right – painter
I. Brodsky (1884-1939)**

⁶ Nurijanyan Avetis (Avis, 1896-1938) was a party and state figure, a Bolshevik. He held various party and state positions. He was known for his extreme views.

⁷ Nazaretyan Hmayak (1889-1937) was a Soviet party and state figure, a Bolshevik. He held various party and state positions. He was Head of J. Stalin's Secretariat. Nazaretyan fell victim to Stalin's terror. Pyatnitsky et al 1934: 620.

⁸ Pyatnitsky et al 1934: 543.

In his speech V. Lenin noted that after the World War China, Persia and Turkey were again in the spotlight of the imperialist powers⁹. According to him, the issue would be resolved through a victorious revolution¹⁰. It could be concluded from this speech that V. Lenin called for a permanent revolution, the essence of which was the export of revolution.



Otto Kuusinen (1881-1964), Delegate of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern. Painter – I. Brodsky

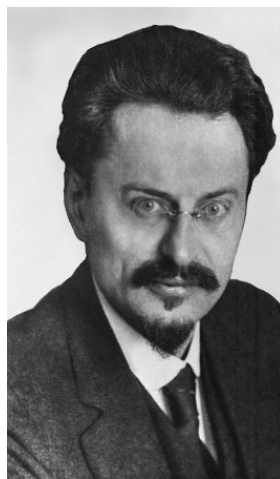


Anastas Mikoyan, Joseph Stalin, Georgy Orjonikidze

At the 3rd Congress of the Comintern, Sargis Kasyan, the representative of Soviet Armenia, stretching the truth, stated that Britain supported Armenia because it wanted not only to create a base to fight against Soviet Russia, but also against spreading socialist ideas in the East¹¹.



Sargis Kasyan (1878-1938)



Lev Trotsky (1879-1940)

S. Kasyan considered that the Turkish threat continued: "The Turkish government keeps showing imperialist aspirations at our border"¹². According to him, in case of any real threat from Turkey, Soviet Russia would support the Armenian workers and peasants¹³. That way he tried to justify the sovietization of Armenia, which would no longer be subject to Turkish invasion under the protection of the Bolshevik troops.

Among the leadership of Soviet Russia there were people who resorted to radical actions, including G. Orjonikidze. In a telegram on May 4, 1920, addressed to V. Lenin

⁹ Pyatnitsky et al 1934: 23.

¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹ First International Congress 1924: 469.

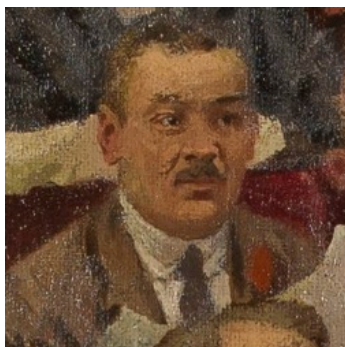
¹² First International Congress 1924: 470.

¹³ Idem.

and J. Stalin he directly demanded, even blackmailed them saying they should refuse to sign a peace treaty with Armenia, which would be negatively accepted by Muslims. The latter “will get the impression that we, the Christians, have occupied Azerbaijan, leaving aside Armenia and Georgia”¹⁴. Hence, it can be concluded that G. Orjonikidze was rushing to Sovietize the mentioned republics. According to Russian researcher V. Mukhanov, G. Orjonikidze was the main organizer and implementer of the sovietization of Transcaucasia. He enjoyed the personal trust of the Soviet leadership and first of all of V. Lenin¹⁵.



Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Russia V. Lenin is talking to the participants of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern



Nariman Narimanov (1871-1925). Painter – I. Brodsky

The Soviet leadership knew that the Kemalists were preparing to attack the Republic of Armenia, but it was desirable for the Turks to know the position of the Bolsheviks in this matter¹⁶, thus, not only members of the former Ottoman government, but also the representatives of M. Kemal came to Moscow by different routes. After discussing these issues, on the initiative of Moscow, the so-called 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East was convened in Baku, organized by G. Zinoviev, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist

¹⁴ Kvashankin et al. 1996: 125.

¹⁵ Mukhanov 2017: 94.

¹⁶ As of May 1920, the Sovietization of Armenia was not yet part of the Bolsheviks' plans. According to V. Lenin: “Armenia is of no interest to us in the near future...”, Kvashankin et al. 1996: 124-125.

International. The members of the organizing body were N. Narimanov, G. Orjonikidze, J. Stalin, A. Mikoyan and others.

We do not think that J. Stalin's presence in Baku was accidental. In the telegram addressed to G. Orjonikidze, he directly stated that in the Armenian-Turkish-Tatar issue he and V. Lenin were eager to resolve the issue in favor of Azerbaijan and Turkey¹⁷. And in the summer of 1920, as a guarantee of their position the Turks were given 6,000 rifles, more than 5 million bullets, 17.6 thousand shells, and about 200 kg of gold¹⁸.



G. Zinoviev (with his hand raised) speaks at the 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East. September 1920, Baku

The 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East took place in Baku from September 1 to 8, 1920¹⁹. An enormous sum of money was allocated for its organization and realization at a time when the population of Russia was in a difficult socio-economic situation, followed by famine. Among those invited was Enver Pasha²⁰, the former military minister of the Ottoman Empire, a war criminal, one of the masterminds and perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide. It should be noted that before coming to Baku, in Moscow Enver had received a considerable amount of money from the Soviet government, most of which he had sent to former Young Turk leaders²¹. It should be noted that the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party had made a decision to provide M. Kemal with gold and weapons²².

Officially 1895 people arrived in Baku, and 1273 of them were communists²³. The Turks had the largest number of delegates at the Congress - 235, Persians - 192, Armenians - 157²⁴.

¹⁷ Kvashankin et al. 1996: 145-146, n. 1.

¹⁸ Mukhanov 2017: 96.

¹⁹ The congress officially finished on September 7, at 10:10 pm. See First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 123.

²⁰ Enver had come to Baku in the same car with G. Zinoviev. See Matonin 2016. 213. Some time later, Enver "was sent on a business trip" to Central Asia to form an anti-British front. However, he joined the local anti-Soviet forces and led the local rebel movement. He was killed on August 4, 1922, during a clash with the Bolshevik Red Army.

²¹ Sahakyan 1991: 4.

²² Kvashankin et al. 1996: 138.

²³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 7.

²⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 6.



Delegates of the Congress of the Peoples of the East, travelling from Moscow to Baku (1920). Center right - Anastas Mikoyan

On August 31, a joint solemn session of the Baku Council of Deputies and Trade Unions of Azerbaijan took place, welcoming those present and sending a special greeting to G. Zinoviev as “the leader of world communism” and K. Radek²⁵, as “the leader of world proletariat”²⁶. B. Kun was also mentioned as “the leader of the Hungarian Communist Revolution”²⁷. Representatives of the Communist parties of England, Germany, France, Italy, Eastern Europe and the United States were also reported to be attending the 1st Congress of the Peoples of the East²⁸. The Soviet leadership tried to present the Congress as an exceptional event, which gave an opportunity to unite the peoples of the East for the first time and guide them to the anti-colonial movement.



Meeting of the delegates of the Congress in Baku

²⁵ In 1919 K. Radek was released from a German prison due to the mediation of Tala'at Pasha. See Tanriverdi 2020: 127.

²⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 7.

²⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 8.

²⁸ It should be noted that during the whole Congress all the speeches ended or were interrupted by applause, “hurrray” calls, and the brass band performed “International”.

The Congress opened on September 1, at 9:40 pm. Those present were greeted by N. Narimanov, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan, and then by G. Zinoviev, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (Comintern). He referred to the revolutionary movement in Russia, emphasizing the role of the workers of Baku in the struggle against Tsarism, and then proceeded to the defeats of the Red Army in the war against Poland²⁹.

G. Zinoviev emphasized the great importance given to the people of Asia and Africa, who, together with the working classes of Europe and America, would take part in the world revolution, and only then the domination of the bourgeoisie all over the world would be put to an end³⁰.



Sultan-Zade (Mikayelyan)



Haykaz Kostanyan

The speeches of the delegates of the Congress were translated into Russian, English, German, Persian, Turkish and other languages³¹. By the way, the translator of Turkish (Caucasian Tatar language) was Sultan-Zade, an Armenian, who, for whatever reason, introduced himself as a Caucasian Tatar³². At N. Narimanov's suggestion, the presidency of the

Congress of partisans and non-partisans was elected and Armenia was represented by Haykaz Kostanyan³³.

The opportunity to make the first speech was given to G. Zinoviev, who first of all valued the number of delegates in the Baku Congress, stressing that for the first time in human history it was possible to gather more than two dozen representatives of the East, most of whom had been hostile to one another and had not even met before³⁴.

²⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 11.

³⁰ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 12.

³¹ According to a contemporary, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the delegates were Turkic-speaking or understood Turkic languages. See Fayn 2018: 37.

³² First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 26. Avetis Sultan-Zade (Mikayelyan, 1888-1938) was a Bolshevik, one of the founders of the Persian Communist party, president of the Persian section of the Comintern. He was the author of studies concerning Persia, Editor-in-Chief of the journal "Economičeskoe stroitel'stvo" (1925). He fell victim to Stalin's terror (1938), but was later acquitted.

³³ H. Kostanyan (1898-1938) was a Soviet-Armenian party and state figure, a Bolshevik. He was the People's Commissar for ASSR Labor and Social Security and Internal Affairs (1920-1923), he held party and state positions both in Armenia and in the USSR. He fell victim to Stalin's terror.

³⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 30.



The building of the Mailyan Brothers Theater, where the Congress took place. Now it is Azerbaijani State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre. The architect is Nikolay Bayev, an Armenian

G. Zinoviev addressed the issue of the Republic of Georgia and strongly condemned Noy Zhordania as the main representative of the II International³⁵. He believed that the peasants of Turkey, Persia, India, China, Armenia and other countries were deprived of land, but with the help of workers from the West they could rise and carry out an “extensive land revolution”³⁶. G. Zinoviev considered that the above-mentioned countries, including Armenia, “could and should directly start the struggle for Soviet rule”³⁷.

In his speech, G. Zinoviev also referred to Turkey, stating that not in all cases their interests corresponded, but Soviet Russia helped M. Kemal, without forgetting that his movement was not communist. In order to prove he was speaking the truth, G. Zinoviev referred to the transcript report of the first session of the government headed by M. Kemal where he said: “The Caliph and Sultan is sacred and inviolable”³⁸.

G. Zinoviev believed that it was necessary to “ignite a real sacred war against English and French capitalists... “You know ... in what condition Armenia is. Yesterday all the Entente powers wanted to protect it and now no one is protecting it”³⁹. At the end of his speech, he noted that the Comintern addressed the Eastern countries, saying: “Brothers, we call for a holy war against British imperialism” (Loud applause, long shouts of “hurray”. The members of the Congress got up shaking their weapons⁴⁰. The speaker could not continue for a long time. Everyone stood and applauded, shouting “We swear”)⁴¹.

³⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 33.

³⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 39.

³⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 40.

³⁸ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 42.

³⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 45-46.

⁴⁰ English writer H. Wells, who watched the documentary film dedicated to the Congress in Petrograd, was especially shocked by the fact that the delegates raised their guns, swords and daggers and shook them. He came to the following conclusion: “This film should be shown with caution and only to adults. There are moments after which “The Morning Post’s” Mr. Gwin and Mr. Rudyard Kipling will start having nightmares, if only watching that movie will not deprive them of sleep for good”. See Wells 1960: 48: See the film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRFeuHbxYSU>

⁴¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 48.



After the announcement of "Jihad"



Karl Radek

As an example of England's and France's treachery and hypocritical policy K. Radek cited the pro-Armenian appeals and promises of those powers during the war. The French left the Armenians of Marash defenseless⁴² which allowed the troops of M. Kemal to suppress the resistance of the Armenians and kill most of the population. He also drew the delegates' attention to the US policy towards Armenia. K. Radek noted: "Recently America has been acting as a savior of Armenia, urging them to fight against all the peoples among whom they were historically destined to live. From time to time, Americans send ships loaded with bread to Armenia, which, however, cannot save Armenians from hunger and cold"⁴³.

It is evident that the Bolshevik figure resorted to blatant falsification, distorting historical facts. The fact remains that the aid received from the USA in May 1919 saved Armenians from starvation⁴⁴.

K. Radek stated that the Republic of Armenia, which was ruled by the Entente powers, hated Soviet Russia, and in the current situation it was forced to negotiate with

⁴² The retreat of the French army from Marash was conditioned by the necessity to relinquish Cilicia and keep Syria, which was economically advantageous to the French. See History of Armenia 2010: 226.

⁴³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 60.

⁴⁴ Barkhudaryan 2010: 54.

Soviet Russia, realizing that the Entente powers could not help. The English did not take any steps to help Armenians, despite the fact that the British army was stationed in Mesopotamia⁴⁵.



Dadash Khoja oghli Buniatzade
(1888-1938)

Buniatzade⁴⁶ spoke on behalf of the Communist faction, but his speech was partially translated. It is interesting that the part referring to Enver was left out of the translation. After the complaints, the whole text of the speech was presented. Buniatzade categorically denied the 1918 myth about the Ottoman army and Enver's liberating role⁴⁷.

The next speaker was a certain Vahardin Shakir, who tried to justify the Ottoman Empire's involvement in the World War by saying that Turkey was forced to take part in the war "for self-defense"⁴⁸ and pursued no invasive goals.

V. Shakir tried to convince those present that Turkish officers were significantly different from Russian or European army officers, because "a Turkish officer is a real proletariat. He was not brought up in the spirit with which the officers in Europe and Russia were brought up"⁴⁹. According to the delegate, during the World War Turkey did not mean to occupy new territories, but wanted to create buffer zones from Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan between itself and Russia⁵⁰.

Haydarkhanov, representing the communist faction at the Congress, stated that he disagreed with and did not accept V. Shakir's assertion that during the war Turkey had defended itself, had not been an instrument of German imperialism and had had no invasive aspirations⁵¹.

G. Zinoviev, the chairman of the session, stated that the partisan and non-partisan factions had agreed to organize 4 sections on agricultural, national-and-colonial, Soviet construction and organizational issues. It was planned to send one person out of every 20 delegates into those sections. As a result, each section would include 90 people⁵². At the same time, it was informed that there would be no session the next day, as it was planned to hold a parade.

At the September 4 session, Narbutabekov, representing Turkestan, especially appreciated V. Lenin's and I. Stalin's speech addressed to the Muslims of Russia and

⁴⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 60-61.

⁴⁶ Dadash Khoja oghli Buniatzade (1888-1938), an Azerbaijani state and political figure, a Bolshevik.

⁴⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 76.

⁴⁸ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 77.

⁴⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 78.

⁵⁰ Idem.

⁵¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 80.

⁵² Idem.

the East on November 20, 1917, in which they said that the agreement about Turkey's separation "and the seizure of Armenia from Turkey has been torn and destroyed, and that Constantinople must remain in the hands of the Muslims"⁵³. In fact, he not only welcomed, but also reaffirmed the decision of the Bolshevik leadership, for whom the Armenian question no longer existed.

The next speaker was Kumik⁵⁴ J. Korkmasov⁵⁵, who regretted not seeing among those present Enver Pasha, who "organized a counter-revolution to overthrow the Soviet rule"⁵⁶. The delegate strongly criticized the Young Turks Yusuf Izet and Nuri Pasha's anti-national activities in Dagestan in October 1918, with mass violence committed⁵⁷.

G. Zinoviev offered to limit speeches, announcing that translations would be only in Russian, Turkish-Azerbaijani and Persian⁵⁸. He said he wanted to read the written statements of "prominent Turkish politicians in Baku who are not members of our Congress"⁵⁹ – Enver Pasha and Ibrahim Tali, a representative of the Turkish government of Anatolia⁶⁰.



Jelal-ad-Din Korkmasov
(1877-1937)



Enver pasha (at the center), Baku, September, 1920

⁵³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 90-91.

⁵⁴ The Kumiks are the second largest Turkic-speaking Sunni people in the Caucasus after the Azerbaijanis.

⁵⁵ Korkmasov Jelal-ad-Din (1877-1937) studied at the universities of Moscow and Sorbonne. In 1909-1910 he published the weekly newspaper "İstanbul News" with his own funds in Constantinople. He was a Soviet state and political figure, a diplomat, Bolshevik, founder of the Republic of Dagestan. He fell victim to Stalin's terror.

⁵⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 94.

⁵⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 95.

⁵⁸ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 99.

⁵⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 108.

⁶⁰ He refers to the government of Ankara headed by M. Kemal.

Enver's⁶¹ statement was full of the terms “imperialism”, “world imperialism”, “working classes”, “workers”, “revolution”, “international”, the meaning of which he had no idea of at all. He declared that they were the devoted and true allies of the Comintern⁶². By distorting the facts, he tried to prove that the Ottoman Empire went to war to prevent the Entente powers from “suffocating and destroying”⁶³ them, as Germany had agreed to defend them. At the same time, he accused the former ally of using the Turks for their occupation plans⁶⁴. According to Enver's statement, when Soviet Russia found itself in a blockade between the Whites and the Entente Powers, the Ottoman government decided to work together against a common enemy and to “become Russia's friend”⁶⁵.



D. Moore. Poster. “Comrades Muslims! Under the green flag of the Prophet, you went to conquer your steppes, your villages. The enemies of the people took away your native fields. Today, under the red flag of the Workers and Peasants Revolution, under the star of the army of all the oppressed and working people, gather from the east and west, from the north and south. Saddle up, comrades! Join the regiments of Vsevoluch!”

Enver sought to prove that the Ottoman Empire had been an ally of the Russian working class in the overthrow of the monarchy in Russia, when it closed the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits

for navigation. “Thus, we have supported the opening of a new way for saving the world. From the point of view of the oppressed, I consider it a victory”⁶⁶.

As historian H. Avetisyan mentioned: “Enver's words about the right of the peoples living in Turkey to self-determination, as if they had equal rights, sounded blasphemous”⁶⁷.

After Enver⁶⁸, the statement of Ibrahim Tali, the representative of the Ankara government was read out. He, like the previous one, condemned global imperialism,

⁶¹ According to the memoirs of S. Aralov, Soviet Plenipotentiary Representative in Turkey, Enver wanted to organize an Islamic army; and to conceal his real goals he presented himself at the Congress as a supporter of communism. See Aralov 1960: 22.

⁶² First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 108.

⁶³ Idem.

⁶⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 109.

⁶⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 110.

⁶⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 110.

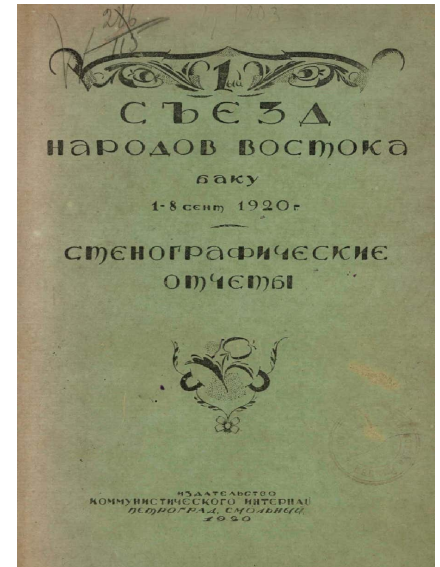
⁶⁷ Avetisyan 1987: 30.

which sought to take Turkey's "vital waterways"⁶⁹. I. Tali was trying to convince that Turkey (Turkish peasant was meant) had taken up arms solely for the purpose of protecting its national borders and "its productive forces"⁷⁰.

Continuing to falsify the facts, I. Tali stated that they were threatened by two accomplices of Western capitalism, namely the Republic of Armenia and Greece. And in such a "grave" situation, the Anatolian "revolutionaries" turned to the "red revolution rising like the dawn in the East"⁷¹. M. Kemal's representative tried to assure the Congress that they sincerely accepted the hand of friendship extended by Soviet Russia⁷².

G. Zinoviev, speaking on behalf of the presidency of the Congress, proposed to adopt a resolution on Enver's and Tali's speeches. B. Kun took the floor for this and the resolution he read out hailed the "revolutionary" struggle in Turkey, but noted that it was directed against foreigners, did not protect Turkish workers and peasants from exploitation. At the same time, it called to exercise caution towards those leaders of the movement, who had previously led Turkish workers and peasants to the death⁷³.

G. Zinoviev's proposal to put the resolution to the vote caused some noise in the assembly hall. Some delegates demanded that they be given the floor, but the chairman insisted on voting on the resolution that had unanimously been approved by the presidency without discussion⁷⁴. It is self-evident that G. Zinoviev took advantage of the noise and mess in the assembly hall and put the resolution to the vote, which was accepted with applause⁷⁵.



The cover page of the transcript report of the Congress

⁶⁸ On August 10, 1921, Enver arrived in Batumi. He wanted to secretly cross to Turkey in order to start the struggle against M. Kemal. Under various pretexts Soviet authorities prevented him from carrying out his intention. At that time, the Soviet leadership was finally oriented towards M. Kemal. See Vasilev 2018: 67.

⁶⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 112.

⁷⁰ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 113.

⁷¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 115.

⁷² First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 116.

⁷³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 117.

⁷⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 118.

⁷⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 118.



John Reed (1887-1920)

The transcript of the conference separately presents the speech of the US representative John Reed. It seemed that J. Reed was supposed to focus entirely on the US occupation policy in Mexico, Cuba and other Latin American countries, racial issues, but again the Armenians and Armenia became the center of discussion. He reported that the Middle East and particularly Armenia were the center of attention of American capitalists, and the wealthy Americans had raised millions of dollars to help Armenia⁷⁶. J. Reed believed that rich Americans, on the one hand, helped the suffering Armenian people, and on the other hand, robbed their own and neighboring peoples, giving some of that robbed money to help the hungry people of Armenia. As an example, he referred to wealthy K. Dodge who published articles about how Turks had

driven Armenians to deserts but at the same time he had mines where the workers' protests were brutally suppressed, and they were driven to the desert like the Armenians⁷⁷. According to J. Reed, American capitalists helped Armenia because there were rich mines and cheap labor there which would be exploited by wealthy Americans⁷⁸.



The presidency of the Congress

⁷⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 122.

⁷⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 123.

⁷⁸ Idem.

We do not consider such a comparison appropriate. Probably the keynote speakers had been instructed to mention Armenia and Armenians from now and then in order to turn the public opinion against them and to ideologically secure Kemalist Turkey's attack on Armenia and prepare for its sovietization.

The next, fifth session started on September 5, 1920. At the suggestion of the presidency, topics related to national and colonial issues would be discussed, and Pavlovich reported on them⁷⁹. He stated that "Dashnak" Armenia and "Menshevik" Georgia were the "enemies" of the peoples of the East, as European imperialism supported them with weapons and bread so that they would sever ties with revolutionary Russia and separate the Caucasus from "revolutionary" Turkey, Persia and India, adding that the imperialists, in their turn, had provoked Greece to attack Turkey, and Poland - to attack Russia⁸⁰.

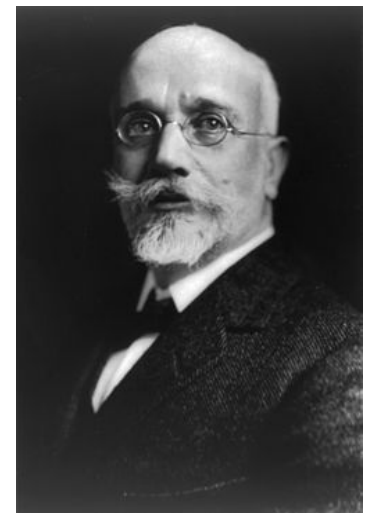
Probably referring to the Armenian massacres in the Ottoman Empire in the 1890s, Pavlovich noted that they were condemned by the II International; and anti-Sultan demonstrations were organized only to allow capitalist governments to interfere in Turkey's internal affairs⁸¹.

He mentioned that Armenians claimed Karabakh (Artsakh) and Zangezur (Syunik), referring to some secret letter by D. Kanayan. In addition, Armenia wanted to become a major Mediterranean power and occupy a territory where Armenians make up 50% of the population. It is self-evident that the Bolshevik figure meant Cilicia. As Pavlovich stated: "Armenian newspapers offer Greece, namely Venizelos (Prime Minister of Greece – R. S.) to occupy Trabzon. It is a real provocation"⁸².

At the end of his speech, the speaker came to the expected conclusion: "in order to end the fratricidal war" between Armenian, Georgian and Turkish workers and peasants "it is necessary to first establish Soviet power in those countries, and then form a federation of the peoples living there"⁸³.



M. Pavlovich (1871-1927)



E. Venizelos (1864-1936)

⁷⁹ Veltman Mikhail who acted under the pseudonym Mikhail Pavlovich (1871-1927), was an Orientalist, revolutionary, Bolshevik. He was one of the organizers of the Baku Congress.

⁸⁰ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 137.

⁸¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 141.

⁸² First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 149.

⁸³ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 151.

At the end of this session, a number of written statements were submitted to the presidency, including the “Declaration of the Representatives of the Armenian Working Class”⁸⁴, but they were not read out, so the chairman proposed to attach them to the minutes of the session as documents.



Béla Kun (1886-1938)

The sixth session of the congress took place on September 6. The chairman announced the agenda – “The issue of Soviet construction in the East”, on which B. Kun reported⁸⁵. At the end of his speech, he referred to Armenia. B. Kun noted that the transition of the democratic Republic of Armenia to a parliamentary system took place “under the slogan of freedom and equality”⁸⁶, which was in fact false.

On September 7, 1920, the last, 7th session of the Congress was convened, chaired by G. Zinoviev. He informed that a permanent executive body would be elected, which would lead the work until the next congress, which was planned to be convened once a year⁸⁷. G. Zinoviev said that the two factions of partisans and non-partisans had discussed the issue of establishing a permanent council of “propaganda and actions” and had decided to call it the “Council of Propaganda of the Peoples of the East”⁸⁸, which would consist of 47 people⁸⁹. At G. Zinoviev’s suggestion, the composition of the council was read out: first the names of the party members, then those of non-partisans. The name of infamous Avis Nurijanyan was mentioned among the former⁹⁰. Despite the large number of Armenian delegates, none of them was given the opportunity to speak.

The chairman could not leave out Armenia, noting that it was a “bourgeois-democratic republic”⁹¹. G. Zinoviev announced: “There is no united Armenia; on the one hand there is the worker-and-peasant Armenia, to which we extend a fraternal hand, and on the other hand there is the cursed, executioner Dashnak, bourgeois Armenia”⁹² (loud applause).

⁸⁴ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 170.

⁸⁵ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 174.

⁸⁶ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 183.

⁸⁷ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 211.

⁸⁸ Idem.

⁸⁹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 212. At the beginning of 1921, “The Communist University of Eastern Workers” was established in Moscow, which was to train national personnel for Eastern, including Soviet countries.

⁹⁰ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 219.

⁹¹ First Congress of the Peoples of the East 1920: 226.

⁹² Idem.



**A monument dedicated to the republic in Takvim Square in Ankara.
To the right of M. Kemal are the statues of the head of the
Soviet delegation K. Voroshilov and Ambassador S. Aralov.**

Thus, after failing in European countries, Soviet Russia took steps to export the socialist revolution to the East. That goal was pursued by the Congress of the Comintern and the First Congress of the Peoples of the East convened in Baku. The Republic of Armenia was mentioned almost throughout the whole Congress. Most of the delegates described Armenia as a representative and defender of the interests of British and French imperialism in the region. Soviet Russia was ready to make concessions to the Kemalists and the Young Turks for the sake of the world revolution, thus during the whole process of the sessions the RA and its foreign and domestic policy were criticized. By spreading blatant lies some of the delegates tried to distort the real situation and concluded that the salvation of Armenia could only be found in its Sovietization. In fact, the Congress ideologically prepared for the Sovietization of Armenia, which took place due to the Kemalist attack on September 23, 1920.

It should be noted that Soviet authorities failed to get the support of Muslims. Moreover, while in Central Asia Enver provoked a mass anti-Soviet nationwide armed struggle - Jihad, which lasted until the 1930s.

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Translated from the Armenian by Syuzanna Chraghyan

THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SOUTH RUSSIAN VOLUNTEER ARMY, BRITISH AND AZERI INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IN TRANSCAUCASIA IN 1918-1920

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Abstract

The breakthrough processes that took place in Russia led to the collapse and split of the Russian Empire, and as a result of that, the unpredictable development of historical and political processes led to the emergence of independent national statehoods in Transcaucasia. In each of them, ambiguous and contradictory functions of state system formation occurred, including, first of all, the processes of creation of armed forces and intelligence services, for which there were neither sufficient human resources, nor experience and material-and-financial means. Similar processes took place throughout the whole territory of the former Russian Empire. The first Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) appeared on the crossroads of different intelligence services (the Russian Volunteer army, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey).

Keywords: First Republic of Armenia, General Denikin, Azerbaijan, Georgia, intelligence service

There has been no reference to this topic in historiography at all. That is why we set the aim of revealing to some extent the military and political relations between the South Russian Volunteer Army led by General A. Denikin and the Republic of Armenia in the domain of intelligence and political conflict with Azerbaijan in 1918-1920, in particular to study the conflict of intelligence services around Transcaucasia and in Armenia, based on very important archival facts and other documents.

As a result of the Battle of Sardarapat against the Turks in May 1918, the Armenian people re-established their statehood, but found themselves at the center of geopolitical events and border conflicts and territorial disputes between Azerbaijan, Georgia and particularly Turkey. The intelligence services of the South Russian Volunteer Army led by General A. Denikin were carrying out activities in this regard and the Republic of Armenia was not neglected, since Armenia was given a prominent place in the programs of the restoration of the Russian Empire. As a result, the Republic of Armenia, its young, newly emerging intelligence agencies appeared at the center of an unyielding conflict.

The breakthrough processes that took place in Russia led to the collapse and split of the Russian Empire, and as a result of that, the unpredictable development of historical and political processes led to the emergence of independent national

statehoods in Transcaucasia. In each of them, ambiguous and contradictory functions of state system formation occurred, including, first of all, the processes of creation of armed forces and intelligence services, for which there were neither sufficient human resources, nor experience and material-and-financial means. Similar processes took place throughout the whole territory of the former Russian Empire.

Leaving the national regions, however, neither the Red Guards, nor especially the White South of Russia reconciled with the situation, and they took steps to restore the former positions, the integrity of a united Russia. In this respect the newly established Transcaucasian republics and the North Caucasus became the center of their attention. The attention of the special services formed by the command of the Russian White Guard's armed forces was focused on these very issues, and the various newly emerging Transcaucasian states had their own attitude towards these realities.

Taking advantage of the passive position of the British in the region, Azerbaijan and Georgia accepted White Russia from the position of almost open hostility or so-called hostile neutrality. They were alarmed by the imperial ambitions of Volunteer Russia; sometimes they even were ready to form an alliance with the Bolsheviks with certain reservations. However, their desires were moderated by the British who practically did not need a united and powerful Russia in any way. In this situation, the Republic of Armenia, proceeding from its geopolitical interests, showed readiness to cooperate not only with the south of Russia and other new state formations, but also did not neglect or remove from the agenda the issue of having relations with the Red Russia.

Taking all this into consideration, the South Russian Volunteer Army, which had become an influential military and political force thanks to Denikin, turned the attention of its newly forming special services to those republics, trying to be aware of the events taking place there and thus influence them as much as possible, using its officers in the national armies. They also wanted to take out the military property left over from the old army, which those republics needed as well, because they simply did not have their own. This is what prompted the activation of the intelligence services of the Volunteer Army in Transcaucasia and in the Caucasus in general.

In 1918-1920 the Republic of Armenia maintained relatively stable military and political relations with various Russian state formations. The intelligence services of those republics as a whole were in the embryonic stage, striving to become professional, involving the special services of both the White Guards and Britain and others.

Due to the victory in the First World War, from the end of 1918 till the middle of 1919 the British military representation and those of other countries played a decisive role in the military and political life of the Transcaucasian republics with their presence, significantly influencing solutions of regional significance and in particular, delimitation issues. The English played a negative role in the events of the beginning of 1918 and later, keeping under their control the incomparably strategically more important Baku, where allied police was established, as well as the no less important Tbilisi and

Yerevan, considered secondary, without reckoning with the Azerbaijani, Georgian or Armenian government, which was considered an ally. They made openly gainful decisions for British interests, some Azerbaijani-related details of which were reviewed by Volkhonsky and Mukhanov¹. At the same time, after the forced departure from Transcaucasia, a part of the Russian military remained in those republics, where they were much needed and in fact, some of them served those countries honestly and professionally. Nonetheless, in the new conditions, in order to restore its lost positions, the Russian Empire, in this case Voluntary Russia placed much importance on the intelligence and political work in the Caucasus and in Transcaucasian republics.

In this respect, the position of White Russia contributed to the stabilization of the Republic of Armenia at certain moments. The disruption of the position of Volunteer Russia at that historic moment could destabilize the situation in the Caucasus even more and contribute to the strengthening of the position of Musavat Azerbaijan and Menshevik Georgia in conditions of alienation of Russia itself; especially since the British policy was not particularly pro-Armenian. The Republic of Armenia was intently watching the events in the North Caucasus, where the Azerbaijani authorities were looking for support in the fight against the supporters of Denikin. The latter in their turn regarded Azerbaijan as a somewhat non-friendly force. Naturally, the intelligence services of the armed forces of South Russia noticed Azerbaijan's dangerous activation in the North Caucasus and tried to neutralize it, preventing the spread of separatist and anti-Russian sentiments among the population. For Armenia it was important also because significant forces of Armenian officers were concentrated in the North Caucasus, particularly the Armenians of the Black Sea coast, some of whom, in the form of armed detachments, supported the Volunteer Army in the fight against the Georgians. The latter changed their position only after Denikin's defeat and ended their participation in the battles fought by the Volunteers. Anyway, South Russia was of strategic importance to the Republic of Armenia. From there, although with difficulty, weapons, ammunition and food were procured for the Armenian army. A. Denikin openly supported the supply, also contributing to the transportation of Armenian troops to the Republic of Armenia through transit routes of Georgia, with the government of Georgia making significant obstacles for this. In this respect, the Georgian-Azerbaijani military and political alliance of June 16 and September 1919 was alarming, since the Georgian-Azerbaijani rapprochement was directed against Denikin and his ally, the Republic of Armenia². And Azerbaijan did not hesitate and even brought its troops closer to the borders of Dagestan. In Armenia this was received with alarm. Armenia did not even think about joining the Georgian-Azerbaijani alliance, in spite of the concerns to remain completely isolated in the region³.

¹ See Volkhonsky, Mukhanov 2007: 151–156.

² See Petrosyan 2011: 323.

³ It should be noted that the Georgian-Azerbaijani alliance was quite stable and it was completed by the Turkish-Azerbaijani secret agreement signed on April 15, 1920. The document was obtained by the RA Intelligence service and was published in N.20 summary of July 6, 1920 (signed by Hovhannes Khan-Kotursky, Chief of the Intelligence and

The intelligence of the Volunteer Army, which had its representation in the Republic of Armenia in the person of Colonel M. Zinkevich, who was particularly friendly towards the Republic of Armenia, naturally noticed Azerbaijan's activation. The latter took advantage of the alliance with Turkey and the passive position of the British which needed neither a strong White Russia nor, clearly, Red Russia. Highly covert destructive espionage activities were carried out throughout Russia.

The steps aimed at alienation from Russia became targeted, in response to which Volunteer Russia took appropriate countermeasures. The intelligence services of the Volunteer Army showed some aspiration to prevent anti-Denikin steps and actions. For that purpose real intelligence and political actions were taken to operatively be informed about the moods of the republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as well and even to have their network of agents in the armed forces, other law enforcement institutions and state establishments of those countries.

At that moment, the British military and political representation was also trying to secure its presence in the region and entered into an ambiguous game. On the one hand, as mentioned by the advisor of the RA diplomatic mission in Tbilisi, prince M. Tumanyan "Not only did the British not support the agents of the Volunteer Army, but also forbade others"⁴ to support them. On the other hand, in order to fight against Soviet Russia, which generally fitted into the goals of the British Empire, they wanted to pit the Bolshevik Russia, created by German emperor's agent V. I. Lenin against the South and generally White Guard Russia, to impair both sides, and as a result to have a torn up, dismembered Russia with a lot of small state formations, which would no longer pose a threat to the British Empire and which would be deprived of a global role. Denikin's representatives were allowed to recruit personnel in Batumi to replenish the Army and create an agency⁵, which, however, did not become a reality due to the ambiguous and multi-layered policy of the British. Azerbaijan, as well as Georgia and the Republic of Armenia, became the scene of conflicting special services, where the vital interests of many countries clashed. And the Republic of Armenia was in the most difficult situation of all.

The fact that the command of Denikin's Volunteer Army had such intentions is evidenced by the fact that on November 1918 the so-called "Special Consultation" sent Colonel G. Leslie with a mission to Yerevan. He and other high-ranking officers started to serve in the General Staff of the Armenian army and in the secret Russian intelligence group, aiming to establish strong ties between the RA and the Volunteer Army, making the Armenian republic their stronghold in the fight against Bolshevism.

Counterintelligence Department of the General Staff of the Republic of Armenia, Lieutenant of the Admiralty, and his assistant Mikayel Dodokhyan). This was referred to by historian VI. Ghazakhetsyan as well. See Virabyan 2015: 568-575, See also Ghazakhecyan, 1-3 p. See <http://www.academhistory.am/imagesdownloadfiles/KAZACHECYAN%20rus.pdf> ghazakhec.

⁴ See Denikin 2005: 209.

⁵ Idem.

They also sought to make it their ally in the plans to occupy Georgia, etc.; the events and developments around the 1918 Georgian-Armenian war served as an occasion for that. However, the Armenian side did not take the bait, especially since the RA intelligence services and the Ministry of Internal Affairs had considerable insights into the secret aspects of the activities of Denikin's officers⁶.

This was more evidently demonstrated in the events that took place in the Kars province. The fact that the Armenian government was relatively well informed about the events taking place in the Kars province (June-July 1919), including Colonel G. D. Leslie's⁷ (representing Denikin's Volunteer Army) espionage and political activities in connection with strengthening Russian Volunteer Army's influence in the region, indeed clearly testifies to the satisfactory activity of the General Staff's intelligence and counterintelligence division and its relevant unit on the ground, even though Leslie acted in a disguised manner and as a military spy kept the rules of secrecy. It was clear to the Armenian side that on the recommendation of the so-called "Special Consultation" attached to the Volunteer Army, Leslie, the military and political representative of the "Special Consultation" in the Armenian government, was negotiating with Muslim representatives and the command of the Turkish 12th Army in Kars. The goal was that after the Turks left, the region should be handed over to the Russians. The Armenian side had facts that Leslie was interested in the relations between the Armenians, the British and the Russians⁸. We believe this should not be taken too seriously, because it was obvious that Bolshevik Russia, like the Volunteer Army, Wrangel and all together were not able to deal with such issues at that time. However, Colonel Leslie's meeting with "Shura" and the Turkish command in mid-January, 1919, of which the RA military authorities, the government and the intelligence bodies were informed as well, aroused the dissatisfaction of Armenian social and political circles. In this connection, on January 21, in a letter to Colonel Leslie, S. Tigranyan demanded an explanation concerning the negotiations with C. Temperley, English Governor of Kars, whether there was an intention to "establish Muslim and not Armenian governance headed by the Russian governor"⁹. On January 22, Leslie responded by saying: "I did not have an official conversation about political issues in Kars, however, I advised Colonel C. Temperley, the English military governor that in order to get out of this difficult situation, it is necessary to appoint a Russian governor who would be in direct contact with the Armenian government. There has never been a demand on my side that Muslim governance be established in the province"¹⁰. All this, however, deepened the dissatisfaction with Leslie's activities, and in 1919, in its N10

⁶ See Petrosyan 2005a: 87-88.

⁷ Leslie George [Yuri] Dmitriyev [01.04.1887-02.02.1957] - 01.12.1917 -1920 – Volunteer Army]. See Ganin 2009: 266, 481, 537, 595, 730.

⁸ See Petrosyan 2005a: 156.

⁹ See NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 164, p. 4, 10.

¹⁰ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 164, p. 5, 11.

issue the “Zhoghovurd” newspaper of Yerevan simply wrote: “Colonel Leslie, General Denikin’s representative, has entered into negotiations with English Colonel C. Temperley on his own, he has conducted anti-Armenian propaganda in Yerevan and Echmiatsin and is trying to turn the British against us. His goal is to establish a Russian-Tatar administration in the Kars province”¹¹. Thus, the people’s faction of the RA Parliament demanded the presidency of the RA Council ask the Foreign and Military ministers whether they knew that “Colonel Leslie, the representative of the Volunteer Army was totally agitating against the Armenian people and the Republic of Armenia and whether it was true that Col. Leslie received 1000 rubles a month from the Military Ministry, and if so, from what money”¹². Naturally, the February 11, 1919 session of the RA Parliament addressed the issue and expressed its attitude, bringing facts, trying to find out who Leslie was, who he represented, what position he held¹³, but many issues were not made public. It was obvious that the RA government, the military department and the relevant structures, including the intelligence service, were trying to keep secret ties with other non-Soviet state and other formations in South Russia and this could give rise to various parliamentary and political speculations and misunderstandings. Based on this, the heads of the RA Foreign and Military Ministries assured that the Colonel of the Volunteer Army had not abused his position and had not carried out any anti-Armenian activity. Hence, the fact of cooperation between the special services of the two sides is obvious, but it is another matter to find out by what negligence this important information spread to the press and into the sphere of parliamentary gossip, inflaming passions and creating new complexes around Armenia which was undergoing a process of establishment.

However, there was a sense of uncertainty. Some representatives of the RA Intelligence Service, some high-ranking commanding officers and party-and-political circles were more cautious in giving preference to this or that country. There were even vague doubts as to who was really stronger - Bolshevik Russia, Kolchak or Denikin (which became obvious during the cold reception given to Colonel Leslie sent to Yerevan by the Volunteer Army in mid-1919)¹⁴, the British, the Americans or other forces. In the secret report from Tbilisi on January 20, 1919 addressed to S. Tigranyan, General G. Ghorghanyan warned about it: “Our foreign policy must be extremely cautious. We cannot, should not pursue an exclusively pro-British or pro-Russian policy. We had linked our destiny with the Entente countries since the very beginning of the war and did not give it up until the last day. We must now make it clear to everyone that we are waiting for a solution to our problems not from England, France, Russia or the United States separately, but from the Entente countries. Our fate must be decided by the Allies’ Conference in Paris. Until that decision is made, it would be wrong to link our

¹¹ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 164, p. 6, 14.

¹² NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 164, p. 17.

¹³ NAA, f. 198, l. 1, f. 15, p. 133.

¹⁴ See Petrosyan 2005a: 88.

welfare with this or that Entente country, as it is impossible to predict the position of that country in the future conference. We may have temporary success, but we may lose a lot”¹⁵. However, those hopes later turned out to be baseless, leading to the inevitable isolation of the Republic of Armenia and its inevitable decline.

A. Manukyan’s article and the comprehensive study of the documents of the October 20, 1927 session of the Transcaucasian Territorial Control Committee of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party reveal that one of the co-authors of the idea of establishing the General Staff in the Armenian Army was Colonel Mikhail Zinkevich, a staff officer of the Russian army (by the way, in some documents he is referred to not as a colonel, but as a general)¹⁶. He intended to create an autonomous structure of Denikin’s Volunteer Army in order to carry out the instructions and direct orders of the top leadership of that army at any time (he was originally the unofficial representative of that army). It is also necessary to refer to G. Petrosyan’s point of view about a not fully disclosed page of M. Zinkevich’s activity. According to a scientifically substantiated point of view, to prove which G. Petrosyan refers to interesting, practically reliable archival and other facts, Colonel M. Zinkevich, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armenian Army, with the active support of the Russian National Council of Yerevan, set up a secret intelligence group in Yerevan with his agents. The group was in direct contact with the “Special Consultation”¹⁷ attached to the Volunteer Army and with the Russian National Council for Transcaucasia in Tbilisi. This group provided regular information to the Volunteer Army and the “Special Consultation” attached to it about the Armenian Army, about various issues of the domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia, and the policy of Great Britain in Transcaucasia. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic had concrete facts about the existence and activity of the Russian intelligence group. However, the Armenian government showed restraint, firstly because on the one hand it did not pose a threat to the country’s independence and on the other hand in order not to disrupt the Armenian-Russian relations that were in the process of formation. The role of Denikin’s representation was to recruit Russian army staff officers living and operating in Armenia, deploy them to other various structures of the Armenian army and thus use them to solve far-reaching strategic problems, such as perhaps establishing the power of Denikin in the Republic of Armenia and jointly fighting the threat of Bolshevism. M. Zinkevich was one of the people given relevant tasks. It should also be noted that Zinkevich was one of the immediate witnesses of the involuntary birth of the First Republic of Armenia and one of the co-authors of the active creators and organizers of the power structures of the new state (with the above reservations).

¹⁵ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 193, part I, p. 35- 36.

¹⁶ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 412, p. 35, see also Hovhannisian 1982: 470, 474, 516 -517, 524.

¹⁷ It played the role of a government. See Petrosyan 2005a: 15, 17, 22; Petrosyan 2005b: 20, 80, 83-84, 132, 137, 138-139, 189; Petrosyan 2011: 90, 72-101, etc.

According to the order of the Military Minister dated April 28, 1919, M. Zinkevich, the head of the headquarters of the Armenian division was appointed acting Chief of General Staff¹⁸. Already on August 28, 1919 (3703/oc), on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief of the RA Military Ministry a telegram was received from Lieutenant General Lukomsky¹⁹ from Rostov. It said that Colonel M. Zinkevich was sent with a mission to Armenia as a military representative of the Commander-in-Chief of the South Russian Armed Forces under the Government of the Republic of Armenia. This is also referred to by the RA diplomatic representative in Tbilisi in his September 24, 1919 (N 3080) telegram addressed to the Military Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. And on October 3, 1919 (N 3219) he already recorded the fact that the operation was in process and that Zinkevich had arrived²⁰. On September 27, 1919, hearing Prime Minister Al. Khatisyan's report on the appointment of Colonel Zinkevich as the RA Military Representative in the Volunteer Army, the session of the Council of Ministers gave its agreement²¹. For his skilful activity Zinkevich was repeatedly awarded letters of gratitude by the government for his impeccable performance, especially during his tenure as Chief of General Staff, when he was in close cooperation with RA Military Minister Major General Hakhverdyan²². After the multifaceted military and reconnaissance activity in Armenia, since the beginning of 1920 Zinkevich started beneficial activity in the structures of the South Russian Volunteer Army, often for the benefit of the Republic of Armenia. In a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated June 27, 1920 (N° 5205), the Head of the Office of the Council of Ministers informed that in the June 25, 1920 session the Council of Ministers decided to appoint Colonel M. Zinkevich as its representative in South Russia²³. And in the letter dated June 29, 1920 (N° 3922), Hakob Ter-Hakobyan, the Secretary General of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed Zinkevich that the RA Government had recognized him as the representative of the South Russian Government attached to the Government of Armenia²⁴. And in his official letter to the government dated June 14, 1920 (N° 3642) RA Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Ohanjanyan stated that Zinkevich's mission ceased to function with the victorious advancement of the Bolsheviks, considering that by negotiating with the Bolsheviks the Armenian government had not contradicted itself, that they had received and would receive the representatives of different divided parts of Russia, especially since both P. Wrangel and Denikin supported Armenia by giving ammunition and food and promising support in the future as well²⁵. In this new position

¹⁸ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 131, p. 24.

¹⁹ Alexander Sergey Lukomsky [10.07.1868-25.02.1939]- from November 24, 1917 to 1920 he was in the Volunteer Army. He died in exile. See Ganin 2009: 269,406, 428, 535-536, 584.

²⁰ NAA, f. 275, l. 5, f. 131, p. 1-3.

²¹ NAA, f. 199, l. 1, f. 100 (85), p. 215.

²² NAA, f. 204, l. 1, f. 91, p. 65, etc.

²³ NAA, f. 200, l. 1, f. 412, p. 33.

²⁴ NAA, p. 33-34.

²⁵ NAA, f. 199, l. 1, f. 111, part II, p. 176.

Zinkevich was trying to be useful to the Republic of Armenia. In his letter back on April 11, 1920 (N° 2313) addressed to Colonel Zinkevich Al. Khatisyan informed that according to the information obtained by them, as well judging from the conversation of M. Harutyunyan, the diplomatic representative of Armenia with General D. P. Dratsenko²⁶, it became clear that Major General D. P. Dratsenko, the representative of the Commander-in-Chief of the Volunteer Army had voluntarily handed over to the Azerbaijani government in Baku more than 100 cannons, 200 machine guns, 40,000 three-barrel rifles, a huge number of land mines and bullets, 2 armored vehicles, a warship, etc., as well as other military engineering equipment. Khatisyan believed that the military property should either have been given a different purpose or should have been sunk in the sea. He considered any other solution as hostile act against Armenia and strongly protested against it, emphasizing that it was especially unacceptable because Armenia's attitude towards Russia had always been friendly²⁷. It was obvious that the Armenian side was expecting real support, an explanation for what had happened from Colonel Zinkevich, as an old friend. In his reply letter to the RA minister-president dated April 20, 1920 (N° 2219) Colonel Zinkevich emphasized that the fact of handing over weapons and equipment to Azerbaijan was true, although he had no direct evidence for that. However, he did not deny that he could only have a pronounced negative attitude towards it and that those guilty would be punished. Zinkevich emphasized that his attitude towards Azerbaijan was unchanged, adding that it was formed after the events of 1917. At the same time he explained his reasons for leaving the RA. At the end of his message Zinkevich emphasized that he was very happy to be able to continue his work for Armenia tested through hardships, and to strengthen the friendly ties between Armenian and Russian peoples. He added that at that time he was participating in the work of providing assistance to Armenian refugees organized by the Armenian government²⁸.

The RA intelligence apparatus studied the military and political situation in Armenia, and on the other hand, through its approved residents, representative-agents it provided information at the level of the Transcaucasian republics on the situation and military sentiments in Denikin's Volunteer Army and in particular in the Red Army. That intelligence unit also conducted intelligence operations against Turkey and Iran regarding the condition of the Turkish army, its location, number, plans, and other regional geopolitical issues. By the way, it should especially be noted that the initial stage of the intelligence and counter-intelligence activities of the Republic of Armenia is characterized by the dominance of the White Guard Volunteer Army. And it was so tangible and significant that later the Armenian government even took steps to isolate

²⁶ Dani[i]l Pavel Dratsenko [08.12.1876 - 1945] - General of the Russian Army, during 1915-1918 he was in Transcaucasia; from November 15, 1918 till 1920 he had close relations with the Volunteer Army, being a representative of its high-ranking officer staff. See Ganin 2009: 213, 458, 587, 725.

²⁷ NAA f. 200, l.1, f. 412, p. 22.

²⁸ NAA f. 200, l.1, f. 412, p. 23.

White Guard officers from their direct role in intelligence activities, which they deliberately carried out mainly in the interests of Denikin's Volunteer Army. In connection with this latest matter the government appointed Captain Vahagn Galust Muradyan head of the intelligence department and deputy chief of the General Staff, instructing him to possibly neutralize this tendency of the White Guards. Thus, Denikin's intelligence services covered not only the North Caucasus and its adjoining territories, but also each of the Transcaucasian republics.

According to A. V. Ganin, who referred to the conflict between the White Guard intelligence and the Azerbaijani intelligence and the role of Armenians in it, as well as to the activities of the British special services in Azerbaijan in the first half of 1919, Armenia was one of the major stages of the conflict between the intelligence services of different countries, and the forces led by Denikin sought to revive the Russian Empire. This did not fit into the British plans, which carried out divisive intelligence and political work, guided by the principle "Divide and rule". They demonstrated their impartial position, but did everything possible to prevent Russia from being reborn, to make it remain in a collapsed state and be expelled from the Transcaucasian region. Currently similar processes take place as well and this harms the vital and security interests of the Republic of Armenia. Thus, according to A. Ganin, White Guard scout Captain A. S. Chernishev pursued exactly those goals²⁹. Around March 20, 1919, he penetrated into Azerbaijan and was able to infiltrate into the newly-opened Investigative and intelligence political department of Baku, which had a staff of 10 people³⁰. The department also recruited A. A. Okoyev or Akayev, Hakobyants, of Armenian origin, known to the Armenian intelligence³¹. Since the department's activities included the detection and declassification of Bolsheviks, counter-revolutionaries and particularly officers of the Volunteer Army, as well as the discovery of their counterintelligence, naturally, it was

²⁹ According to A. Ganin, Captain *Alexander Sergey Chernishev*, born in 1886, had been a member of the General Staff since March 23, 1918 and then was sent to serve in the armed forces of South Russia. He was a brave combat officer who had taken part in the battles of the Caucasian front and the capture of Erzurum as a member of the 5th Caucasian Rifle Regiment and was severely wounded. As of May 1918 he was at the disposal of the headquarters of the Caucasian Front. By the order of the Transcaucasian government, from May 10, 1918 he was transferred to the General Staff. From 1919 he started serving in the armed forces of South Russia. His future fate is unknown. His political views are echoed in the draft text he wrote on the aims of the "Russian Order of Partisans", in which he set himself the task of uniting all the spiritual and physical forces for an active struggle for the revival of United Russia based on federative principles. See Ganin 2009: 375; Ganin 2016: 100, 108. See

<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/razvedchiki-epohi-diletantov>:

http://istmat.info/files/uploads/58797/azerb_1919.pdf 08.08.2021:

³⁰ Ganin 2016: 98-100.

³¹ Ganin 2016: 98-100; see also NAA, f. 275, l. 5, f. 75, p. 35, f. 26, p. 203, f. 184, p. 52, f. 75, p. 35, f. 26, p. 203, f. 204, l. 1, f. 131, p. 24, f. 275, l. 5: During those days RA resident in Baku was *Arshak Sargisyan* (Arshak Sargisov), a member of the diplomatic mission, was deported from Baku for allegedly destructive intelligence activities, when *Khan-Tekinsky* was the Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan; and this was reported to Foreign Minister *Mustafa Vekilov* on February 20, 1920. See Nazim 2018: 80, 99, 110, 158 and etc.

important for the White Guards to have an agent in such a structure in Azerbaijan. It should also be mentioned that according to Ganin, Captain Chernishev expected to influence the activities of the department and obtain valuable information for the Volunteer Army³². According to Ganin, Chernishev was a bearer of imperial ideas and did not admit the existence of independent Transcaucasian states outside the united Russia, only allowing for the possibility of broad autonomy. Thus, he headed the White Guards intelligence network in Azerbaijan, but in April 1919 his activities ended with arrest³³.

However, during this time, in connection with the appointment of the representative of Kuban in Azerbaijan, Chernishev was trying to find out who would be the representative of Kuban in Azerbaijan, which was important in connection with the network of agents. It should be added that according to Ganin, the armed forces of the South did not have a diplomatic representative in Azerbaijan at that time. This complicated the work of the intelligence service, preventing them from using the diplomatic shelter and carrying out activities³⁴, provided for by the principles of organizing the intelligence service under the General Staff of the Caucasus Army. These principles should have been the base for the establishment of the intelligence service of the Volunteer army in the Caucasian region and for the organization of its further activities, a similar variant of which was realized in the Republic of Armenia³⁵. Ganin emphasized that General L. F. Bicherakhov's intelligence unit was referred to. Its principles became a basis for Chernishev in creating an agent network, which included the acquisition of information about the local population, gathering the necessary information about the enemies and opponents of the revival of united Russia - the Bolsheviks, separatists, nationalists, as well as collecting data about the neighboring nations and states. All this had to be realized through a network of agents and spies and by questioning the arriving people, by army intelligence, interrogation of prisoners, as well as through information obtained from refugees, using air intelligence as well. In general, the Command of the Volunteer Army planned to organize its reconnaissance as operatively as possible in Tersk province, Dagestan, Astrakhan region, Stavropol, in the Governorate of Elizavetpol, Tbilisi, Yerevan, on the border with Persia and in the Apsheron Peninsula where the main body of the intelligence service was located. Naturally, the Armenians and the Armenian intelligence service did not stay away from this process, as a result of which certain relations were established between the two sides. Thus, according to A. Ganin, three reconnaissance groups were formed: Petrovsky, Tbilisi and Apsheron: this was thoroughly instructed and put on a real basis³⁶.

³² Ganin 2016: 100-101, 107.

³³ Ganin 2016: 101.

³⁴ Ganin 2016: 107.

³⁵ See in detail Virabyan 2015.

³⁶ Ganin 2016: 107-108.

From the archival and other materials circulated by Ganin it becomes clear that through yesaul Samedbek Yusupov who was directly subject to the Chief of General Staff Sulkevich³⁷ (appointed on January 15, 1919)³⁸ Azerbaijani special services and internal affairs bodies managed to track down Captain Chernishev because of the chatty and careless agent Smislova and prevent his reconnaissance activities, arresting him on a former Armenian street. This became the subject of a detailed investigation by the Ganja (Gandzak) district judicial investigator in late April-early May 1919, and the governor of Ganja became involved in this as well.

Shamistun Nazirli, a researcher on the military history of Azerbaijan and a journalist, stated about a secret conversation between Samed Bey Mehmandarov, the Azerbaijani Military Minister and Khosrov Bey Sultanov, governor of Kharabakh, based on the information related to the troops operating on Askeran (Artsakh-Karabakh) and other fronts and on the facts provided by Major General, then Lieutenant General Habib Bey Salimov, the Commander of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic troops in Artsakh as of March 31, 1920, as well as the Chief of the General Staff of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces. The conversation provides important information on the above-mentioned Chernishev and presents Mehmandarov's opinion on the intelligence activities of arrested Smislova: "No more than a week ago, a subversive group led by Smislova was caught in Ganja. And who was among its members? Nelli Fyodorovna Chernisheva, the lover of our General Staff employee; Stanislav Zuber and others. Apparently, our counterintelligence and the security bodies are just asleep. Instead, in Armenia, judging by the facts, the Bolsheviks act differently. They declare with sympathy that the Armenians are under the hostile Muslim blockade by Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey, and that only the Bolsheviks give them guarantees of state independence, in addition to expanding their territory at the expense of Azerbaijan and Turkey"³⁹.

According to them, the disclosure of Chernishev's agent network was facilitated by the financial documents kept by him, which he did not manage to destroy, in particular, his one-month report from February 20 to March 20, and even more precisely - March 24⁴⁰. The documents testified that one of their main tasks was to expose the Bolshevik underground in Azerbaijan and beyond its borders, including the Caspian region,

³⁷ Sulkevich Mammad Bey – Sulkevich Suleyman [Matvey, Massey, Muhabed Bey. 20.07.1865-15.07.1920] was a Lithuanian Tatar, a Muslim. His father had served in the Alexandrov Hussar Regiment, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel. General Mammad Bey Sulkevich himself was born into a noble family in Kemeys, Villen province. From June 25, 1918 till November 18, 1918 he was the head of the so-called Crimean regional government. He was named Matsey Bey upon birth, however, for his activities in the Crimea, the local Tatars named him Suleyman Pasha, and in Azerbaijan he voluntarily adopted the name Mammad Bey. See Shamistan Nazirli 2015: 40-41, 47. From March 19, 1919 till April 1920 he served in the army of Musavat Azerbaijan. He was the Chief of the General Staff of the Azerbaijani army, then he was captured by the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, arrested and detained in the Bailov Prison in Baku, and then executed by shooting.

³⁸ Aslanov, Akhundov, Abdullaeva, Alieva 2018: 51.

³⁹ Shamistan Nazirli 2015: 15, 200.

⁴⁰ Ganin 2016: 105.

cooperating with the British in this matter, also trying to establish contact with Georgia. At the same time, they tried to establish secret contacts with the Georgian military attaché in Baku and the Azerbaijani state officials, attaching importance to parliamentary hearings in the Azerbaijani parliament, significant materials on military and political issues, etc. Without repugnance they resorted to bribery as well, which, according to the Volunteer intelligence, had become so widespread in Azerbaijan that ministers and even the most powerful officials could be bribed with a certain amount of money. They resorted to questioning Armenian refugees as well. The arrest of Chernishev by the Azerbaijani counterintelligence revealed the list of 9 agents he had recruited, indicating the sums paid to them. And so, in addition to Okoyev, the group of agents organized by Chernishev included Aghoyev, Barchikhinyants, Beyer, Igumnov, Orlov, Tsagolov, E. I. Smislova⁴¹, V. A. Chestnokov⁴². One of them - E. I. Smislova drew the attention of the 27-year-old yesaul Samedbek Yusupov (Yusubov), centurion of the 2nd Karabakh Cavalry Regiment. At a hotel she carelessly said that she had been sent to Ganja by General Denikin's army and by the English headquarters to gather information for the English about the Azerbaijani army, the number of Turkish officers in the Azerbaijani military units, as well as information for the Volunteer Army about the number, deployment and discipline of the Azerbaijani army, as well as the location of its arsenal⁴³. Yusupov immediately reported this to the Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General S. A. Sulkevich, from whom he received instructions to watch Smislova. Ultimately, Yusupov's efforts were successful, as Smislova helped him to get to Chernishev, and a seemingly insignificant piece of paper was handed over by Yusupov to the head of the counterintelligence department on March 29, as a result of which Smislova was searched and arrested.

This fact received exceptional attention from the military and political authorities of Azerbaijan and it is evident from the telegram sent by S. S. Mehmandarov from Ganja to Kh. Khasmamedov, member of the Azerbaijani Parliament, Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs on March 29, 1919. It requested that measures be taken immediately to

⁴¹ Ganin 2016: 101. In a letter to the Judicial Chamber of Azerbaijan, on April 25, 1919 the prosecutor of Ganja reported that Elizaveta Ivanovna Smislova, a 22-year-old resident of Penza, noblewoman, checked into hotel "Centralnaya" in Ganja around March 20: she was a fourth-year student at the Petrograd Faculty of History, specialized in Oriental languages at special courses, and already in 1918-1919 she lived in Baku, working at the Office of the Management of Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and after her dismissal in late January, 1919 she worked at a notary.

⁴² Ganin 2016. 105-106, 108-109.

⁴³ Taking this into account, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijani special services, Aydin Bayram from Azerbaijan unconditionally claimed that in order to destroy the foundations of the young Azerbaijani republic and to undermine socio-political stability in the country, Armenian nationalists carried out intense anti-Azerbaijani, provocative and intelligence activities. A. Bayram concluded that the Armenian spies sent the information they obtained not only to the ARF centers, but also to the Denikinians, to the Bolsheviks, the British, that the majority of those arrested by the authorities of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic in connection with Denikin's army attack were Armenian *saboteurs*. See Aydin Bayram 2019: 8-9, 12. See www.elibrary.az/docs/jurnal/jrn2019_24.

arrest the members of the disclosed spy organization: "In connection with the irrefutable evidence that information was gathered about the Azerbaijani armed forces in Ganja, citizen Smislova was arrested. She is accused of spying for the Volunteer Army and the Armenian government. Several officers of the Ganja garrison were discovered to be her accomplices. Her other accomplices are in Baku, namely Nelli Feodorovna Chernysheva, who lives at 8 Armenian Street, Music College and is the wife of an officer of the General Staff who served in the Armenian army and currently lives in Baku; and Stanislav Rudolf Zuber who is in the Rilski Merkuriev office. I suppose all the threads of the spy organization are intertwined in Baku ...»⁴⁴.

As a result, he played an important role in the development of Azerbaijani counterintelligence. On March 31, 1919, the Chief of General Staff Sulkevich sent yesaul Yusupov on a business trip to Ganja on the instructions of the Military Minister, and the assistant to the Minister of Internal Affairs was instructed to support him. At the same time, they claimed that the center of the spy agency was in Baku, and it reached out to the troops and the government. Thus, according to the order of the Military Minister, Sulkevich considered it necessary to work in solidarity everywhere, to organize counterintelligence in the military department and in the criminal investigation department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, considering it a very responsible job, entrusting it only to very reliable Muslim officers, finding that the job should not be trusted to somewhat hostile Russians or Armenians and that he could not allow it for the sake of his homeland. Sulkevich believed that the job required a complete devotion to the interests of the republic, which could not be bought with money⁴⁵. In order to solve this problem, Sulkevich personally asked the governor to support Yusupov and to coordinate his actions with G. B. Fatalibekov, the head of the Baku reconnaissance police. Due to these important circumstances, the investigation of the case of Smislova and others, which started on March 29 in Ganja, was personally led by Lieutenant Aghalarov, the chief of the counterintelligence department of the General Staff, and the preliminary investigation was led by I. I. Viktorovich, investigating judge on especially important cases⁴⁶. And in his telegram of March 29, 1919 addressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Azerbaijani Military Minister S. B. Mehmandarov stated that Ms. Smislova had been arrested in Ganja on charges of spying for the Volunteer Army and the Armenian government⁴⁷. In this regard, General of the Azerbaijani Army Murad Gyaray Bey Tlekhas⁴⁸ admitted that at that time he was ruthless towards Denikin's spies who had fallen into their hands in Azerbaijan.

⁴⁴ Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan 1998: 88-89.

⁴⁵ Ganin 2016: 101-103.

⁴⁶ Idem.

⁴⁷ Ganin 2016: 103.

⁴⁸ Murad Gyaray Bey Tlekhas (1874, Kuban region - May 29, 1920, Baku), Major General, Circassian. In 1918-1920 he fought for the independence of Azerbaijan. In the autumn of 1918, when the White Guards occupied Kuban and Adygea, Tlekhas went to Azerbaijan. On December 4, 1919, he was appointed Governor-General of the fortified region

A. Ganin stated that on the basis of the confiscated documents, the Azerbaijani intelligence declassified the activity of A. A. Okoyev⁴⁹, the 22-year-old triple intelligence agent of Armenian descent who collaborated with the White Guards and British intelligence, was well known in Armenian intelligence, which we mentioned above.

Thus, according to the facts provided by A. Ganin, Okoyev was tasked by the Volunteer Army intelligence to join the Baku Investigation Department in order to obtain the necessary information and, if possible, to guide the Department's activities. To uncover all the activities Okoyev had carried out against them, the Baku investigators conducted searches also at the house of General Shchetinin, prince, former head of the Tbilisi Railway Gendarmerie Department, head of the intelligence group of the Volunteer Army in Baku, and at the house of General Stanislav Rudolf Zuber. On April 4, on the basis of the facts obtained, charges were brought against Chernishev, his wife, Smislova and Lieutenant A. Okoyev, although they did not accept the charges, except for Smislova. They were imprisoned in the notorious and ominous Bailov prison in Baku. According to the facts brought by Ganin, during the investigation A. Okoyev claimed that he had never acted against Azerbaijan, but he was a secret agent under the Commissar of the Allied States in Baku, and from March 1 until his arrest he was a secret agent of the counterintelligence department of the British headquarters. And according to the testimony of Colonel F. P. Kokerel, Commissar of the Military Police of the Allied States in Baku, from late February 1919 till March 7, he served in the operative unit of General Bicherakhov's headquarters under Captain Chenishev whom he provided information about the local Bolsheviks, and on the instructions of the Police Headquarters of the Allied States he tried to find out whether the rumors were true that through the British headquarters Bicherakhov's army secretly distributed weapons to the workers of Baku. Okoyev kept this secret from Chernishev, although he had received a salary of 780 rubles for 20 days of work, which was not a small amount. The details of the case investigated by the Azerbaijani investigative bodies testified that in early April, 1919, without leaving his service at the British headquarters and his work with Chernishev, Okoyev was admitted to the Baku Intelligence Department, allegedly not on his own initiative but at the suggestion of the Governor of Baku, who had assessed his merits in connection with other matters. By the way, during the interrogation Baku Governor Rashid Bey Akhund Zadeh, for obvious reasons, did not confirm Okoyev's version. Together with Hasan Bey Fatalibekov, the head of the intelligence department, they

of Baku and played an important role in the establishment of the armed forces of that country. He was arrested by the Bolsheviks, accused of killing the famous Bolshevik Ali Bayramov, and was executed. See Shamistan Nazirli 2016: 28, 34-35.

⁴⁹ According to the evidence obtained by Ganin, Okoyev's father was Armenian and his mother was French. He was born in Paris, studied at a lyceum, and then, as a second-class non conscripted soldier he took an exam at a Realni School in Baku. He considered himself a Frenchman and converted from Catholicism to Orthodoxy during his marriage. Okoyev was the agent of the Allies, 22 years old. He lived in Baku since December, 1918. See Ganin 2016: 108.

denied Okoyev's allegations, stating that Okoyev had been accepted by the intelligence department as a secret agent due to his own persistent request, knowing in advance that he was serving in the British counterintelligence, which was not denied by Okoyev either. He had stated that he simultaneously worked in several places. He did not hide the fact that he had introduced himself as an Ossetian and had concealed his Armenian origin which would prevent him from entering the intelligence department⁵⁰.

In his new job Okoyev dealt with the disclosure of Bolsheviks and withdrawal of weapons from the village of Mashtagh, maintaining friendly relations with Chernishev and considering him useful in gathering information for the British⁵¹. It is certainly interesting that Captain Chernishev himself vehemently denied the allegations against him, refusing to testify, and only after being accused of violating international law against Azerbaijan by Russian military intelligence, he tried to defend himself in a special way. Chernishev gave a very original answer to that, and during the interrogation on April 7 he found that the issue as such could be resolved only by the Peace Conference, and before the decision of the conference, the territory in which he had operated, was considered to be Russia, where the activity of Russian military intelligence was quite natural and legal⁵². Such a statement simply showed that Chernishev did not recognize Azerbaijan as an independent state, clarifying: "The revolution, and then anarchy divided the peoples of Russia, proving that the former state system had exhausted its power and was unable to meet the demands of many peoples of Russia in regard to their cultural development and independent position. And in order to find new ways as soon as possible, in order to find common ground for unification on the basis of broad autonomy in which case all the peoples of Russia can express their national privileges, Russian military intelligence has set itself the goal of contributing to that unification. I strongly believe that only in these conditions the small peoples of Russia, which are culturally, historically, geographically, economically and politically connected with it, will not be exploited by any foreign third power, that only in the case of general unification will their voice be heard among the great powers deciding the fate of the world. I believe that only then will there be a common ground in the revolution and anarchy, only then will the principles of unification of all the peoples of Russia on the basis of broad autonomy be finally found, their security will be ensured, and state-building and cultural development will be achieved. The whole main purpose of intelligence, its idea, of sincerity of which there is documentary evidence, run like a red thread through my intelligence activities on the Apsheron Peninsula"⁵³. This is truly the sincere confession of a Russian noble spy, the unwavering, unique devotion of a Russian officer to the state, only in case of which the state could have real security guarantees.

⁵⁰ Ganin 2016: 107, 109.

⁵¹ Idem.

⁵² Idem.

⁵³ Ganin 2016: 110.

Denying the testimony of his agent Smislova, as an excuse for his stay in Baku Chernishsev tried to divert the Azerbaijani special services, saying that he was not sent on a business trip by the White Guard command, but only accidentally stayed in Baku after the withdrawal of General M. A. Przhevalsky's detachment, as he was tasked with liquidating the warehouses of the detachment. He said that he had not given any instructions to Smislova, that the acquaintance with her had been accidental, that they had met only 2-3 times. And his wife testified that she was in no way aware of her husband's activities, that he was engaged only in "counterintelligence" for the Volunteer Army. During an additional interrogation Captain Chernishev himself denied his wife's involvement in intelligence work, noting that the existence of a number of documents had nothing to do with intelligence⁵⁴. On April 2, investigator I. I. Viktorovich conducted a search of Chernishev's house in Baku, during which two maps and several documents were confiscated, which he had not managed to destroy. Among them was in particular one of his important reports on a month-long work spanning the period from February 20 to March 24, which revealed almost the whole picture of White Guard intelligence in Azerbaijan⁵⁵.

However, not satisfied with the obtained facts, the Azerbaijani special services set out to find and arrest all the persons who had something to do with Captain Chernishev, first of all those who had visited his apartment. As a result, the list of those arrested included N. F. Chernisheva, Captain Chernishev's wife (she lived on the Armenian street of Baku at that time and according to Ganin, she was the wife of a former officer of the Armenian army), Lieutenant A. A. Okoyev (Okoyants-Hakobyants), Captains N. D. Zhukov and Petrov, Staff-captain Y. Kalinin, Staff-rotmasters A. A. Kasimov and V. A. Chestnokov, Cornet V. P. Yordanov, Kaptenarmus A. P. Bulankin, Chernysheva's servant, soldier I. S. Tsikhovsky, temporary military official S. Kleshchevsky, sworn trustee I. G. Lutskin, engineer S. M. Remennikov, as well as Remennikova's servant N. Hakobyants. The adjutants were not kept for long, they were soon released. According to Ganin, on April 11, the detainees were transferred to Ganja, except for Petrov, who was being held in the central prison in Baku. After all this Ganja's warden M. Sklyarov wrote to Ganja's District Prosecutor: "On April 11, the head of the intelligence department of the troops of the Republic of Azerbaijan, trusting me, without any documents, brought to the prison Semyon Remennikov, Yevgeny Kalinin, Sergey Kleshchevsky, Iosif Lutskin, Alexey Kasimov, Alexander Okoyev, Vladimir Yordanov, Alexander Chernishev, Nimim Chernishev, Vladimir Chestnokov, Nikolay Zhukov, Iosif Chekhovsky, Nikolay Hakobyants and Anton Bulankin, of whom adjutants Hakobyants and Chekhovsky were released based on a letter on April 13. According to the same letter the rest of them were ordered to remain in custody until the end of the investigation". Warden M. Sklyarov therefore asked him not to delay and send the decisions on the above-mentioned persons, except for Chestnokov, in regard to whom

⁵⁴ Ganin 2016: 109-110, 113.

⁵⁵ Ganin 2016: 104.

there was a decision, but who died of typhus in prison⁵⁶. According to Ganin, the Azerbaijani special services, in particular the counterintelligence bodies considered A. Okoyev's or A. Hakobyants's arrest more important, viewing it one of their successful cases, and the rest, according to them, were indirectly related to that case⁵⁷.

In connection with Chernishev's case, as a result of an external observation of Colonel I. V. Tsvetkov, the head of the motorcade of the Caspian detachment of the Volunteer Army, G. B. Fatalibekov, Baku intelligence police chief found out about his ties with Chernishev and arrested him on April 22, confiscating his documents, notebook, notes, Chernishev's and Colonel Lazarev's notes on receiving a password. Colonels Lazarev and V. V. Makarov came under surveillance. During the search of the latter's apartment, among other items, the correspondence with General I. G. Erdeli, Commander of the Volunteer Army's military units in Terek-Dagestan region, the correspondence with Colonel Lazarev and two other coded telegrams were found. And as it turned out, Tsvetkov had at his disposal a large amount of explosives, ammunition, cars left over from Bicherakhov's detachment (102 cars). The cars were sold to private individuals and Armenian organizations, and the proceeds from the sale were transferred to the Volunteer Army, which was also the result of expulsion by the British from the region, which took place on March 1, 1919, when General V. Thomson, the commander of the Allies' troops that entered Baku, forced the Russian forces to leave Azerbaijan and the territory under the control of the South Russia's armed forces⁵⁸. The counterintelligence of the Azerbaijani army had also found out that in March 1919 there was allegedly an intention to take the cars and other property out of Azerbaijan, but they could not obtain such direct evidence from Tsvetkov. On April 28, Tsvetkov, together with Colonel V. P. Lik arrested with him, were released due to lack of corpus delicti, and the confiscated money and documents were returned to them⁵⁹.

This conflict between the intelligence services had formed in a situation when the Azerbaijani counterintelligence, as well as the intelligence bodies of the Volunteer Army in Azerbaijan were still in the embryonic stage of formation in the spring of 1919, and the intelligence personnel were somewhat amateurish, inexperienced. Moreover, there was no precise line between intelligence and counterintelligence bodies, which was specific to the Republic of Armenia as well, where they were subordinated to the General Staff⁶⁰. Nevertheless, as it turns out from M. Sulkevich's letter (N 1539) of March 31, 1919, addressed to Major General S. Aghabekov, Assistant to the Minister of

⁵⁶ Ganin 2016: 110-111.

⁵⁷ Ganin 2016: 110.

⁵⁸ Ganin 2016: 110, 111-112; Bezugolny 2011: 234-236; Gasanli 2010: 323-324; Puchenkov 2012: 132-133.

⁵⁹ Ganin 2016: 113.

⁶⁰ It should be noted that according to Ganin, the Azerbaijani counterintelligence department, like its Armenian counterpart, had a limited number of personnel. As of March, 1919 it included Ali Kuliyeu, Mossum Ibrahimov, Shikh-Ali Oghli Aziz, Abbas Novruzoglu, Bakhtiyar Saniyev, David Kakhiyev, and the so-called temporary agents - yesaul S. Yusupov, I. Vakhramaibekov, having a very limited amount, about 11.5 thousand rubles for March, as was the case with the Armenian structure. See Ganin 2016: 114, See in detail Virabyan 2015.

Internal Affairs, the task was to organize counterintelligence in Baku. He informed that yesaul Yusupov was being sent for that purpose, adding that only especially trusted Muslim officers should be involved in the case, as it should not be entrusted to Russians or Armenians who were hostile to them. He emphasized that the job required a complete devotion to the interests of the republic, which could not be bought with any money⁶¹. It was clear that the reason for such an approach was the events in Ganja connected with the alleged anti-Azerbaijani espionage activities by Smislova, Chernishev and others.

Chernishev's investigation lasted for 2 months, and on April 28 the latter's wife, Chernisheva was released on a 5000 rubles bail⁶².

It is obvious that in Azerbaijan they were quite worried about the activities of the Volunteer Army spies⁶³. In his dispatch to Colonel M. B. Aliyev, the military attaché of Azerbaijan in Tbilisi, General M. Sulkevich, the Chief of the General Staff, expressed his concern: "During the search at Chernishev's, quite important documents were found, which reveal the entire network of his agency. By the way, one of his agents, an Armenian officer, simultaneously serves the British and in the Baku investigation department. There is reason to believe that the intelligence of the Volunteer Army in Georgia is headed by General V. P. Shatilov⁶⁴. Warn the Chief of the General Staff of Georgia to be careful until suspicious people leave the country, which we should do in Baku and in other cities"⁶⁵. On April 22, Sulkevich sent a special letter about Chernishev to the Prosecutor of the Ganja District Court, and in May he informed the Prime Minister of a radio report confiscated from Chernishev, regarding the activities of the network of agents of the Volunteer Army within Azerbaijan⁶⁶. Its analysis shows that in those and other documents the Azerbaijani special services were also looking for an Armenian

⁶¹ Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan 1998: 90-91.

⁶² Ganin 2016: 114.

⁶³ On March 28, 1919, after the formation of the Azerbaijani army, by the decree of the Military Minister Samed Bey Mehmandarov and Chief of the General Staff Mammad Bey Sulkevich, the Intelligence and Counterintelligence Divisions were established under the General Staff. It was planned to employ 23 agents with a salary of 1000 rubles each, however, there were initially 10 agents who undertook the job of carrying out the operations of the special services of the state. The department was subordinated to the General-quartermaster of the General Staff. It was headed by Cornet, then Lieutenant Aghalarov. And since the Counterintelligence department of the General Staff could not handle its tasks with the Bolshevik propaganda in the army, in October, 1919, at the suggestion of the Military Ministry, a special criminal investigation unit was established under the Ministry of Internal Affairs to carry out political police operations in the army. And already in the autumn of 1919, an attempt was made to organize a military counterintelligence at the Ministry of Internal Affairs under the name "An organization for Struggle against Counter-Revolution", which reminds of the Bolshevik experience. In 1919 the head of the counterintelligence of the Republic of Azerbaijan was Nagi Bey Sheikhzamanli. See Ganin 2009: 131, 351; Aydin Bayram 2019: 8. See Ganin 2016: 113. Shamistan Nazirli 2015: 224; History of Azerbaijan 1963; Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan 1998: 87.

⁶⁴ Shatilov Vladimir Pavel [15.5.1855 - December, 1928] – a General, who was the representative of the General Command of the Volunteer Army in Georgia. He was arrested by the Georgian authorities, and in 1919 he headed the semi-official center of the Volunteer Army in Tbilisi. He was deported to Yugoslavia after the defeat of the White Army. See Zalessky 2003: 666-667.

⁶⁵ Ganin 2016: 114.

⁶⁶ Ganin 2016: 115-116.

trace, which, according to them, was undoubtedly related to the intelligence of the Volunteer Army.

It could be assumed that Azerbaijan was really worried about the intelligence activities of the South Russian Armed Forces, which was also a matter of resources. In this regard, Ganin cited the self-confession of the Azerbaijani Interior Ministry, in which the head of the Ministry stated that they could not counter each of the actions of the agents of the Volunteer Army within Azerbaijan, the recruitment of the network of agents from among mountaineers and in the Caspian region, given the fact that Chernishev had access to the British, to the General Staff of the Republic of Azerbaijan and to the top leadership⁶⁷, and Azerbaijan simply could not counteract this. It was on the basis of this last circumstance that the examination of Azerbaijani officers and officials began in Azerbaijan. They were forced to testify and justify themselves, but as was the case with Chernishev's additional interrogation, the whole further investigation came to a standstill, and extorting new information from the detainees proved ineffective. Finally, on May 27, the Ganja District Prosecutor proposed to replace the preventive measure for Chernishev, Okoyev and Smislova with a non-custodial measure. It was decided to release Chernishev on a 10 thousand rubles bail, and Smislova and Okoyev were put under local police surveillance. And so, Smislova and Okoyev were released on May 28 and Chernishev - on June 2⁶⁸. The latter left for Petrovsk, and the gun confiscated from Okoyev was handed over to the British headquarters. The British pressure on the Azeris is obvious here, otherwise Chernishev, Okoyev or Hakobyants would hardly escape from their clutches.

All this testifies to the conflict between the Voluntary Army, the Azerbaijani and British intelligence services in Azerbaijan and around it, in which the Armenians were not playing a secondary role at all. It should be noted that at that time both the Volunteer Army and the Azerbaijani and Armenian intelligence services were solving similar problems in an attempt to establish themselves and effectively counter the enemy's machinations. The role of the British in that conflict was multi-layered and ambiguous. They were one of the key figures in that secret war, and all the parties to the conflict sought to communicate and cooperate with them: they could not do without it since it was the most experienced special service in the region. According to the analysis, the case of Chernishev and Okoyev aggravated the relations between the Volunteer Army and Azerbaijan, created tensions for the local Russian and Armenian population. Many Russian officers were accused of espionage and were incarcerated in the prisons of Ganja and Baku⁶⁹. It is noteworthy that during the interrogation both Captain Chernishev and A. Okoyev stated that they did not plead guilty because they had worked on their own land, i.e. on the territory of the former Russian Empire, at a time when the existence of independent Azerbaijan was not recognized by anyone. In

⁶⁷ Steklov 1928: 26.

⁶⁸ Ganin 2016: 116.

⁶⁹ Baykov 1923: 177.

this respect, according to Ganin, General A. Denikin's order dated November 9, 1919, was natural. According to it all the Russian officers had to leave the Azerbaijani troops due to the hostile attitude of the Azerbaijani authorities towards the Russian army and the treacherous advance of the Azerbaijani troops into the territory of Armenia⁷⁰.

As a postscript it should be mentioned that one of the last references to Okoyev dates back to 1920. In a telegram (N 468) sent to Tbilisi on May 25, 1920, renowned Armenian spy Tigran Devoyants, one of the leaders of the intelligence and counterintelligence department of the General Staff of the Republic of Armenia, informed about the English translator Okoyev (A. Hakobyants), who had come to them to get a permit, and had had a lengthy conversation with his assistant, Khachatryan, apparently seeking to get hired by the Armenians. Devoyants ordered to arrest Okoyev and send him to Yerevan⁷¹. In a telegram on July 5, Devoyants asked Kishmishyan to send him any letter addressed to Dodokhyan by the English translator Okoyev (or Akoyev)⁷².

In Armenia, they followed up on the information received through Tbilisi from the North Caucasus, particularly from the Volunteer Army, and often, if necessary, in order to verify this or that fact, to clarify issues connected with the personnel they sought the help of the relevant special services or turned to the relevant actions.

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⁷⁰ Ganin 2016: 117.

⁷¹ Ganin 2016: 115-116, NAA, f. 275, l. 5, f. 184, p. 52.

⁷² NAA, f. 275, l. 5, f. 184, p. 61.

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PHILOLOGY

LITTLE-KNOWN RUSSIAN LITERARY FIGURES ON THE ARMENIAN QUESTION AND THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE (1910s)

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Abstract

The article introduces several little-known Russian literary figures who, after visiting Western Armenia and Transcaucasia, expressed their civil position regarding the Armenian question and the Genocide. Among these authors are A. Berezovsky-Olginsky, A.Kulebyakin. A.Tirkova S. Rafalovich, and P.Sibirtsev.

Keywords: Russian literary figures, Armenian genocide

The goal of this article is to introduce Russian literary figures, who are little-known to the general public and who, after visiting Western Armenia and Transcaucasia, reflected the plight of the Armenian people quite deeply, comprehensively and figuratively, expressed their civil position regarding the Armenian question and the Genocide.

At the beginning of 1913, Antoine Berezovsky-Olginsky (pen name - T. Olgenin), who was a well-known publicist at the time, visited six vilayets of Western Armenia (Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Tigranakert, Sebastia, Kharberd), where he thoroughly studied the socio-economic and political situation of Western Armenians. Soon, the Turkish authorities, seriously concerned about T. Olgenin's activities, accused him of anti-Turkish propaganda and raised the issue of his expulsion from the country. Returning from Western Armenia, Olgenin gave lectures on the topic "Disappearing Armenia" first in Tiflis and then in Baku. He noted that Armenia played an extremely important role for Russia, therefore, "Russia should take the initiative to resolve the Armenian question. This is required by its state interests, as well as moral duty. Russia must correct the mistakes of its past: if the Armenian question is not resolved today, the Russian state will be in great danger in the future ... Delay in this issue will be a fatal blow for both Russia and Armenians"¹. The lectures found a wide response in the public and were covered in detail in the press. T. Olgenin's trip to Western Armenia, his articles and public speeches on the eve of the First World War reawakened the interest of the Russian public towards Armenia and the Armenian question.

"Poet-General" Alexander Parfenovich Kulebyakin (1871-?) was one of the prominent military leaders of the Russian army who participated in the fighting on the Caucasian front in Western Armenia. On February 26, 1919, the Committee for the investigation of violent actions against Armenians during the World War interrogated A.

¹ Bakvi dzayn, 15, VI, 1913.

Kulebyakin as a witness in Tiflis, and he testified: "On October 20, 1914, I crossed the Russian-Turkish border with Russian troops and I was at the stage of military operations until November 1917. I successively held different positions - from regiment commander to division chief inclusive, and in 1917, for 5 months I temporarily commanded the Caucasian corps.

In Turkish Armenia I personally visited the Van vilayet, I was in Mush, Surb Karapet, Kop, Akhlat, Ardanush, Bayazet, Karakilisa of Alashkert, Erzurum and the Passinskaya valley.

In many places I personally saw traces of debacle and massacre of Armenians. As far as I remember, these atrocities were perpetrated mainly by the Kurds, and on the part of the Turks, as a matter of course, there was connivance. I saw many corpses of women and children, who were beaten, as the local Armenians told me, by the Kurds. Thus, in the village of Soluk, behind the bridge across the Euphrates, near the city of Mush, there is a spacious building, in which there were up to a hundred human bones. According to all the signs they were remains of women and children. As Cossacks-Labinians told me, when we captured Mush, many Armenian women and children took refuge here, and the Turkish troops killed them here. The photographs of this scene were taken by Parokhodov, the photographer of the Fourth Corps. In addition, in the autumn of 1915 I saw many corpses of Armenians in the gorge of the river Bendimahu, south of Begri-Kala. I depicted this scene in the poem "Bendimahu", included in the collection "Echoes of Van". As I was told by local Armenians, as well as by Russian officers, the Armenians fled here from Van after the July retreat of Russian troops in 1915 and, being chased by the Kurds, everyone was killed. Part of the Armenians who fled along this road, were killed by the Kurds near the village of Gyuli, between Van and Panz, on the shores of Lake Van. In 1915 and 1916 I visited the Monastery of Varag, all the Armenian churches of the city of Van, the Akhtamar monastery and Surb-Karapet. All these churches were completely destroyed and robbed. I encountered a particularly wild scene of the most barbaric destruction in the Monastery of Surb Karapet and the Monastery of Varag. Everything there was completely taken away and badly destroyed. I expressed my impressions in the poems "Old Van", "Defense of Van", "Death of Van", "Avants", "Akhtamar" and others, included in the collection "Echoes of Van". In general, all the Armenian churches that I visited bore traces of destruction. I found the cities of Mush, Van, Karakilisa, Akhlat, Kop, Melazgert in a state of complete destruction. In Melazgert there were literally only stones left. Being busy with combat missions, I personally did not carry out any investigations of atrocities against Armenians and was not an eyewitness of the atrocities. I have four photographs of the destruction: two photographs of the Monastery of Surb Karapet and two photographs of the Monastery of Akhtamar, which I keep for my literary work about Armenia. These pictures were taken by Parokhodov, the photographer of the Fourth Corps, who has many other photos"².

² NAA, f. 200, f.1, l.199, p. 151 and reverse. See also f. 221, l. 1, f. 8, p. 4-5 and reverse. Original manuscript.

After the war, living in Tiflis, in his poetic works A. Kulebyakin time and again turned to the shrines of Armenia and the Armenian people - Masis and Araks. He wrote the poem "The Cross of Masis. Two Legends" (1917) and the poem "Araks" (1919). The poet turns to the historical past of the Armenian people, whose tragic pages were witnessed by Araks:

And sometimes the stones seem to cry,
And the waves seem to pour blood.

In 1915, Ariadna Tirkova (pen name - A. Vergezhsy), a literary and public figure, a correspondent for central Russian newspapers, was also on the Caucasian front, in Western Armenia. On November 5, 1915, returning from the front, at the initiative of the Public Club she read a report on the topic "War and the Woman" in the hall of the Tiflis Musical School. In 1916 A. Tirkova published the book "Old Turkey and the Young Turks. A Year in Constantinople", which depicts Turkish reality - the political situation in the country and various aspects of Turkish life. Speaking about the politics of the Young Turks, she wrote: "The unprecedented extermination of the Armenian people showed that despite the programs and slogans borrowed from Europe, the Young Turks, in essence, are no different from the old Turks"³. In a separate chapter, she depicted the portraits of Young Turks, including the "executioner of the Armenian people" – Tala'at Bey. Tyrkova believed that the history of the extermination of Armenians was "a verdict for the Young Turks written in bloody letters". A separate chapter is devoted to the Armenians in the book, which reflects the author's love and respect for the Armenian people. The activity of the Dashnaktsutyun party in Turkey is especially warmly spoken of. The author wrote the following about the *pogroms*: "The description of the Armenian *pogroms* reminds of the terrible chronicles of ancient exterminations, when the victors killed, tortured, raped and robbed the defeated with such unruliness, of which only a human is capable of all the animals. In 1896, in the very Constantinople, about 10,000 Armenians were killed within three days, not to mention tens of thousands killed, wounded and ravaged in large and small provincial towns. After the overthrow of Abdul Hamid, immediately after the announcement of the constitution, there was a *pogrom* in Adana"⁴.

In 1918-1920, the writer and playwright Sergey Rafalovich took an active part in the literary and social life of Transcaucasia (Baku, Tiflis). He was an eyewitness to the September events in Baku in 1918, when about 30 thousand Armenians were exterminated. In the article "The Truth about the Baku Events" Rafalovich wrote: "My testimony should be perceived as the testimony of a completely objective eyewitness, prompted by solely an indignant sense of justice and truth to give real and impartial coverage of facts distorted with unacceptable ... frivolity"⁵.

³ Tirkova 1916: 7.

⁴ Tirkova 1916: 62-63.

⁵ Kavkazskoe slovo, 3, XII. 1918.

On March 3 and 8, 1919, in Tiflis, the Committee for the Investigation of violent actions against Armenians during the World War interrogated S. Rafalovich as a witness to the *pogrom* of the Armenian population of Baku.

The article and protocol of the interrogation of S. Rafalovich once again confirm the fact that after the fall of the Baku commune, the capture of Baku by Turkish troops and the establishment of the Musavat government, a deliberate *pogrom* and massacre of the Armenian population were carried out.

In the article "Freedom for the Dead (Pro Armenia)", Rafalovich exposed the policy of the great powers towards the Armenian people, urged them to turn words into deeds and save the nation, which was on the brink of destruction: "Europe bears a grave sin before many small peoples, among which the Armenian people occupy one of the most important places in terms of the suffering they have endured. And if until now complex political relations and combinations, the notorious European equilibrium prevented the present winners from turning words into deeds and forced them to confine themselves to good wishes and exhortations, now, finally, the time has come to atone for their sins and take advantage of the new political situation, primarily in order to correct the centuries-old injustices and save the dying"⁶.

Pyotr Sibirtsev, a Russian literary figure, took part in military operations as part of the regiment of Andranik, the legendary hero of the national liberation movement. In the summer of 1918, after the cessation of hostilities, Sibirtsev returned to Tiflis. There he read articles in defense of the Armenian people, their just cause and rights. Particularly interesting is the article "Pro Armenia", where he wrote: "On all the roads - highways, country roads and mountain roads, on mountains and along the banks of rivers, I met caravans of refugees everywhere; and everywhere I came across the same pictures of hunger, cold and dirtiness. Thus, on the mountains and roads the Armenian nation, the Armenian people were dying and are dying, people innocent of political enmity are dying, and they must be rescued. It is the duty of all mankind"⁷.

P. Sibirtsev wrote down Armenian folk tales and fables, wrote poems dedicated to the Armenian people and Armenia. In one of them - "Armenia" - the poet with sincere compassion and philanthropy listed the trials that had fallen to the lot of the Armenians. In the lines he wrote one can hear the voice of protest and faith in the bright future.

Addressing the fate of the Armenian people, speaking in their defense, Russian literary figures contributed to the spread of the truth about Armenia. They revealed to the Russian public the essence of the Armenian question, the real causes of the Genocide, responded with wrath to the *pogroms* of Armenians, exposed the vile goals pursued by the great powers in the Armenian Question, calling on them to help the people who had found themselves on the brink of destruction.

⁶ Zakavkazskoe slovo, 8. II. 1919.

⁷ Kavkazskoe slovo, 4. VII. 1918.

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POLITICAL SCIENCES AND INFORMATIONAL SECURITY

TERRITORIAL ISSUES IN THE KARABAKH CONFLICT IN THE LIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND DOCUMENTS RECOGNIZED BY THE PARTIES

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Abstract

“Karabakh conflict” is in the first lines of the word list of modern global political discourse. The problem is viewed differently by the conflicting parties and mediators, as well as analysts. Our task is to present an image of the conflict corresponding to the “original” in the light of the textbook facts of history and primary sources. The expertise is carried out in the format of theses on key issues of the topic stated in the title.

Keywords: Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, Turkization of the Caucasian Tatars

Preamble to the topic. “Karabakh conflict” is in the first lines of the word list of modern global political discourse. The problem is viewed differently by the conflicting parties and mediators, as well as analysts. But to a first approximation, the analysis already demonstrates that the main source of discrepancies lies in the attitude towards historically and legally reliable facts. Sometimes they are simply ignored or presented in incorrect modi. Our task is to present an image of the conflict corresponding to the “original” in the light of the textbook facts of history and primary sources. We do not need to plunge into distant history. For a full-fledged political and legal expertise of the conflict, it will be enough to take the first decades of the XIX century - the years of the accession of Eastern Armenia to Russia - as the starting chronological point. The expertise is carried out in the format of theses on key issues of the topic stated in the title.

Thesis 1. The main argument of Baku in the light of the establishment of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR)¹ in 1918.

The key argument in the discourses around Nagorno-Karabakh² (NK) was the argument of official Baku about Artsakh's belonging to Azerbaijan. It is refuted by many legal and political facts. Here we will turn to the most indisputable historical fact. Until 1918, this could not have happened due to the fact that before that time there was neither a political or administrative unit with the right to subjectivity with the name Azerbaijan in Transcaucasia, nor a geographic region with such a name, nor a

¹ Abbreviations and their backronyms are used in the text for stylistic reasons.

² The toponym “Nagorno-Karabakh” that came into use during the Mongol rule, is the name of the provinces of Artsakh and Utik' of historical Armenia, which later became known simply as Artsakh. In this article, *Nagorno-Karabakh* and *Artsakh* are used synonymously.

community with the ethnonym *Azerbaijanis*. A state-like entity called *Azerbaijan* first appeared as a result of the Turkish intervention in Transcaucasia during the collapse of the Russian Empire. On September 15, 1918, accompanied by the expeditionary force of the German Empire, the Turkish troops that had entered Baku overthrew the legitimate authorities, massacred more than 30 thousand Armenians and established a new Turkish state - the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR). This was Turkey's first pre-Cyprus experience of creating a satellite state beyond its borders through a military invasion. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (1975) has not been recognized by any state except for Turkey itself. However, the Turkish project "*Azerbaijan*", launched in 1918, was completed in 1991: the Republic of Azerbaijan received international recognition.

Thesis 2. The beginning of the Karabakh conflict.

The Turks initially laid at the basis of the ADR the idea of creating a link between Turkey and Central Asian Turkestan as a decisive step in ensuring the spatial continuity of the Great Turan project, which the Turks were pursuing.

After the capture of Baku in September 1918, in line with the implementation of this plan, the Turkish troops moved to Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) in order to force it to surrender to the ADR. This is how the Karabakh conflict began. The people of Artsakh, who had already proclaimed their land an integral part of the Republic of Armenia, rejected these demands and on October 18, 1918, near the village of Msmna, they defeated the Turkish regiment that had penetrated into NK. The ADR and the Republic of Armenia (RA) were recognized *de facto* by the League of Nations. The issue of their *de jure* recognition was postponed until the resolution of disputed territorial issues arising as a result of ADR claims to vast territories of Transcaucasia from Baku to Batumi, including NK, Zangezur, Nakhichevan and Kars.

Thesis 3. Self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1918-1920. Declarations of the Congresses of Plenipotentiary Representatives of the People (PRP) of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In 1918-1920 the Congresses of Plenipotentiary Representatives of NK (PRNK) repeatedly declared the Armenian region an integral part of the Republic of Armenia, which proclaimed its independence on May 28, 1918. In the conditions of the collapse of the Russian Empire, when there were no *de jure* recognized states in Transcaucasia, the Resolutions of the Congresses of PRNK were acts of self-determination of Artsakh in territories that did not belong to anyone except the people of Artsakh.

In the chaos of the collapse of the Russian Empire, in the entire Transcaucasia there was no other national institution endowed with such a high legitimacy as the Congress of PRNK. The NK National Council elected by the Congress of PRNK was empowered to manage the economic and social life of Artsakh, to organize the protection of the region from external aggression.

General William Thomson, who entered Baku in November 1918 leading the British military mission and declaring himself military governor, demanded that the NK National Council recognize the power of the ADR. In August 1919, the VII Congress of the PRNK, under the pressure of the British, concluded a "Temporary Agreement" with the government of the ADR on the temporary recognition of the ADR's power "until this issue was resolved at the Peace Conference"³. The matter did not reach the Paris Peace Conference. In March 1920, the "Temporary Agreement" was violated by the Azerbaijani side, which organized the massacre of Armenians in Shushi and nearby villages.

On April 28, 1920, on the day of the entry of the XI Red Army into Baku and the proclamation of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic (AzSSR), the IX Congress of PRNK again proclaimed NK an integral part of the Republic of Armenia⁴ and informed the "delegation of the Republic of Armenia in Moscow about the decision of the Congress to convey to the Russian Soviet government"⁵.

Thesis 4. Consequences of the Turkish intervention in Transcaucasia.

The Turks, who fought in World War I on the side of the defeated Triple Alliance, soon left Transcaucasia. But their intrusion into the region was not without consequences. And this is not only about the establishment of the satellite state ADR. They drew the Caucasian Tatars into bloody orgies of *pogroms* against Armenians, finally infecting the former with genocidal consciousness and behavior. In the absence of other ethno-generating principles and values, the aggressive intolerance and hatred towards Armenians and other indigenous peoples of Transcaucasia became determinants of the emerging political identity of the turkifying Caucasian Tatars.

Thesis 5. Rejection of the ADR application for admission to the League by the League of Nations.

In view of the unreasonable claims of the ADR to the territories where it had neither historical right, nor political or administrative control, the League of Nations refused to admit it to the League⁶ and in 1920 the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh was included in the agenda of the Paris Peace Conference. The ADR left history without a legal successor, without factually established and recognized borders and sovereignty over the so-called disputed territories - NK, Zangezur and Nakhichevan.

Thesis 6. Relinquishment of claims to Nagorno-Karabakh, Zangezur and Nakhichevan by the AzSSR and recognition of the right of the people of the NK to full self-determination.

³ From the history 1989: 23-25.

⁴ Bulletin of the Archives of Armenia 1989, N 1: 120.

⁵ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008.

⁶ League of Nations 1920: 173-174.

On November 30, 1920, a day after the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia, Baku declared the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh, Zangezur and Nakhichevan as integral parts of Soviet Armenia. On December 1, 1920, the Declaration was proclaimed at a ceremonial meeting of the Baku Council, dedicated to the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia. On December 2, 1920, the Declaration was published with the part about Nagorno-Karabakh revised: "... the working peasants of Nagorno-Karabakh are given full right of self-determination"⁷. On December 4, the central body of the RCP(b) - newspaper "Pravda" published an article by J. Stalin on the relinquishment of claims to Nagorno-Karabakh by the AzSSR⁸. The original of the Declaration, according to which Baku recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as an integral territory of Soviet Armenia, is still inaccessible to researchers.

Thesis 7. Proclamation of NK as an integral part of Soviet Armenia.

On June 12, 1921, Soviet Armenia declared NK as its integral part⁹. The legality of this act was beyond doubt both from the point of view of international law and in the context of regional political and legal realities. The document was not legally vulnerable, due to:

a) The resolutions of the Congresses of the PRP of NK in 1918-1920, proclaiming NK as an integral territory of the RA;

b) The absence of parties disputing that NK belonged to Soviet Armenia, including the AzSSR, which recognized the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to full self-determination.

On June 3, 1921, before the Republic of Armenia declared NK as its integral part, the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b)(Caucasian Bureau of the Russian Communist Party [of Bolsheviks]), with the participation of representatives of Azerbaijan, adopted a special resolution obliging Armenia "to indicate in the declaration of the Armenian government that Nagorno-Karabakh belonged to Armenia"¹⁰.

Thesis 8. Discussion of the issue at the plenary session of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) of July 4, 1921.

On July 4, 1921, at the request of Baku, which recognized the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to complete self-determination on December 2, 1920, the issue was put on the agenda of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b). After discussion and voting, it was decided: "to include Nagorno-Karabakh in the SSR of Armenia, to hold a referendum only in Nagorno-Karabakh"¹¹. N. Narimanov, the representative of the AzSSR, demanded that the issue be passed on to the Central Committee of the

⁷ Mountainous Karabagh 1992: 604-605.

⁸ Stalin 1947: 413-414.

⁹ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 629.

¹⁰ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 627.

¹¹ From the history 1989: 56.

RCP(b). The Bolshevik Central Committee of the RCP(b), which had already decided to tear NK away from Soviet Armenia, but avoided responsibility for this arbitrariness, was not going to consider the issue itself. It was for this purpose that J. Stalin was sent to the plenary session of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b), with the task to solve the issue of transferring Nagorno-Karabakh to the AzSSR on the spot. Stalin's mysterious silence at the meeting of July 4, 1921 has an explanation after all: the next day he completed the task of the Center, but in line with his concept of autonomization.

Thesis 9. Consideration of the issue at the plenary session of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) on July 5, 1921 and the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh.

On July 5, 1921, a new session of the plenary meeting of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) was held, at which the draft of the new decision was read out: "Based on the need for national peace between Muslims and Armenians ... leave Nagorno-Karabakh within the Azerbaijani SSR, granting it broad regional autonomy with the administrative center in the city of Shushi, which is part of the autonomous region ..." ¹².

The draft was not put up for discussion and voting, which demonstrates the blatant cynicism of the arbitrariness towards Armenia. The Kavbiuro of the RCP(b), an unconstitutional, partisan institution of a third party, did not have the right to resolve territorial issues (especially beyond the borders of Russia). The implementation of this factually not adopted decision with gross violations was in fact the annexation of NK, which had already been declared an integral part of Soviet Armenia.

Even if we assume that the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) had the authority to make decisions on Artsakh, the legal assessment of the documents emerging from it shows the gross distortions of the essence of the issue contained in them. On July 4, 1921, the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) decided: "*To include Nagorno-Karabakh in the SSR of Armenia*", while Nagorno-Karabakh had already been declared an integral part of Soviet Armenia with the knowledge and by the decision of the same Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) a month earlier (June 3, 1921). The next day, the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) decided "*to leave Nagorno-Karabakh within the Azerbaijani SSR*" despite the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh had never been a part of the Azerbaijani SSR before and had already been declared an inseparable part of Soviet Armenia.

The second paragraph of the not adopted, but enacted draft resolution of the Kavbiuro of July 5, 1921 was an outrageous arbitrariness: "To instruct the Central Committee of Azerbaijan to determine the boundaries of the autonomous region and submit to the Kavbiuro of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) for approval". In fact, Baku received the task to determine the borders of not only the region, but also of Soviet Armenia.

¹² Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 639.

Thesis 10. Decree of the Azerbaijani Central Executive Committee (AzCEC) of Soviets on the formation of the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh (AONK) “from the Armenian part of Nagorno-Karabakh”.

Tearing Nagorno-Karabakh away from Soviet Armenia, the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) compensated for this annexation by granting Nagorno-Karabakh (i.e. the entire Nagorno-Karabakh) “broad regional autonomy”, which the name of the autonomy corresponded to until 1936 - the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh (AONK). According to the annexation act, territorially the AONK had to coincide with geographical Nagorno-Karabakh. The exact formulation “Leave Nagorno-Karabakh within the boundaries of the Azerbaijani SSR, granting it broad regional autonomy” leaves no room for discrepancies. On July 7, 1923, the AzCEC, in violation of the already illegal (and not adopted!) decision of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b), decreed *the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh* only on one-fourth of Nagorno-Karabakh with the wording: “To form an autonomous region from the Armenian part of Nagorno-Karabakh ... with the center in the town of Khankendi”¹³. Delaying the decreeing of the region for two whole years, Baku put into circulation the issue of the so-called Kurdistan autonomy (*Red Kurdistan*) in order to territorially separate the region from Armenia¹⁴. With such manipulation, in 1923, the AONK was decreed with shrunk borders and with 95% of Armenian population (Armenians would have made up a significant majority even if autonomy had been granted to the entire Nagorno-Karabakh). Khankendi (historical Vararakn, present-day Stepanakert) was declared the center of the region, instead of the city of Shushi, as the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) required. After such a disintegration of the NK territory, in 1936, the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh (AONK) was renamed into the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), reflecting the plunder of the region’s lands. Having decreed the autonomous region from a part of Nagorno-Karabakh, it was also necessary to finalize the historical and factual belonging of NK to Armenians with a special statement: “All pastures, forests, orchards and factual ownership of land and water are retained by the current owners”¹⁵.

Thesis 11. Continuation of the annexation policy under cover of border demarcation.

Comparison of the official maps of the ArmSSR, AzSSR and NKAO of the 1950s with those of the 1930s shows how, without the consent of the ArmSSR and NKAO, their borders were cut to pieces by the tacit consent of Bolshevik Moscow¹⁶. In 1927 the territory of Soviet Armenia was 30 thousand 247,6 square km, and by the time of the collapse of the USSR it was 29 thousand 742,5 square km, 505,1 square km less than in 1927. And all these territories were transferred to the AzSSR as a result of repeated

¹³ From the history 1989: 152-153.

¹⁴ *Red Kurdistan* was never formed, and the Kurdistan County, created in 1923, was annulled in 1929.

¹⁵ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 651-652.

¹⁶ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 654-657.

“border clarification” carried out under various pretexts (mainly with the motivation to provide pastures to nomadic farms), often without any registration.

Thesis 12. Ideological cover and political and legal compensation for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The plundering of Armenian territories took place under the pretext of the project of building in the AzSSR an international, not national, socialist republic of a new type not having a titular nation. The goal of the Soviet government in Azerbaijan, repeatedly voiced by the Bolshevik leaders, was “to create a strong non-national center out of it”¹⁷. Until the adoption of the new Constitution in 1936, the AzSSR remained the only republic in the USSR that did not have a titular nation. The concept of *an Azerbaijani* had no ethnic content and referred to all the residents of the AzSSR. The special status of the AzSSR as a Soviet republic without a titular nation excluded the division of the peoples inhabiting it into titular and non-titular. All of them were considered co-founders of the AzSSR as their common state¹⁸, but not national minorities. The place of the Armenians in the republic was special not only because of their significant role in the economy, culture and political history of Eastern Transcaucasia. Since the time of the Russian Empire, the ethnopolitical portrait of Eastern Transcaucasia was presented through the tandem of the concepts of “Armenians-Muslims”, in which the concept of *Muslims* served as a common name for all the peoples professing Islam. Until the 1930s, the conceptual construction “Muslims-Armenians” was a key political formula in almost all the documents concerning the problem. With this key idea of “establishing national peace between Muslims and Armenians” in the AzSSR, the draft decision of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) of July 5, 1921 was initiated. Recalling in the preamble the bloody clashes between Muslims and Armenians, the Decree “On the formation of the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh” announced that the goal of Soviet power in the AzSSR was the establishment of cooperation between Muslims and Armenians “in a single state union”¹⁹. By the Decree of the AzCEC “On the nationalization of state institutions in the Azerbaijani SSR” the Armenian language was declared the language of communication with the AONK²⁰. On the flag of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, the name of the autonomy was written in the Turkish and Armenian languages²¹. Regarding the territory of the Autonomous Oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Decree on its formation stated that “... the factual ownership of land and water ... is retained by the current owners”. In the annual economic reports the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the AONK were pointed out in a special line

¹⁷ From the history 1989: 56.

¹⁸ In 1997, the Minsk Group proposed to return to the idea of a common state, but Baku categorically refused.

¹⁹ From the history 1989: 152.

²⁰ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 652-653.

²¹ <https://bit.ly/2VWA2AV>

as national and state formations²². According to the constitution of the AzSSR, the chairman of the Regional Council of Deputies of the AONK/NKAO was assigned the second position in the hierarchy of the republic's legislative power - the position of the first deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the AzSSR. The political and legal attributes for the Armenian region and the Armenian people of the AzSSR collectively constituted a kind of compensation for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan, filling the concept of a non-national AzSSR with political and legal content. In a broad sense, it was expressed in the fact that in all the official documents of the twenties related to the problem, the granting of "broad regional autonomy" to Nagorno-Karabakh was considered to be the realization of the right of the Armenians of the AzSSR to self-determination, an act ensuring "the legal existence of the Armenian people within Soviet Azerbaijan"²³. Formulations on the status of the AONK/NKAO and "the legal existence of the Armenian people within Soviet Azerbaijan" leave no room for speculations that the Armenians of the AzSSR were the co-founder of this international Soviet republic without a titular nation, and not a national minority.

Thesis 13. Creeping retreat from the idea of a non-national AzSSR.

As it turned out later, the status attributes of the Armenian autonomy of the AONK and the place of Armenians in the national mosaic of the non-national AzSSR were a cover for the "velvet annexation" of Armenian lands. The goal was to soften the arbitrariness towards the Armenians and convince them to refrain from open protests. At the same time, the Bolshevik Center considered them decisions subject to revision. The main goal for the Bolshevik-Trotskyists, who had colluded with the Turks, was the inclusion of NK within the AzSSR. The course towards a gradual political and legal devaluation of the statutory merits for the AONK practically began with decreeing the region only on a part of Nagorno-Karabakh with shrunk borders. Meanwhile, the process of Turkization of the Caucasian Tatars, which had begun under Tsarism, was gaining momentum. In the non-national, international AzSSR, the Center undertook the implementation of the policy of *rootization*²⁴ envisaged for the national republics, the declared goal of which was to train personnel for the party and state apparatus of the republic of representatives of indigenous peoples. Raising the newcomer Caucasian Tatars to the rank of an indigenous people, the Center set about incorporating them into the power structures of the AzSSR, ousting from there the personnel of truly indigenous nationalities, primarily Armenians.

Thesis 14. Closure of the project of the national AzSSR. Mutation of the Stalinist project for the construction of the Azerbaijani nation.

²² From the history 1989: 273.

²³ Kirov 1924.

²⁴ There exists rich literature in regard to the assimilation of Caucasian Tatars until 1930s. See e.g. Sventokhonsky 2001; Auch 2001; Baberovsky 2004.

After the death of the “leader of the revolution”, the statesman Stalin, who had been debating with Lenin on the national and state structure of the USSR, dealt with the Trotskyist branch of the Bolsheviks and in the 1930s began to implement his own approaches in matters of the national and state structure of the USSR. He appeared to have a special plan for the AzSSR, aimed at overcoming the undesirable consequences of the policy of the Russian Empire and the Bolsheviks for the USSR. This involved in the process of Turkization the ethnically faceless mass of migrant workers who had come from Persia to Russia and whom the empire called by the false ethnonym *Caucasian Tatars*. Stalin decided to bring out a new Azerbaijani nation, different from both the Persian and Turkish identity, by merging the indigenous peoples of the AzSSR professing Islam with Caucasian Tatars. The plan of Stalin, who was thinking in imperial categories, was that due to the mastering of the history and culture of indigenous peoples, Caucasian Tatars had to acquire a new ethnic identity in this merger and recognize themselves as Azerbaijanis. The project of Azerbaijanization of the republic was aimed not only at strengthening the southern borders of the USSR. At that time, it also had an unvoiced geopolitical subtext: at a convenient moment to carry out the Turkish idea of creating a Greater Azerbaijan “in red performance”. It is known that when creating the ADR in 1918 the Turks assigned to it the name of the real Azerbaijan - the northwestern province of Iran. Stalin did not mind intercepting this plan of the Turks and carrying it out “in red performance”. At the end of World War II, he was close to realizing this idea. Only under the firm insistence of the allied powers to withdraw the Soviet troops from Iran and the flexible policy of the latter, this plan was not realized²⁵.

The project of Azerbaijanization encountered certain difficulties from the beginning. The influx of migrant workers, who had found themselves in Transcaucasia and had become the largest community through the efforts of the empire, had neither history connected with Transcaucasia, much less a culture created here to invest in the “money-box of the project nation”. Everything was to be accomplished at the expense of the indigenous peoples and undisguised robbery of Persian literature, the privatization of the classics of which began in Baku already in the early thirties. Thus, the Stalinist project of building a new Azerbaijani nation, on the one hand, presupposed the assimilation of Caucasian Tatars in the culture of indigenous peoples, and on the other hand, the taking away the national identity from the indigenous peoples and their forced Azerbaijanization. In 1933, Stalin entrusted the implementation of this plan to his favorite Mir-Jafar Baghirov, who was appointed first secretary of the Azerbaijani Communist Party in 1933 (before that, none of the leaders of the non-national AzSSR had been a Caucasian Tatar). In 1936, the ethnonym *Azerbaijanis* first appeared in the new Constitution of the USSR as the name of the new titular nation of the Republic.

But in spite of Stalin’s plan, on the ground, the project of Azerbaijanization of the Republic practically turned into the process of forced Turkization of the indigenous peoples of the Republic through the efforts of the aforementioned Baghirov. A special

²⁵ In post-Soviet conditions, the project of Greater Azerbaijan again appeared in the “working folder” of Turkey.

spiritual image of the newly-minted Azerbaijani was formed – an abuser confident in his impunity with the political consciousness of a Turk.

The Stalinist project of Azerbaijanization of the Republic proved to be a failure. The “leader of the peoples” had miscalculated. Even in his thoughts he had not assumed that the leadership of the Republic could turn the project he had conceived into a mechanism of the Turkization of the Republic. Most of the indigenous peoples professing Islam, under the pressure of Azerbaijanization with massively distributed Azeri passports, went into a kind of national underground. Even now they are waiting for a convenient situation to get out of this underground. Meanwhile, the Armenians of the AzSSR, who did not succumb themselves to the project of Azerbaijanization/Turkization, especially after Stalin’s death, began to be viewed as an obstacle to the completion of this plan, which had already survived a mutation. All the peoples of the multinational AzSSR and the union state itself would undoubtedly benefit if the development of the Republic was oriented towards maintaining its multinationality and federalization.

Thesis 15. Transformation of the national and state structure of the USSR towards the Stalinist plan of autonomization.

Stalin, who put forward the concept of autonomization in the disputes around the national and state structure of the USSR, did not overpower Lenin, who had laid the foundation for the construction of the USSR on the idea of national republics as sovereign entities. After Lenin’s death, Stalin, who did not renounce his views, was forced to reckon with Lenin’s legacy as a fact. He did everything to fit the established political realities within the framework of his concept and ensured that in the Constitution of the USSR (1936) named after him, the national republics delegated to the Union Center their most significant powers and functions, which are associated with the sovereignty of the state. This philosophy of the Stalinist Constitution was adopted by the 1977 USSR Constitution. The unity of the USSR and the supremacy of the Constitution of the USSR were also ensured by the fact that from the beginning the constitutions of the union republics could not contradict the Constitution of the USSR, since they were drawn up on its basis. In the pyramid of national entities, the interval of status powers of the union republics and lower-level entities of the national and state structure was reduced, which was reflected in the documents on the state and legal status of the NKAO. This was recorded primarily in the fact that the NKAO, along with the AzSSR, had the constitutionally established status of an entity of the national and state structure of the USSR with the right to self-determination (all national autonomies had this status). The supremacy of the Constitution of the USSR in determining the status of NKAO was also enshrined in the “Law of the AzSSR on the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region” (Baku, 1987), all articles of which on the status and powers of the NKAO begin with the statement: “In accordance with the Constitution of the USSR and the Constitution of the Azerbaijani SSR ...” (The right to draw up the “Law of the AzSSR

on the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region” according to the legislation of the USSR rested with the Regional Council of People’s Deputies of the NKAO, after whose submission the Supreme Soviet of the AzSSR approved the law). Both the AzSSR and the NKAO were entities of the national and state structure of the USSR and in terms of the right of representation in the supreme legislative power of the country they were equal (the difference was limited to quotas). Territorial integrity as one of the attributes of statehood for the AzSSR and NKAO was defined in a legally equivalent way: the territory of the autonomous region (as in the case of the republic) could not be changed without its consent. The NKAO and AzSSR were also equal in terms of the key attributes of statehood delegated to the Union Center. Neither the NKAO, nor the AzSSR had their own currency, their own armed forces. The USSR had one state border, and the internal borders between the republics had the status of administrative borders. The prosecutors of the Union republics and autonomous formations (in this case, the AzSSR and NKAO), in accordance with Article 166 of the Constitution of the USSR, were appointed by the Prosecutor General of the USSR.

It is obvious that in the Stalinist edition of the national and state structure of the USSR the delegation of such significant powers by the national republics to the Center brought their status attributes as close as possible to the analogous attributes of autonomous formations.

Thesis 16. The eradication of Armenians from Nakhichevan. Protests of the Artsakh people against the arbitrariness towards the Armenians of the AzSSR.

The legal transformation of the national and state structure of the USSR towards the Stalinist concept of *autonomization* did not become an obstacle to the forcible Azerbaijanization (in fact, Turkization) of the non-Turkic peoples of the AzSSR professing Islam and the eradication of Armenians from the Republic. On the contrary, Baku was given carte blanche to act on behalf of the Union Center. The genocide of the Armenians of the Nakhichevan region that had started by the Turks in 1918, continued in Soviet times as well. In 1925, by the decision of the Azerbaijani Central Executive Committee, in violation of the Treaty of Kars, the refugee Armenians that had fled from the *pogroms* of the Turks in 1918, were prohibited to return to their homes²⁶. By the 1980s, almost all the Armenians were squeezed out of Nakhichevan by “soft” pressure. The same policy was pursued with respect to the NKAO, the authorities and population of which repeatedly turned to the Center with protest petitions (1930s, 1945, 1965, 1967, 1987) with tens of thousands of signatures. There was no estoppel (tacit agreement) regarding the forcible inclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh into the AzSSR. In 1977, in connection with the adoption of the new Constitution of the USSR, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, having discussed the question of the status of the NKAO in the light of the letters of the workers, concluded: “It is necessary

²⁶ Bakinskiy rabochiy, 06.05 1925.

to annex Nagorno-Karabakh ("Artsakh" in Armenian) with the Armenian SSR"²⁷. The powerful protest movement, known as the *Karabakh Movement*, that started in 1988 was a continuation of the incessant struggle of the Artsakh people for the restoration of justice and the realization of their right to full self-determination, recognized, but suppressed by force. Up to Gorbachev's coming to power, the Center's disregard for the arbitrariness committed in the AzSSR against Armenians and other indigenous peoples had a political explanation in the light of the project to build a new Azerbaijani nation. Moscow also hoped that the policy of autonomization, which was not officially declared, but was actually pursued in the USSR in the form of delegating to the Center the main attributes of statehood by the Union republics, would eventually eliminate all local contradictions. It was believed that this would be facilitated by the proclaimed goal of the national policy in the USSR - the formation of the Soviet people as a historically new community of people.

Thesis 17. Gorbachev's *perestroika* as a project for the collapse of the USSR. The genocide of the Armenians of the AzSSR.

Pinning their hopes on the policy of *perestroika* and *glasnost* proclaimed by M. Gorbachev, on February 20, 1988, the extraordinary session of the Regional Council of People's Deputies of the NKAO appealed to the Supreme Soviets of the AzSSR, ArmSSR and USSR with a request to consider the issue of transferring the NKAO from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR. Baku responded to the request to consider the issue with the Armenian genocide in Sumgait. This was followed by acts of mass violence against Armenians throughout the whole AzSSR. Gorbachev and his team actually appeared to be on the side of the *pogromists*. The genocide of Armenians in the AzSSR was a shock that shook the USSR, since it was this crime that revealed the deliberate inaction of the union authorities in ensuring the physical safety of their citizens. One must have an idea of the power of the USSR secret services in order to understand the Center's awareness of this inaction. As it turned out later, it was through the Karabakh conflict that Gorbachev's team carried out the course of dismantling the USSR into union republics. All the actions of this team in 1988-1991 received adequate understanding in the light of this plan. It also included the punitive operation "Ring" in the spring of 1991, when the Center put at the disposal of Baku the internal troops of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs and the units of the 23rd division of the 4th Soviet Army stationed in Kirovabad to carry out a large-scale military and police operation to deport the Armenian population of Artsakh and liquidate the "rebellious region". The purpose of the operation was to ensure the preparation of the full dissolution of the USSR into union republics, so that after the flag of the USSR was lowered there were no obstacles and exceptions in the way of its implementation. But Gorbachev did not manage to complete the violence against NKAO before he left. The coup (according to many experts - a staged performance) in August 1991 led the country to the final phase of disintegration, and the Karabakh conflict entered the period of post-Soviet realities.

²⁷ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 665.

Thesis 18. Insurmountable legal obstacles to the application of the principle of territorial integrity to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

During the collapse of the USSR, the Republic of Azerbaijan was recognized within the borders of the AzSSR, and this became the justification for the wars (1992-1994, 2016, 2020) against the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), unleashed by Azerbaijan to restore its allegedly violated territorial integrity. But upon closer examination it turns out that from the fact of the political recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan stemmed neither its right to use force against the NKR, nor a legal conclusion about the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the borders of the AzSSR. It does not have the right to use force under the UN Charter²⁸ which prohibits its member states from resorting to force when settling disputes. The principle of territorial integrity of states (inviolability of state borders) is also inapplicable to the Republic of Azerbaijan, since its purpose is to protect the legitimate borders, and not those resulting from annexations. The application of this principle to the Republic of Azerbaijan bypassing the annexations of the Armenian territories in favor of the AzSSR is unlawful. It was documented in the Russian-Turkish Treaty of Moscow²⁹ (March 16, 1921) and the Treaty of Kars³⁰ (October 13, 1921) and in the decision of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) of July 5, 1921.

The legal nullity of the treaties of Moscow and Kars from the moment of their signing stems from the fact that one of their signatories, the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey represented a reclusive movement in the Ottoman Empire, and was not entitled to conclude such treaties on behalf of the state. The status of this party to the treaties of Moscow and Kars did not exceed the status of a non-governmental organization³¹. Such a qualification of these documents also stems from the fact that Armenia was forced to accept them. It is documented in Article XV of the Treaty of Moscow, according to which Russia undertook "to take in relation to the Transcaucasian Republics the steps necessary for the obligatory recognition by these Republics the treaties that they will conclude with Turkey, articles ... directly concerning them". It is clear that these steps of coercion had to be taken against Soviet Armenia in order to get its consent to relinquish Nakhichevan. While recognizing Turkey and the USSR in the 1920-30s, the West ignored the illegality of these agreements, considering them not subject to revision. But this did not make them legally sound. Nowadays this is even more relevant because the implementation of the forcibly imposed annexationist treaties was accompanied by violations incompatible with the treaties themselves, with the consequences of which both Armenia and Russia are faced today. On February 18, 1924, bypassing the Treaty of Kars, the Nakhichevan region was unilaterally

²⁸ <https://www.un.org/ru/charter-united-nations/>

²⁹ Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy 1959. The book is placed on the website: <https://bit.ly/3IAKQfe>

³⁰ Documents of the USSR Foreign Policy 1960: 420-429. <http://dvp.sssr.su/IV.pdf>

³¹ Although the other signatories of the documents were not recognized subjects of international law either, in 1921 they were not confronted by internationally recognized subjects disputing their rights.

transformed into an autonomous republic within the AzSSR. A double legal regime arose regarding the status of Nakhichevan: in the USSR it was an autonomous republic within the AzSSR, and under the acting Treaty of Kars it was a territory only transferred under the patronage of the AzSSR. The successive changes in the status of Nakhichevan within the USSR had no consequences for the Treaty of Kars, which remained indifferent to its statutory metamorphoses within the USSR.

Azerbaijan's renunciation of the legal succession of the AzSSR in 1991 gave the status of Nakhichevan a legally absurd character: according to the acting Treaty of Kars (if we considered it legally sound), this was a territory that had been transferred under the patronage of the already defunct AzSSR, and according to Article 134 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan it was an autonomous state (!) within the unitary Republic of Azerbaijan which had renounced the legal succession of the AzSSR³². The Treaty of Kars, according to which Nakhichevan was torn away from the ArmSSR and transferred under the patronage of the AzSSR, which had gone into oblivion, is in effect, and the AzSSR left history without a legal successor. The only conclusion that inevitably follows from these legal facts is unambiguous: Nakhichevan is now the territory of Armenia occupied by the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Thesis 19. Proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a legally invalid act.

On February 5, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijani SSR adopted the Law "On Changes in the Name of the Azerbaijani SSR"³³, decreeing "to rename the Azerbaijani State, the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic, to the Republic of Azerbaijan". The center did not react to this act, which was in disagreement with Article 71 of the Constitution of the USSR. It was clear that the "Republic of Azerbaijan" was just another name for the AzSSR, since the renaming did not entail any changes either in the constitutional status of the republic, or in its political or national and state structure. The current Constitution of the USSR retained this name until the collapse of the union state, and according to the Fundamental Law of the USSR, acts of sovereignty were adopted on behalf of the AzSSR. The Declaration "On the Restoration of State Independence"³⁴ of August 30, 1991, and especially the Constitutional Act "On State Independence"³⁵ of October 18, 1991, in which the "philosophy of sovereignty" of the Republic of Azerbaijan is laid out in detail, suggest important legal implications. In the "Constitutional Act ..." the status of the territory annexed in April 1920 by Soviet Russia was attributed to Azerbaijan. It was specifically a territory and not a Soviet republic, and it could become its successor during the collapse of the USSR. The motives for renouncing the legal heritage of the Soviet period are obvious: it contains

³² <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/ru/az/az057ru.pdf>

³³ http://base.spinform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=2888

³⁴ <http://www.myaazerbaijan.org/index.php?p=Azerbaijan/5>

³⁵ <http://nurlu.narod.ru/ARMA.htm>

documentary evidence (the “decision” of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b), the treaties of Moscow and Kars, the illegality of which Baku had no doubt of) of the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan in favor of the AzSSR and was not suitable for justifying the legality of the borders of AzSSR. But it was not only that. Baku hoped that by renouncing the heritage of the AzSSR, the Republic of Azerbaijan would be freed from responsibility for the genocide of the Armenians of the AzSSR. Therefore, ignoring the USSR Law of April 3, 1990 “On the procedure for resolving issues related to the secession of a union republic from the USSR”³⁶, Baku proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan not by an act of secession from the USSR, but by the restoration of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic of 1918-1920 established by the Turks.

But even such a formalization of sovereignty did not help the Republic of Azerbaijan to acquire legitimate borders, since the ADR established by the Turks had left history without acquiring either recognized or established borders which they could refer to. In 1991, Baku did not have legitimate grounds (treaties, agreements), ensuring the applicability of the principle of territorial integrity to the Republic of Azerbaijan. This led to the absence in the “Constitutional Act ...” of a legally significant statement regarding the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Article 14 of the “Constitutional Act” stating that “the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the historically established borders is unified, indivisible, inalienable” is a statement devoid of legal meaning. The insolubility of the task of proclaiming the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the basis of legitimate succession forced Baku to resort to the substitution of all key facts and concepts in the “Constitutional Act”. One of them was in the above-mentioned excerpt from Article 2, stating that “the Republic of Azerbaijan is the successor of the Republic of Azerbaijan that existed from May 28, 1918 to April 28, 1920”. But there existed no state with such a name in Transcaucasia. Baku post-factum renamed the long-gone Azerbaijani Democratic Republic into the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to give legal credibility to the act of succession with such an adjustment.

Thesis 20. The problem of recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the borders of the AzSSR in the context of the right of peoples to self-determination.

In the modern world, the primary source of the legitimacy of the state border is the act of self-determination of people, implemented through an independence referendum. The state border is one of the final forms of the realization of the right of self-determination of peoples, formalized in interstate treaties (agreements) between neighboring states. The emergence of three republics with the name of Azerbaijan (with each subsequent one not being the legal successor of the previous one) in the east of Transcaucasia in the 20th century demonstrates that none of them established itself by an act of self-determination through an independence referendum.

³⁶ Messages of the congress 1990: 253.

The first such state - a similar formation, the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic - became a political reality as a result of the Turkish intervention in Transcaucasia in 1918. There was no mention of an independence referendum.

The second state - a similar formation emerged in April 1920, when the XI Red Army of Soviet Russia entered Baku, abolished the ADR and proclaimed the AzSSR. And again, without an act of an independence referendum.

In 1991, the current Republic of Azerbaijan, on the initiative of the EU, was also recognized not on the basis of an act of self-determination. The "referendum" was carried out post-factum after the recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan by Europe.

Thesis 21. On the legitimacy of the proclamation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR).

All the legal acts, all the documents adopted in the XX century in Artsakh by a referendum or by its elected authorities were in accordance with international law.

1918-1920

Endowed with full representative power, the Congress of Plenipotentiary Representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh and the National Council of Nagorno-Karabakh elected by it as the supreme executive body in the conditions of "statelessness" of the region were absolutely legitimate according to the criteria of modern international law. In 1918-1920 there was no other national institution in Transcaucasia with such a resource of legitimacy as the Congress of the PRNK. The British military mission that entered Baku, led by General Thomson, and the ADR government, which entered into contractual relations with Nagorno-Karabakh and on August 26, 1919, concluded a "Temporary Agreement" with the National Council of NK, had to reckon with this³⁷.

1988-1989

The decision of the extraordinary sitting of the Council of People's Deputies of the NKAO dated February 20, 1988, was a petition addressed to the Supreme Soviets of the AzSSR, ArmSSR and USSR to consider the issue of transferring the NKAO from the AzSSR to the ArmSSR³⁸. The Regional Council of the NKAO did not violate either the principles of international law or the laws of the USSR by its petition-appeal.

The decision of the Eighth session of the Council of People's Deputies of the NKAO of the 20th convocation "On the proclamation of the secession of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from the Azerbaijani SSR" dated July 12, 1988, was adopted after the appeal of the Regional Council of People's Deputies dated February 20, 1988, on the transfer of the NKAO from the AzSSR to the ArmSSR was followed by the Armenian genocide in the city of Sumgait and acts of mass violence against Armenians in the Armenian-populated regions of the Republic. It became obvious that the Baku leadership had undertaken bloody forms of de-Armenization of the Republic and that the security of the region's population could be solved only by secession from

³⁷ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 364-366.

³⁸ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 665.

the Azerbaijani SSR and joining the Armenian SSR. This was a decision made by an entity of the national and state structure of the USSR, endowed with the right to self-determination.

On August 16, 1989, based on the experience of the Congresses of the PRP of NK of 1918-1920, a Congress of People's Representatives (PR) of Nagorno-Karabakh was convened to govern the region in conditions when, by the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet dated January 12, 1989, a special form of government was introduced in the NKAO and the powers of the Council of People's Deputies of the NKAO were temporarily suspended³⁹. The decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet was an unlawful act, and this was confirmed on November 28, 1991, by the USSR Constitutional Supervision Committee, which ruled that "the competence of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet did not include the right to suspend the activities of any Councils of People's Deputies"⁴⁰. In accordance with the Constitution of the USSR, the Congress of the PR of Nagorno-Karabakh restored people's power in the NKAO as the fundamental principle of the political system of the USSR. The National Council, elected by the Congress of PR of NK, carried out the functions of the executive power of the NKAO until the proclamation of the NKR.

1991

On September 2, 1991, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was proclaimed by the Joint Session of the Nagorno-Karabakh Regional and Shahumyan District⁴¹ Councils with the participation of people's deputies of all levels in full accordance with the international legal norm on the right to free self-determination of peoples and the laws of the USSR as a disintegrating state⁴².

In 1991, the impeccability of the proclamation of the NKR in the context of Soviet constitutional law was ensured by the USSR Law "On the procedure for resolving issues related to the secession of a union republic from the USSR" of April 3, 1990, which approved the right of autonomous formations and large minority populations to independently decide the issue of their status in the event of the secession of the union republic from the USSR⁴³. The law proceeded from the fact that autonomous national formations and areas of compact residence of non-titular nationalities were included within the union republics on the basis of the right of peoples to self-determination and that they retained this right in the event of secession of the union republic from the USSR. This fundamental provision was reaffirmed in the USSR Law "On the separation

³⁹ Pravda, January 13, 1989. Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 670-671.

⁴⁰ Nagorno-Karabagh 2008: 709-711.

⁴¹ On February 12, 1991, by the decision of the Supreme Soviet of the AzSSR, the district was liquidated and included in the Goranboy district.

⁴² The declaration of independence referred to as «Common declaration of human rights» <https://bit.ly/3rQW7C6>, «International pact of economic, social, and cultural rights» <https://bit.ly/3yfvph>. «International pact of civil, political, and cultural rights» <https://bit.ly/3yb9RbP>.

⁴³ Messages of the congress 1990.

of powers between the USSR and the subjects of the federation”⁴⁴ adopted on April 26, 1990, in a wording that excludes any misinterpretation: “Autonomous republics, autonomous formations are part of union republics on the basis of free self-determination of peoples”. With the sovereignty of the NKR the above-mentioned laws of the USSR together with the Declaration of the AzSSR of December 2, 1920 (by which Baku recognized the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to full self-determination) eliminated the contradiction that is sometimes seen between the principles of self-determination of peoples and the territorial integrity of states. Artsakh retained its right to full self-determination even after the collapse of the USSR, regardless of the observance or violation of the procedures for the secession of the Republic of Azerbaijan from the USSR in 1991 and its claims to NK.

The proclamation of independence of the NKR on September 2, 1991, was absolutely legitimate in the context of the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, if we ignore the legal inconsistency of the act of its sovereignty. The declaration of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 30, 1991, on the restoration of the ADR, which had existed and had not acquired established or recognized borders, expanded the legal basis for the declaration of independence of the NKR, since it followed from this act that the NKR declared its independence in the territories that did not belong to the Republic of Azerbaijan either legally or factually. With such a legal basis for the legitimacy of sovereignty, on December 10, 1991, in the presence of international observers, the Joint Session of People’s Deputies of all levels of the NKAO and neighboring Shahumyan district voted for the independence of the NKR through an independence referendum. 99.89 % of the citizens participating in the referendum voted in favor of the sovereignty of the NKR.

Thesis 22. On the political and legal assessment of the recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the borders of the AzSSR by the European Community: reprisal against RIGHT.

The West desired not just the abolition of the USSR, but such an elimination of the nuclear superpower which would not entail dangerous consequences for the West (and possibly for the whole world). The safest and most inexpensive project was the collapse of the USSR into union republics. It was obvious that possible disputes over “conflict borders” between the Union republics would not be aggravated by the republics themselves, in order not to miss the historic chance of sovereignty. And therefore, in the geopolitical project of dismantling the USSR, these minor contradictions could be neglected. But the West had a special attitude to the Karabakh conflict. In 1988-1990, the people of the NKR repeatedly received messages of support for their liberation movement. Here are some examples.

⁴⁴ Messages of the congress 1990. <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/901817747>

On September 12, 1988, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution “On the situation in Soviet Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh”⁴⁵, in which it condemned “the violence against Armenians in Azerbaijan” and supported “the demand of the Armenian minority for reunification with the Socialist Republic of Armenia”. On November 19, 1989, the US Congress adopted a “Resolution in support of the fundamental rights and aspirations of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh”⁴⁶ and called to support such a “fair settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which would really reflect the views of the people of that region”. Moreover, the Congress called “to investigate the acts of violence committed against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, to identify and bring to justice those who are guilty of killings and bloodshed”. After these resolutions the massacres and bloodshed intensified, especially in the spring and summer of 1991 during the punitive operation “Ring”.

On March 10, 1999, the European Parliament adopted a resolution confirming that during the collapse of the USSR the NKR proclaimed independence on the same legal basis as the Republic of Azerbaijan⁴⁷.

The genocide of the Armenians of the AzSSR, which took bloody forms in 1988-1991, concerning which the elite of world science and culture of the West raised alarm⁴⁸, was sufficient for an adequate assessment of the essence of the Karabakh conflict. But the official West ignored Baku's criminal acts and in 1992 recognized the Republic of Azerbaijan within the borders of the AzSSR, the heritage of which the Republic of Azerbaijan had just renounced. The most plausible explanation for this behavior of the West comes down to the fact that the West saw in the Karabakh conflict an explosive mechanism for the collapse of the USSR into union republics. Keeping their finger on the pulse of the implementation of this project, the western capitals shrewdly did not call the crimes of Baku by their own name, so that at the finish line, when they recognized the Republic of Azerbaijan within the borders of the AzSSR, they would not find themselves on the side of the state that they themselves had accused of committing genocide. It was clear that this would become a collective violation of the UN General Assembly Declaration of October 24, 1970 “On the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation between states in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations”, according to which the UN supports the application of the principle of territorial integrity only to states “observing in their actions the principle of equality and self-determination of peoples”⁴⁹. Probably, the Western capitals also believed that accusing the AzSSR of committing a crime against humanity and failing to recognize the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan on this basis would give

⁴⁵ Official Journal of the European Communities, No. C 94/117, July, 1988.

⁴⁶ <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c101:S.J.RES.178>.

⁴⁷ Official Journal of the European Communities, C175/251. The European Parliament leaned on the Resolutions it adopted on January 12, 1990, May 27, 1993, June 18, 1977, November 3, 1998.

⁴⁸ https://aga-tribunal.info/en/open_27-7-1990_en/

⁴⁹ Acting international law 1996.

https://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/declarations/intlaw_principles.shtml

rise to similar problems, complicating the “velvet dissolution” of the USSR. In discourses on this topic, the idea is often expressed that the West was by default guided by the principle of *uti possidetis*, usually applicable in situations of transition of sovereign power. This principle which means “whatever you own is yours,” in 1991 was probably justified for many union republics of the USSR, but not for the Republic of Azerbaijan, because since 1988 Baku had neither administrative nor political control in the NKAO. Chronologically, the last status of the NKAO was a special administration introduced in the region on January 12, 1989, when all economic and administrative-and-party structures were withdrawn from the subordination of the AzSSR and reassigned to Moscow and Yerevan.

The initiator of the official legalization of the dissolution of the USSR into the union republics was the European Community (EC). On December 16, 1991, in Brussels, at the level of foreign ministers the EC Council determined a general approach to the issue of the official recognition of new states in the post-Soviet territory and Eastern Europe (the document is known as the “Statement by the Twelve”⁵⁰). The European Community declared the criteria for the recognition of new states. On December 21, 1991, by a joint declaration in Alma-Ata the union republics that had already declared their independence, including the Republic of Azerbaijan, agreed to the criteria for recognition put forward by Europe⁵¹. On December 23, 1991, the EC in its turn approved the Alma-Ata Declaration and began to implement its decision. As expected, this was perceived in Baku as approval for the continuation of the war against the NKR and the policy of ethnic cleansing. This put into action the historically developed syndrome of impunity for crimes against humanity, for the acts of genocide of Armenians in Baku (1905, 1918, 1990), Shushi (1920, 1988), Sumgait (1988) during the punitive operation “Ring” (1991). The European Community ignored not only the genocidal behavior of the AzSSR/Republic of Azerbaijan, but also the legal facts incompatible with the recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the borders of the AzSSR. “Disregarded” was the fact that none of the state-like formations with the name “Azerbaijan” was established by an act of self-determination (referendum on independence) as a starting point for acquiring legitimate borders. In 1991 neither the EU, which recognized the Republic of Azerbaijan, nor the Azerbaijani authorities could indicate which borders were under consideration if: a) the Republic of Azerbaijan, refusing to be the successor of the AzSSR, proclaimed the restoration of the ADR of 1918-1920, which included neither Nagorno-Karabakh nor Nakhichevan; b) the ADR, the statehood of which was being restored, did not have established borders; c) Azerbaijan lost all ties with Nakhichevan, which, under the acting Treaty of Kars, had only been transferred under the patronage of the already defunct AzSSR; d) by the time Azerbaijan was recognized in accordance with the norms and principles of international law, on December 10, on the basis of a nationwide referendum, the independent NKR

⁵⁰ <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/901857469>

⁵¹ <https://cis.minsk.by/page/178>

became a reality within the borders of the NKAO and the adjacent Armenian-populated Shahumyan district.

In fact, in 1991, the EU adopted not the act of recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan with established borders, but ascribed virtual borders to it, instructing Baku to clarify them at its discretion. It was exactly what the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) did in 1921. And in 2021, based on the experience of the 1920s, Azerbaijan began to clarify “its borders” and invaded the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

The act of recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the virtual borders of the AzSSR in 1991 did not change the annexationist nature of the Treaty of Kars and the “decision” of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) and did not make the borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan definite. This political act did not (and could not) entail legal consequences for previously concluded treaties and equivalent documents concerning the territories included within the AzSSR. The recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the borders of the AzSSR did not give legitimacy either to the Resolution of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) dated July 5, 1921, or to the acting Treaty of Kars and the borders of the AzSSR that appeared on their basis. Nakhichevan and Nagorno-Karabakh did not cease to be annexed territories. Baku understood this very well (and still understands it!). In the absence of legal grounds for the proclamation of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the borders of the AzSSR during the collapse of the USSR, the borders for the Republic of Azerbaijan could be established by an act of primary self-determination – an independence referendum, since before that not a single such act had been carried out in the east of Transcaucasia. Baku did not dare to do this, fearing the loss of not only Nagorno-Karabakh, but also of the districts with a large minority population of Lezghins and Talysh, who were ready to use the USSR Law “On the procedure for resolving issues related to the secession of a union republic from the USSR” of April 3, 1990. Baku avoided holding an independence referendum, since at the end of the collapse of the USSR the capitals of the union republics already knew about the intention of the West to recognize the post-Soviet republics within the borders of the former union republics.

Thesis 23. The Minsk process of the resolution of the Karabakh conflict under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE): an imitation of a legal approach.

The OSCE’s general approach to the resolution of the conflict predetermined the decision of the European Community (EC) on the recognition of the post-Soviet states within the borders of the union republics. The formula turned out to be inapplicable to the AzSSR due to the well-known legal facts already mentioned above and came into conflict with both the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act⁵². The EC decided to bypass these facts, apparently assessing them as inevitable costs of the dismantlement of the USSR. The a priori message about the legitimacy of the borders of the AzSSR

⁵² <https://www.osce.org/ru/ministerial-councils/39505>

became a starting point for the substitution of the image of the conflict. The principles of international law, declared by the OSCE as the basis for the settlement of the conflict, turned out to be only declared, but not introduced into the Minsk process, becoming in fact a cover for the OSCE's avoidance of RIGHT. The principle of the territorial integrity of states was "involved" in the settlement of the conflict without establishing the legality of its application to the Republic of Azerbaijan with the annexed Nakhichevan and Nagorno-Karabakh. This recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan ran counter to the UN General Assembly Declaration "On Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations" of October 24, 1970, according to which the principle of territorial integrity is applicable to states "conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". If we assume that at the end of the dismantlement of the USSR it was politically unreasonable for the West to mention the genocide of the Armenians in the AzSSR, in the following decades, when the Republic of Azerbaijan's actions proved that it adhered to this criminal line already in relation to Artsakh, there can be no reasonable explanation for the exclusion of the genocidal behavior of Baku from the framework of the settlement of the conflict. Apart from the factology of the conflict, the principle of international law on free self-determination of peoples was "introduced" into the Minsk process as well. The settlement process left out not only the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to full self-determination, secured by the UN Charter, not only the recognition of this right in the national and state system of the USSR, but also the fact of recognition of the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to full self-determination by the AzSSR itself by the Declaration of December 2, 1921. For the OSCE the fundamental principles of international law actually turned into a farce for the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. This was especially evident at the OSCE Summit in Lisbon⁵³, which offered Nagorno-Karabakh "the highest degree of self-government within Azerbaijan", recognized for Nagorno-Karabakh back in 1921 in the following formulation: "broad autonomy within the Azerbaijani SSR".

The December 1991 decision of the EC to recognize the Republic of Azerbaijan with Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan not belonging to it, in fact, became an argument to justify the wars it unleashed against the NKR in 1992-1994, 2016 and 2020 (in the latter case, with the involvement of Turkey and detachments of mercenary terrorists). The global danger of the recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan with territories not legally belonging to it lies in the mutation of the principle of the territorial integrity of states, which in this application turns from the principle of stability and peace into the principle of cover-up of genocide and seizure of territories.

Thesis 24. The first Karabakh war of 1992-1994.

After sovereignization, the Republic of Azerbaijan, which had lost the support of Gorbachev's team, quickly had a complete fiasco in the war it had unleashed against

⁵³ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/4/39543.pdf>

the NKR. Separate self-defense detachments in the NKR quickly united into the Self-Defense Army, which not only repulsed the attack of the Azerbaijani troops, but also liberated part of the territories of Nagorno-Karabakh, which, according to the July 5, 1921 decision of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b) were to be part of the Armenian Autonomous region of AONK but were torn away from it by a decree of the AzCEC of the AzSSR in 1923. In May 1994, Baku was forced to agree to an indefinite ceasefire and, on the initiative of Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS, to sign the Bishkek Protocol jointly with the delegations of Armenia and the NKR.

Thesis 25. Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Minsk Process.

On February 20, 1988, when making a request to the Supreme Soviet of the AzSSR, ArmSSR and USSR about the handover of the Armenian region from the AzSSR to the ArmSSR, the NKAO counted on a positive solution to the issue not only pinning their hopes on the proclaimed new political course of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Until 1988, there were more than two dozen cases of changes in the borders and the state and legal status of entities of the national and state structure of the USSR. Political decisions, as a rule, were made in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with their subsequent inclusion in the agenda of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the corresponding union republics for their legal and legislative processing. In the case of the NKAO, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU reacted immediately and sharply. The very next day in the main party newspaper "Pravda" they evaluated the decision of the NKAO Regional Council as "the result of the actions of extremists and nationalists"⁵⁴. For the first time, Moscow gave absolute meaning to the sovereignty of the republics. In Yerevan people responded to the events unfolding in the NKAO with peaceful rallies of support. After the massacre of Armenians in Sumgait they grew into a nationwide protest movement unprecedented for the USSR ("Pan-Armenian National Movement - PANM) under the slogan *Miatsum/Reunification*. In the events that unfolded around Nagorno-Karabakh after the Sumgait massacres, Moscow clearly adhered to a course that was strange for the Soviet superpower: not to close the issue and not to give a solution to the conflict, but rather to escalate it. Refusing the people of Karabakh, Moscow actually referred to Baku's denial of the right of the people of NK to self-determination, despite the fact that the AzSSR recognized this right back in 1920. The leaders of the PANM who came to power in Armenia retreated from the goal of reunification, considering it inexpedient, and this was unexpected for the broad masses involved in the national movement *Miatsum*. However, on December 1, 1989, they had to draw back at the Joint session of the Supreme Soviet of Armenia and the National Council of the NKAO in which the issue of reuniting the ArmSSR and NKAO was raised under the pressure of a powerful national movement. The Joint session adopted a resolution on the reunification of the ArmSSR and NKAO⁵⁵. Moscow reacted to this

⁵⁴ Pravda, February 21, 1988.

⁵⁵ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=3153>

negatively, although it could not assess (and did not assess) this act as illegal, and later only persuaded Yerevan to denounce the Joint Resolution. In the light of the events of 1988-1991 that have already become history, it is difficult to find any other reasonable explanation for the behavior of Gorbachev's team and leaders of the PANM in the Karabakh issue, other than that they were informed about the project of the collapse of the USSR into union republics and their involvement in its realization. The retrospective analysis does not reveal any fact that contradicts this version.

On September 21, 1991, the independence referendum in the Republic of Armenia was held without the NKAO, within the ArmSSR. Knowing about the position of the leaders of the PANM, after the proclamation of the declaration "On the restoration of state independence" in Baku (30.08.1991), at the Joint session of People's Deputies of all levels of the NKAO and adjacent Shahumyan region on September 2, 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (Artsakh) was proclaimed. The political elite of the PANM adhered to a different position. On March 5, 1992, on the day of the accession of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN, the leader of the PANM, President Levon Ter-Petrosyan reaffirmed his vision of the resolution to the problem, reiterating his support for leaving the Armenian region within the Republic of Azerbaijan in the status of "full autonomy", considering that "the status of autonomy as a part of Azerbaijan would completely satisfy all parties"⁵⁶. In July 1992, the aggravated relations between the PANM elite and the parliament around the issue of Armenia's attitude towards the status of the NKR ended in a compromise. On July 18, 1992, the opposition in the RA Parliament achieved the adoption of a resolution obliging the Republic of Armenia "not to recognize any internal or international document recognizing the NKR as a part of the Republic of Azerbaijan"⁵⁷. The position of the President of Armenia on the Karabakh issue became the reason for his dismissal from office in February 1998 and the coming to power of Robert Kocharyan (1998-2008). On June 24, 2004, from the rostrum of the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe the latter voiced the key thesis of the essence of the conflict that "Nagorno-Karabakh has never been a part of independent Azerbaijan"⁵⁸. This was an attempt to oust the initial *a priori* thesis of the OSCE from the negotiation process, without reflecting on the factology of the conflict assuming that Nagorno-Karabakh belonged to the Republic of Azerbaijan. The OSCE responded with silence, although it was obvious that such a position provoked Baku's confidence in the solution of the issue by force and a surge of hatred towards Armenians⁵⁹. Within the framework of the Minsk process Armenia failed to link

⁵⁶ Komsomolskaya pravda, March 5, 1992.

⁵⁷ Bulletin of the Archives of Armenia, N 13 (1017), doc. 313 <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=3278>

⁵⁸ <https://armenpress.am/rus/news/539931/>

⁵⁹ A clear manifestation of the ideology of racism implanted in the Azerbaijani society was the brutal murder of Gurgen Margaryan, a fellow student, an Armenian serviceman, by Ramil Safarov, an officer of the Azerbaijani army, motivated by ethnic hatred (in February of the same 2004, in Budapest, at the courses organized as part of the Partnership for Peace programme). The offender not only was not condemned by the Azerbaijani society, but became its favorite. And when in 2012, shortly after the visit of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to Baku Ramil Safarov was extradited,

the principles of international law with the generally recognized and documented facts of the legal folder of the problem. All the projects of the Minsk Group on conflict regulation, presented to the parties, assumed the return of the territories of seven regions “around Nagorno-Karabakh” under Azerbaijani control, although the people of Karabakh had not occupied territories outside the geographic borders of Nagorno-Karabakh. They liberated only a part of the lands which were to be within the boundaries of the Armenian autonomy of the AONK even according to the annexationist decree of the Kavbiuro of the RCP(b). The issue of the legitimacy of the borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan was off the agenda of the Minsk Group, which inspired the Republic of Azerbaijan to unleash wars against the NKR. In 2020 it entered the war against the NKR with the participation of Turkey and with the involvement of terrorist units from Syria. In the spirit of the Minsk Group approach, the new leadership of the Republic of Armenia which came to power in 2018 as a result of the “velvet revolution”, agreed to the “return” of the territories “around” Nagorno-Karabakh, liberated during the 1991-1994 Karabakh war. But Azerbaijani troops broke deep into the territory of not only the former region from the south, but also entered the territory of the Republic of Armenia under the pretext of clarifying the borders. It takes time to uncover the secrets of the 44-day Karabakh war, where the interests of all power centers of the world crossed. The implications of the trilateral statement of November 10, 2020 remain to be brought to light. But according to its results as of June 2021, when this article was written, barbarism prevailed over civilization in the 2020 Karabakh war. Referring to the characters of Armenian mythology we can say: Bel, who appeared in a new form, seriously wounded Hayk⁶⁰.

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he was welcomed in Azerbaijan as a national hero. The killer was pardoned and rewarded with all kinds of awards and honors.

⁶⁰ According to mythology, Hayk was the progenitor of Armenians, and Bel was the leader of the giants, who demanded that Hayk recognize his superiority. Hayk refused to obey Bel and killed him in a decisive battle in Hayots-Dzor. According to legend, his tribe began to be called Hay (Hay) by his name, and the country – Hayastan.

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Translated from the Armenian by Syuzanna Chraghyan

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THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO, THE VENETIAN
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Chapter I

1. It should be known to the reader that, at the time when Baldwin II. was emperor of Constantinople¹, where a magistrate representing the doge of Venice then resided², and in the year of our Lord 1250³, Nicolo Polo, the father of the said Marco, and Maffeo, the brother of Nicolo, respectable and well informed men, embarked in a ship of their own, with a rich and varied cargo of merchandise, and reached Constantinople in safety. After mature deliberation on the subject of their proceedings, it was determined, as the measure most likely to improve their trading capital, that they should prosecute their voyage into the Euxine or Black Sea⁴. With this view they made purchases of many fine and costly jewels, and taking their departure from Constantinople, navigated

¹ Baldwin II. count of Flanders, and cousin of Louis IX. king of France, who reigned from 1237 to 1261, was the last of the Latin emperors of Constantinople.

²The passage which in Ramusio's text is," dove all' hora soleva stare un podestà di Venetia, per nome di messer lo Dose," and upon which he has written a particular dissertation, has nothing corresponding to it in the Latin or French versions, or in the Italian text published by Boni. The city of Constantinople and the Greek provinces had been conquered, in 1204, by the joint arms of the French and the Venetians, the latter of whom were commanded by their doge, the illustrious Henry Dandolo, in person. Upon the division of the territory and the immense spoil that fell into their possession, a larger share (including the celebrated bronze horses of Lysippus) was assigned to the republic than to the emperor elected on the occasion, and the aged doge, who had himself declined the imperial title, but accepted that of Prince of Romania, maintained an independent jurisdiction over three parts out of eight of the city, with a separate tribunal of justice, and ended his days at the head of an army that besieged Adrianople. It is doubtful whether any of his successors in the high office of chief of the republic made the imperial city their place of residence. The doge, a slave of state," says Gibbon "was *seldom* permitted to depart from the helm of the republic; but his place was supplied by the bail, or regent, who exercised a supreme jurisdiction over the colony of Venetians." Such was the podestà, sometimes termed bailo, and sometimes despoto, whose cotemporary government is here spoken of, and whose political importance in the then degraded state of the empire was little inferior to that of Baldwin: whilst in the eyes of the Polo family, as Venetian citizens, it was probably much greater. The name of the person who exercised the functions at the time of their arrival, is said, in the Sorenzo manuscript, to have been Misier Ponte de Veniexia, and, in 1261, when the empire, on rather the city, was reconquered from the Latins, the podestà was Marco Gradenigo.

³ There are strong grounds, Marsden says, the believing that this date of 1250, although found in all the editions, is incorrect. In the manuscript, of which there are copies in the British Museum and Berlin libraries, the commencement of the voyage is placed in 1232, and some of the events related in the sequel render it evident that the departure, at least of our travellers from Constantinople, must have been some years later than the middle of the century, and probably not sooner than 1255. How long they were detained in that city is not stated: but, upon any calculation of the period of their arrival or departure, it is surprising that Grynaes, the editor of the Basle and Paris edition of 1935. and after him the learned Muller and Bergeron, should, notwithstanding the anachronism, introduce into their texts the date of 1260, which was the year in which they returned to Syria from their best Tartarian journey.

⁴ The prosperity, riches, and political importance of the state of Venice having arisen entirely from its commerce, the profession of a merchant was there held in the highest degree of estimation, and its nobles were amongst the most enterprising of its adventurers in foreign trade. To this illustrious state might have been applied the proud character drawn by Isaiah of ancient Tyre, which he describes as "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth."

that sea to a port named Soldaia,⁵ from whence they travelled on horseback many days until they reached the court of a powerful chief of the Western Tartars, named Barka,⁶ who dwelt in the cities of Bolgara and Assara,⁷ and had the reputation of being one of the most liberal and civilized princes hitherto known amongst the tribes of Tartary. He expressed much satisfaction at the arrival of these travellers, and received them with marks of distinction. In return for which courtesy, when they had laid before him the jewels they brought with them, and perceived that their beauty pleased him, they presented them for his acceptance. The liberality of this conduct on the part of the two brothers struck him with admiration; and being unwilling that they should surpass him in generosity, he not only directed double the value of the jewels to be paid to them, but made them in addition several rich presents. The brothers having resided a year in the dominions of this prince, they became desirous of revisiting their native country, but were impeded by the sudden breaking out of a war between him and another chief, named Alaù, who ruled over the Eastern Tartars.⁸ In a fierce and very sanguinary battle that ensued between their respective armies, Alaù was victorious, in consequence of which, the roads being rendered unsafe for travellers, the brothers could not attempt to return by the way they came; and it was recommended to them, as the only practicable

⁵ Soldaia was the name given in the middle ages to the place (the Tauro-Scythian port of the ancients) now called Sudak, situated near the southern extremity of the Crimea or Tauric Chersonesus. It is described in these words: "About the midst of the said province towards the south, as it were upon a sharp angle or point, standeth a city called Soldaia, directly against Synopolis. And there doe all the Turkie merchants, which traffique into the north countries, in their journey outward, arrive, and as they return homeward also from Russia, and the said northern regions, into Turkie."- Purchas, vol. ii. p. z.

⁶ This Tartar prince is usually named Bereké, the successor, and said to be the brother, of Batu, the son of Tushi, eldest son of Jengis-khan; who inherited, as his portion of the dominions of his grandfather (although not in full sovereignty), the western countries of Kapehak or Kipchak, Allân, Russ, and Bulgar, and died in 1256.

⁷ The Bolgar, Bulgar, or Bulghar, here spoken of, is the name of a town and an extensive district in Tartary, lying to the eastward of the Wolga, and now inhabited by the Bashkirs, sometimes distinguished from the Bulgaria on the Danube, by the appellation of the Greater Bulgaria. Assara is the city of Sarai (with the definitive article prefixed), situated on the eastern arm of the Wolga, or Achtuba. "The Astrachan mentioned by Balducci Pegoletti was not on the same spot where that town stands now, but the ancient Astrachan was demolished, together with Saray, by the emperor Timur, in the winter of 1395. The old town of Saray was pretty near the ancient "- Forster.

⁸ These Eastern Tartars, as they are relatively termed, but whose country extended no further to the east than the provinces of Persia and Khorasan, were so named to distinguish them from the Western (or more properly. North-Western) Tartars mentioned in the preceding note, who occupied the countries in the neighbourhood of the Wolga, and from thence to the confines, or beyond the confines, of Europe. Their chief, her named Ala-ù or Hala-ù, is the celebrated Hulagu, the son of Tuli or Tulwi, and equally with Batu, Mangu, and Kubla (the latter of whom were his brothers, the grandson of Jengiz-khan. Being appointed by his elder brother Mangu, to command in the southern provinces of the empire, he left Kara-korum, a short time before the visit of Rubruquis to that Tartar capital, and in the year 1255 crossed the Jihun of Oxus, with a large army. In the following year, he destroyed the race or sect of the Ismaelians, called also Malahidet, of whom a particular account will be given hereafter, and then turned his arms against the city of Baghdad, which he sacked in 1258; putting to death Mostasem Billah, the last of the Abbassite khalifs. Upon the death of Mangu, in 1259, Hulagu became effectively the sovereign of Persian and Babylonian Irak, together with Khorasan, yet he still continued to profess nominal and respectful allegiance to his brother Kublas, who was acknowledged as the head of the Moghul family, and reigned in China. His death took place in 1265, at Tauris or Tabriz his capital.

mode of reaching Constantinople, to proceed in an easterly direction, by an unfrequented route, so as to skirt the limits of Barka's territories. Accordingly they made their way to a town named Oukaka,⁹ situated on the confines of the kingdom of the Western Tartars. Leaving that place, and advancing still further, they crossed the Tigris,¹⁰ one of the four rivers of Paradise, and came to a desert, the extent of which was seventeen days' journey, wherein they found neither town, castle, nor any substantial building, but only Tartars with their herds, dwelling in tents on the plain.¹¹ Having passed this tract they arrived at length at a well-built city called Bokhara,¹² in a province of that name, belonging to the dominions of Persia, and the noblest city of that kingdom, but governed by a prince whose name was Barak.¹³ Here, from inability to proceed further, they remained three years.

It happened while these brothers were in Bokhara, that a person of consequence and gifted with eminent talents made his appearance there. He was proceeding as ambassador from Alaù before mentioned, to the grand khan, supreme chief of all the Tartars, named Kublaï¹⁴ whose residence was at the extremity of the continent, in a direction between north east and east.¹⁵ Not having ever before had an opportunity,

⁹There can be little doubt of this being the Okak of Abulfeda; from hence the route of travellers may be presumed to have lain towards the town of Jaik, on the river of that name, and afterwards, in a south-easterly direction, to the Sihun.

¹⁰The great river crossed by our travellers, and which from its magnitude they sought think entitled to rank as one of the rivers of Paradise, was evidently the Sihun, otherwise named the SIRR.

¹¹ The desert here mentioned is that of Karak, in the vicinity of the Sihun or SIRR, which travellers from the north must unavoidably pass, in order to arrive at Bokhâra.

¹²This celebrated city, the name of which could not be easily mistaken, and has not been disguised by the transcribers, serves materially to establish the general direction of their course; for, having proceeded northwards from the Crimea, they could not have reached Bokhâra otherwise than by crossing the several rivers with discharge themselves into the upper or northern part of the Caspian.

¹³ This appears to be the prince whom Pétis de la Croix names Berrac Can, and D'Herbelot Barak-khan, great-grandson of Jagataï, the second son of Jengiz-khan, who inherited Transoxiana, or the region now possessed by the Usbek Tartars. Barak is said, by the latter, to have attempted to wrest the kingdom of Khorasan from the dominion of Abaka the son of Hulagu; but this must be a mistake, as the death of Barak is placed by the generality of historians in 1260 (by D'Herbelot, unaccountably, in 1240), and that of Hulagu in 1265.

¹⁴ Mangu appointed Kublaï his viceroy in China, and gave to Hulagu the government of such of the southern provinces of Asia as he could reduce to obedience. Returning himself to China in 1258, he died at the siege of Ho-cheu, in the province of Se-chuen, in the following year. Kublaï was at this time in the province of Hu-kuang, and persevered in his efforts to render himself master of Vu-chang-fu, its capital, until he was called away to suppress a revolt excited by his younger brother Artigbuga, whom Mangu had left as his lieutenant at Kara-korum. Contenting himself with exacting from the emperor of the Song, who ruled over Manji, or southern China, the payment of an annual tribute, he retreated to the northward, and in 1260 was proclaimed grand khan, at Shang-tu, which from that time became his summer residence. We are told, however, that he had hesitated for some time to assume the title, and did not declare his acquiescence until the arrival of an envoy sent by his brother Hulagu (by some supposed to have been the elder), who urged him to accept the empire. This envoy we may reasonably presume to have been the person who arrived at Bokhâra, in his way from Persia to Khataï, during the time that Nicolo and Maffeo Polo were detained in that city; and the period is thereby ascertained to have been about the year 1258.

¹⁵ This vague designation of the place of residence of the grand khan must be understood as applying to Khataï, or northern China, from which, or the adjoining district of Karchin, where Shang-tu was situated, he was rarely absent.

although he wished it, of seeing any natives of Italy, he was gratified in a high degree at meeting and conversing with these brothers, who had now become proficient in the Tartar language; and after associating with them for several days, and finding their manners agreeable to him, he proposed to them that they should accompany him to the presence of the great khan, who would be pleased by their appearance at his court, which had not hitherto been visited by any person from their country; adding assurances that they would be honourably received, and recompensed with many gifts. Convinced as they were that their endeavours to return homeward would expose them to the most imminent risks, they agreed to this proposal, and recommending themselves to the protection of the Almighty, they set out on their journey in the suite of the ambassador, attended by several Christian servants whom they had brought with them from Venice. The course they took at first was between the north-east and north, and an entire year was consumed before they were enabled to reach the imperial residence, in consequence of the extraordinary delays occasioned by the snows and the swelling of the rivers, which obliged them to halt until the former had melted and the floods had subsided. Many things worthy of admiration were observed by them in the progress of their journey, but which are here omitted, as they will be described by Marco Polo, in the sequel of the book.

2. Being introduced to the presence of the grand khan, Kublaï, the travellers were received by him with the condescension and affability that belonged to his character, and as they were the first Latins who had made their appearance in that country, they were entertained with feasts and honoured with other marks of distinction. Entering graciously into conversation with them, he made earnest inquiries on the subject of the western parts of the world, of the emperor of the Romans,¹⁶ and of other Christian kings and princes. He wished to be informed of their relative consequence, the extent of their possessions, the manner in which justice was administered in their several kingdoms and principalities, how they conducted themselves in warfare, and above all he questioned them particularly respecting the pope, the affairs of the church, and the religious worship and doctrine of the Christians. Being well instructed and discreet men, they gave appropriate answers upon all these points, and as they were perfectly acquainted with the Tartar (Moghul) language, they expressed themselves always in becoming terms; insomuch that the grand khan, holding them in high estimation, frequently commanded their attendance.

When he had obtained all the information that the two brothers communicated with so much good sense, he expressed himself well satisfied, and having formed in his mind the design of employing them as his ambassadors to the pope, after consulting with his ministers on the subject, he proposed to them, with many kind entreaties, that they should accompany one of his officers, named Khogatal, on a mission to the see of

¹⁶By the emperor of the Romans is meant the emperor, whether Greek or Roman, who reigned at Constantinople. Those countries which now form the dominion of the Turks in Europe and Asia Minor, are vaguely designated, amongst the more Eastern people, by the name of Rûm, and their inhabitants by that of Rûmi.

Rome. His object, he told the was to make a request to his holiness that he would send to him a hundred men of learning, thoroughly acquainted with the principles of the Christian religion, as well as with the seven arts, and qualified to prove to the learned of his dominions by just and fair argument, that the faith professed by Christians is superior to, and founded upon more evident truth than, any other; that the gods of the Tartars and the idols worshipped in their houses were only evil spirits, and that they and the people of the East in general were under an error in reverencing them as divinities. He moreover signified his pleasure that upon their return they should bring with them, from Jerusalem, some of the holy oil from the lamp which is kept burning over the sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he professed to hold in veneration and to consider as the true God.¹⁷ Having heard these commands addressed to them by the grand khan they humbly prostrated themselves before him, declaring their willingness and instant readiness to perform, to the utmost of their ability, whatever might be the royal will. Upon which he caused letters, in the Tartarian language, to be written in his name to the pope of Rome, and these he delivered into their hands. He likewise gave orders that they should be furnished with a golden tablet displaying the imperial cipher,¹⁸ according to the usage established by his majesty; in virtue of which the person bearing it, together with his whole suite, are safely conveyed and escorted from station to station by the governors of all places within the imperial dominions, and are entitled, during the time of their residing in any city, castle, town, or village, to a supply of provisions and everything necessary for their accommodation.

Being thus honourably commissioned they took their leave of the grand khan, and set out on their journey, but had not proceeded more than twenty days when the officer, named Khogatal, their companion, fell dangerously ill, in the city named Alau.¹⁹ In this dilemma it was determined, upon consulting all who were present, and with the

¹⁷ We may reasonably suspect (without entertaining any doubt of the embassy itself) that the expressions here put into the mouth of the emperor, both as they regard the worship of the Tartars and the divinity of Christ, have been heightened by the zeal of Christian transcribers. The circumstance of Kublaï, who is known to have been of an active and inquisitive mind, requesting to be furnished with a number of missionaries from Europe, to instruct his ignorant Tartar subjects in religion, and more especially in the practice of useful arts, is no more than what has been frequently done since, by the princes of half-barbarous nations, amongst whom the doctrine of the Koran had not already taken root. With regard to the holy oil, we find its importance thus stated by Chardin: "Ce qu'il (le clergé Arménien) vend le plus cher, ce sont les saintes huiles, que les Grecs appellent myrone. La plupart des chrétiens orientaux s'imaginent que c'est un baume physiquement salutaire contre toutes les maladies de l'ame. Le patriarche a seul le droit de la consacrer. Il la vend aux évêques et aux prêtres. Il y a quelques douze ans que celui de Perse se mit en tête d'empêcher les ecclésiastiques Arméniens de tout l'orient, de se pourvoir des saintes huiles ailleurs que chez lui. Ceux de Turquie s'en fournissent depuis long-tems à Jeru salem, auprès du patriarche Arménien qui y réside, et qui est le chef de tous les Chrétiens Arméniens de l'empire Ottoman."-Voy. en Perse, tom. i. p. 170, 4to.

¹⁸Frequent mention is made in the Chinese writings of the tchikouei, or tablet of honour, delivered to great officers on their appointment; upon which their titles are set forth in gold letters, and which entitles them to considerable privileges in travelling. That which is here spoken of may be supposed to have been of nearly the same kind. In the vulgar European dialect of Canton, it is termed the emperor's grand chop, a word used to express "seal, mark, warrant, licence, or passport."

¹⁹The name of the place where Khogatal was left is omitted in Marsden, and in the French and some of the Italian texts.

approbation of the man himself, that they should leave him behind. In the prosecution of their journey they derived essential benefit from being provided with the royal tablet, which procured them attention in every place through which they passed. Their expenses were defrayed, and escorts were furnished. But notwithstanding these advantages, so great were the natural difficulties they had to encounter, from the extreme cold, the snow, the ice, and the flooding of the rivers, that their progress was unavoidably tedious, and three years elapsed before they were enabled to reach a sea-port town in the lesser Armenia, named Laiassus.²⁰ Departing from thence by sea, they arrived at Acre²¹ in the month of April, 1269, and there earned, with extreme concern, that pope Clement the Fourth was recently dead.²² A legate whom he had appointed, named M. Tebaldo de' Vesconti di Piacenza, was at this time resident in Acre,²³ and to him they gave an account of what they had in command from the grand khan of Tartary. He advised them by all means to wait the election of another pope, and when that should take place, to proceed with the object of their embassy. Approving of this counsel, they determined upon employing the interval in a visit to their families in Venice. They accordingly embarked at Acre in a ship bound to Negropont, and from thence went on to Venice, where Nicolo Polo found that his wife, whom he had left with child at his departure, was dead, after having been delivered of a son, who received the name of Marco, and was now of the age of nineteen years.²⁴ This is the Marco by whom the present work is composed, and who will give therein a relation of all those matters of which he has been an eye-witness.

²⁰ We have given the name Laiassus from the Latin text, instead of Giazza, given in Marsden's text, which is an evident corruption. The place meant is a port on the northern side of the gulf of Scandaroon, or Issus, which in our modern maps and books of geography has the various appellations of Lajazzo, Aiazso, Aiasso, L'Aias, and Layassa.

²¹ Acre, properly Akkâ, the ancient Ptolemais, a maritime city of Palestine, was taken from the Saracens, in 1110, by the Crusaders. In 1187 it fell into the hands of Saladin or Salah-eddin; and in 1191 it was wrested from him by the Christian forces, under Philippe Auguste, king of France, and Richard Coeur de Lion, king of England. In 1265, and again in 1269 (about the period at which our travellers arrived there), it was unsuccessfully attacked by Bibars, sultan of Egypt. In 1291 it was finally conquered from the Christians, and in great part demolished, by Khalil, another Egyptian sultan, of the dynasty of Mameluk Baharites. In modern days, it suddenly arose from the obscurity in which it had lain for five centuries, and once more became celebrated for the determined and triumphant resistance there made, in 1798 and 1799, by Jezzar Pasha, assisted by a small British squadron and the gallantry of its distinguished commander, against the furious and sanguinary efforts of the invader of Egypt.

²² Clement IV. died on the 29th of November, of the year 1268. The event was consequently a recent one when our travellers arrived at Acre, in April, 1269. It may be observed that the date of their arrival stated in the MSS., some reading 1260, the Latin text having 1270, and others 1272. Some MSS. specify the 30th of April as the day of their arrival.

²³ That Acre was the residence of a legate from the papal see about this period is proved by other records.

²⁴ The Basle, as well as the earlier Latin version, and the Italian epitomes, state the age of Marco, who was to become the historian of the family, to have been then only fifteen years. If this reading be correct, as probably it is, the father, who arrived at Acre in 1269, and may be presumed to have reached Venice in 1270, must have left home about the year 1255. (See Note 3, on p. 10.) The age of nineteen seems to have been assigned in order to make it consistent with the supposed departure in 1250.

3. In the meantime the election of a pope was retarded by so many obstacles, that they remained two years in Venice, continually expecting its accomplishment;²⁵ when at length, becoming apprehensive that the grand khan might be displeased at their delay, or might suppose it was not their intention to revisit his country, they judged it expedient to return to Acre; and on this occasion they took with them young Marco Polo. Under the sanction of the legate they made a visit to Jerusalem, and there provided themselves with some of the oil belonging to the lamp of the holy sepulchre, conformably to the directions of the grand khan. As soon as they were furnished with his letters addressed to that prince bearing testimony to the fidelity with which they had endeavoured to execute his commission, and explaining to him that the pope of the Christian church had not as yet been chosen, they proceeded to the before-mentioned port of Laiassus. Scarcely however had they taken their departure, when the legate received messengers from Italy, despatched by the college of cardinals, announcing his own elevation to the papal chair; and he thereupon assumed the name of Gregory the Tenth.²⁶ Considering that he was now in a situation that enabled him fully to satisfy the wishes of the Tartar sovereign, he hastened to transmit letters to the king of Armenia,²⁷ communicating to him the event of his election, and requesting, in case the two ambassadors who were on their way to the court of the grand khan should not have already quitted his dominions, that he would give directions for their immediate return. These letters found them still in Armenia, and with great alacrity they obeyed the summons to repair once more to Acre; for which purpose the king furnished them with an armed galley; sending at the same time an ambassador from himself, to offer his congratulations to the sovereign pontiff.

Upon their arrival, his holiness received them in a distinguished manner, and immediately despatched them with letters papal, accompanied by two friars of the order

²⁵A vacancy in the papal see, for a period of nearly three years, occurred on this occasion, in consequence of the cabals existing in the Sacred College; when, at length, it was determined to refer the choice of a pope to six of the cardinals, who elected Tebaldo of Piacenza, on the first day of September, 1271. In order to prevent the inconvenience and scandal of such delays for the future, the institution of the Conclave (upon a principle that resembles the impanelling of our English juries) was established.

²⁶In the list of sovereign pontiffs we find him styled "B. Gregorius X. Placentinus." His election, as has been mentioned, took place on the 1st of September, 1271. He was then acting as legate in Syria; but, having early notice of the event, he was enabled to take his departure from thence so soon as the 18th November following, and landed at Brindisi, near Otranto, in January, 1272.

²⁷At this time Leon, or Livon II., reigned in the lesser Armenia, the capital of which was Sis, and Aïas, or Aïazzo, its chief port. His father, whom we call Haiton, and the Arabian writers Hatem, had acted a conspicuous part in the late transactions, having accompanied Hulagu from the court of Mangu-khan to Persia, and assisted in his wars with the Mussulmans. In 1270 he had obtained the consent of Abaka the son of Hulagu, then his liege sovereign, transferring the crown of Armenia, on account of his age and infirmities, to his son Leon. The principal actions of his life are recorded by his namesake, relation and cotemporary, who, having long distinguished himself as a soldier, became an ecclesiastic. His work was edited by Grynæus, at Basle and Paris, in 1532, under the title of "Haithonis Armeni de Tartaris liber," and again, by Andreas Müller, in 1671, under that of "Haithoni Armeni Historia Orientalis: quæ eadem et de Tartaris inscribitur." See also Abul Pharajii Hist. pp. 328-357; and De Guignes, Hist. Gén. liv. xv. pp. 125- 249.

of Preachers, who happened to be on the spot; men of letters and of science, as well as profound theologians. One of them was named Fra Nicolo da Vicenza, and the other, Fra Guielmo da Tripoli. To them he gave licence and authority to ordain priests, to consecrate bishops, and to grant absolution as fully as he could do in his own person. He also charged them with valuable presents, and among these, several handsome vases of crystal, to be delivered to the grand khan in his name, and along with his benediction. Having taken leave, they again steered their course to the port of Laiassus,²⁸ where they landed, and from thence proceeded into the country of Armenia. Here they received intelligence that the soldan of Babylonia, named Bundokdari, had invaded the Armenian territory with a numerous army, and had overrun and laid waste the country to a great extent.²⁹ Terrified at these accounts, and apprehensive for their lives, the two friars determined not to proceed further, and delivering over to the Venetians the letters and presents entrusted to them by the pope, they placed themselves under the protection of the master of the knights templars,³⁰ and with him returned directly to the coast. Nicolo, Maffeo, and Marco, however, undismayed by perils or difficulties (to which they had long been inured), passed the borders of Armenia, and prosecuted their journey. After crossing deserts of several days' march, and passing many dangerous defiles, they advanced so far, in a direction between north-east and north, that at length they gained information of the grand khan, who then had his residence in a large and magnificent city named Cle-men-fu.³¹ Their whole

²⁸As it may be presumed that our travellers commenced their journey about the time of the sailing of Pope Gregory from Acre, the period is fixed by authority that will scarcely admit dispute, to the end of the year 1271, or beginning of 1272.

²⁹This soldan was Bibars, surnamed Bundokdari, Mameluk sultan of Egypt (which is meant by Babylonia), who had conquered the greater part of Syria, and had already (in or about 1266) invaded Armenia, and plundered the towns of Sis and Aïs. In 1270 he made himself master of Antioch, slew or made captives of all the Christian inhabitants, and demolished its churches, the most magnificent and celebrated in the East. It must have been about the beginning of the year 1272 that our travellers entered Armenia; and, although it is not stated specifically that any irruption by the soldan took place at that time, it is evident that he had not ceased to harass the neighbouring country of Syria; and, notwithstanding the formidable combination just mentioned, we find him again, in 1276, invading the province of Rûm, immediately bordering on the lesser Armenia to the northward. The alarms must have been perpetual, and these alone may have been sufficient to deter the two theologians from proceeding with their more adventurous companions; who did not, however, meet with the enemy.

³⁰ It is well known that the knights of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, and the knights of the Temple, were two great monastic military orders that arose from the fanaticism of the crusades, and became the most regular and effective support of the Christian cause in Asia. It is not unlikely that a body of the latter may have been stationed in this part of Armenia (which we should term the pashalic of Marash), for its defence, and the ecclesiastics would naturally seek the protection of its commander, who may have been the master, but was more probably only a knight of the order.

³¹ The ordinary residence of Kublaï at this period must have been Yenking (near the spot where Peking now stands), whilst he was employed in laying the foundations of his new capital of Ta-tu, of which particular mention will be made in the sequel. The operations of war, or the regulations of newly-conquered provinces, might, however, occasion his visiting other cities; and our travellers may have found him in the western part of his dominions. "Il etablit sa cour d'abord," says Du Halde, "à Tai-yuen-fou, capitale de la province de Chan-si, et ensuite il la transporta à Peking." - *Descript, de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 496.

journey to this place occupied no less than three years and a half; but, during the winter months, their progress had been inconsiderable.³² The grand khan having notice of their approach whilst still remote, and being aware how much they must have suffered from fatigue, sent forward to meet them at the distance of forty days journey, and gave orders to prepare in every place through which they were to pass, whatever might be requisite to their comfort. By these means, and through the blessing of God, they were conveyed in safety to the royal court.

4. Upon their arrival they were honourably and graciously received by the grand khan, in a full assembly of his principal officers. When they drew nigh to his person, they paid their respects by prostrating themselves on the floor. He immediately commanded them to rise, and to relate to him the circumstances of their travels, with all that had taken place in their negotiation with his holiness the pope. To their narrative, which they gave in the regular order of events, and delivered in perspicuous language, he listened with attentive silence. The letters and the presents from pope Gregory were then laid before him, and, upon hearing the former read, he bestowed much commendation on the fidelity, the zeal, and the diligence of his ambassadors; and receiving with due reverence the oil from the holy sepulchre, he gave directions that it should be preserved with religious care. Upon his observing Marco Polo, and inquiring who he was, Nicolo made answer, This is your servant, and my son; upon which the grand khan replied, "He is welcome, and it pleases me much" and he caused him to be enrolled amongst his attendants of honour. And on account of their return he made a great feast and rejoicing; and as long as the said brothers and Marco remained in the court of the grand khan, they were honoured even above his own courtiers. Marco was held in high estimation and respect by all belonging to the court. He learnt in a short time and adopted the manners of the Tartars, and acquired a proficiency in four different languages, which he became qualified to read and write.³³ Finding him thus accomplished, his master was desirous of putting his talents for business to the proof, and sent him on an important concern of state to a city named Karazan,³⁴ situated at the distance of sixmonths journey from the imperial residence; on which occasion he

³² When the Teshu Lama of Tibet visited (in 1779-80) the late emperor of China, at Peking, his journey (although from what we consider a neighbouring country, and which has since been garrisoned by Chinese troops) occupied ten months, during four of which he was detained at one place by the snow.

³³ Perhaps the Moghul or Mungal, Ighor, Manchu, and Chinese. The last will be thought the least probable; but no inference should be drawn from his orthography of Chinese names in European characters, and particularly in the corrupted state of the text. The Latin text says that Marco learnt "the Tartar and four other languages;" the French text says, "their language and four different characters" of writing.

³⁴ Having here the name merely, without any circumstance but that of its remoteness from the capital of China, we must presume it to be intended for a city of Khorasan; to which there is no objection but the probability of his having passed through that province when he first visited Tartary, and that it is not here spoken of as a place with which he had been previously acquainted. It was then (together with Persia) under the dominion of the second son of Hulagu, who succeeded his brother Abaka, and took the name of Ahmed Khan, upon his embracing the Mahometan religion. It would, perhaps, be taking a liberty with the orthography to suppose that the name might be intended for Khorasmia, the Kharism of modern geographers.

conducted himself with so much wisdom and prudence in the management of the affairs entrusted to him, that his services became highly acceptable. On his part, perceiving that the grand khan took a pleasure in hearing accounts of whatever was new to him respecting the customs and manners of people, and the peculiar circumstances of distant countries, he endeavoured, wherever he went, to obtain correct information on these subjects, and made notes of all he saw and heard, in order to gratify the curiosity of his master. In short, during seventeen years³⁵ that he continued in his service, he rendered himself so useful, that he was employed on confidential missions to every part of the empire and its dependencies; and sometimes also he travelled on his own private account, but always with the consent, and sanctioned by the authority, of the grand khan. Under such circumstances it was that Marco Polo had the opportunity of acquiring a knowledge, either by his own observation, or what he collected from others, of so many things, until his time unknown, respecting the eastern parts of the world, and which he diligently and regularly committed to writing, as in the sequel will appear. And by this means he obtained so much honour, that he provoked the jealousy of the other officers of the court.

5. Our Venetians having now resided many years at the imperial court, and in that time having realized considerable wealth, in jewels of value and in gold, felt a strong desire to revisit their native country, and, however honoured and caressed by the sovereign, this sentiment was ever predominant in their minds. It became the more decidedly their object, when they reflected on the very advanced age of the grand khan, whose death, if it should happen previously to their departure, might deprive them of that public assistance by which alone they could expect to surmount the innumerable difficulties of so long a journey, and reach their homes in safety; which on the contrary, in his lifetime, and through his favour, they might reasonably hope to accomplish. Nicolo Polo accordingly took an opportunity one day, when he observed him to be more than usually cheerful, of throwing himself at his feet, and soliciting on behalf of himself and his family to be indulged with his majesty's gracious permission for their departure. But far from showing himself disposed to comply with the request, he appeared hurt at the application, and asked what motive they could have for wishing to expose themselves to all the inconveniences and hazards of a journey in which they might probably lose their lives. If gain, he said, was their object, he was ready to give them the double of whatever they possessed, and to gratify them with honours to the extent of their desires; but that, from the regard he bore to them, he must positively refuse their petition.

³⁵In Ramusio's text the period is said to be *venlisei anni*, "twenty-six years," and Purchas endeavours to explain in what sense this number should be understood; but I prefer, in this instance, the reading of the Latin version, which has "xvii annos," as more consistent with the fact. It is certain that the family did not leave Acre, on their return to China, before the end of 1271; and as there is reason to believe that they did not reach the emperor's court before 1273 or 1274, nor remain there beyond 1291, it follows that the period of Marco's service could not have exceeded seventeen years by more than a few months. Twenty-six years include the whole of the period elapsed since the first visit of his father and uncle in 1264 or 1265.

It happened, about this period, that a queen named Bolgana,³⁶ the wife of Arghun,³⁷ sovereign of India, died, and as her last request (which she likewise left in a testamentary writing) conjured her husband that no one might succeed to her place on his throne and in his affections, who was not a descendant of her own family, now settled under the dominion of the grand khan,³⁸ in the country of Kathay.³⁹ Desirous of complying with this solemn entreaty, Arghun deputed three of his nobles, discreet men, whose names were Ulatai, Apusca, and Goza,⁴⁰ attended by a numerous retinue, as his ambassadors to the grand khan, with a request that he might receive at his hands a maiden to wife, from among the relatives of his deceased queen. The application was taken in good part, and

³⁶Although we do not find in the histories of this period that have come to our hands, any mention of the consort of Arghun–khan, yet the name that is here written Bolgana, and in the Latin of the Basle edition, as well as that of the British Museum manuscript, Balgana, occurs, with little difference of orthography, amongst the females of the family. The daughter of Jagataï, son of Jengiz–khan and uncle of Hulagu, was named Bolghân–khâtûn, as appears from the “Rouzat alsafâ” of Mirkhond. The Latin and French texts, and the Italian text in Boni’s edition, call the queen Bolgara.

³⁷Arghun–khan, the son of Abaka–khan, and grandson of Hulagu–ilkhân, succeeded his uncle Ahmed–khan Nikodar on the throne of Persia, Khorasan, and other neighbouring countries, in 1284; and his first act, as we are informed by De Guignes (Liv. xvii. p. 265) was to send to the emperor Kublaï, as the head of the family and his liege sovereign, to demand the investiture of his estates. The death of his queen, here spoken of, must, from the circumstances mentioned in the sequel, have taken place about the year 1287, and he himself died in 1291. The name in all the versions of the work is uniformly written Argon, which approaches extremely near to the Persian orthography.

³⁸ The grand khan, at whose court the family of this queen is said to have resided in Kataia, was the grand–uncle of Arghun, her husband, and the queen herself was probably of the same royal Moghul family, The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian from the common stock of Jengiz–khan. Her anxiety therefore was, that her husband should not degrade himself and her memory, by contracting a marriage with any person of less noble lineage than their own. Viewing the circumstances therefore in their proper light, it will be found that what might at first be thought a romantic story, of a king of India sending an embassy to an emperor of China, for the purpose of obtaining a wife, resolves itself into the simple and natural transaction, of one of the younger members of a great family applying to the head of the house to be allowed to strengthen the connexion, by marrying from amongst those who were probably his cousins in the second degree; for we may presume that if this female had not been one of Kublaï’s own immediate race (a granddaughter, perhaps, as he was then advanced in years), there would not have existed a necessity for making so formal a demand. In regard to the distance between Persia and China, which might be considered an objection to the probability of the fact, it is well known that amongst all the branches of this Moghul family, however remote from each other, a continual intercourse had, up to that period, been maintained, and Arghun himself had applied for and received his investiture from the same monarch. In the event, however, it proved that the difficulties attending the returning journey, over land, had become insuperable.

³⁹The situation of Khataï, or Kataia (or as it was usually called by the medieval writers, Cathay), has been a subject of much discussion amongst the learned; but it cannot, I think, be doubted by those who consult the eastern geographers and historians rather than the Greek, that they apply the name to the northern provinces of what we call China, which were conquered by Jengiz–khan, and his son, Okaï, not from a Chinese government, but from a race of eastern Tartars, called Niu–che and Kin, by whom they had been subdued about one hundred and twenty years before. Whether they confine it strictly to these provinces, or include some of the adjoining parts of Tartary, without–side the wall, it is not easy to determine, as their accounts of these regions are far from being precise; but the former I should judge to be the case.

⁴⁰ These names vary considerably in the different versions and editions, where they appear in the forms of Ulatai and Gulatay, Apusca, Apusta, and Ribusca, Goza, and Coyla; all of them, probably, much disfigured by transcribing from indistinct manuscripts. The Latin text calls them Oulata, Alpusca, and Cor. They are not, however, of any historical importance.

under the directions of his majesty, choice was made of a damsel aged seventeen, extremely handsome and accomplished, whose name was Kogatin,⁴¹ and of whom the ambassadors, upon her being shown to them, highly approved. When everything was arranged for their departure, and a numerous suite of attendants appointed, to do honour to the future consort of king Arghun, they received from the grand khan a gracious dismissal, and set out on their return by the way they came.

Having travelled for eight months, their further progress was obstructed and the roads shut up against them, by fresh wars that had broken out amongst the Tartar princes.⁴² Much against their inclinations, therefore, they were constrained to adopt the measure of returning to the court of the grand khan, to whom they stated the interruption they had met with.

About the time of their reappearance, Marco Polo happened to arrive from a voyage he had made, with a few vessels under his orders, to some parts of the East Indies,⁴³ and reported to the grand khan the intelligence he brought respecting the countries he had visited, with the circumstances of his own navigation, which, he said, was performed in those seas with the utmost safety. This latter observation having reached the ears of the three ambassadors, who were extremely anxious to return to their own country, from whence they had now been absent three years, they presently sought a conference with our Venetians, whom they found equally desirous of revisiting their home; and it was settled between them that the former, accompanied by their young queen, should obtain an audience of the grand khan, and represent to him with what convenience and security they might effect their return by sea, to the dominions of their master; whilst the voyage would be attended with less expense than the journey by land,⁴⁴ and be performed in a shorter time; according to the experience of Marco Polo, who had lately sailed in those parts. Should his majesty incline to give his consent to their adopting that mode of conveyance, they were then to urge him to suffer the three Europeans, as being persons well skilled in the practice of navigation, to accompany

⁴¹ One of the wives of Hulagu, and mother of Ahmed-khan Nikodar (the uncle of Arghun), was named Kutai-khatun, of which Kogatin, (otherwise written Gogatim and Koganyin) may perhaps be a corruption. The word khatun, which signifies "lady," is very frequently annexed to, or forms parts of proper names, borne by Persian and Tartar women of rank.

⁴² These wars must have taken place about the year 1289, and probably in the country of Mawara'nahr, or Transoxiana, amongst the descendants of Jagataï or Zagataï, whose history is particularly obscure; but there is reason to believe that they (or any of the Moghul princes) were seldom in a state of tranquillity. Troubles were also excited, nearer to China, by a younger brother of Kublaï, who attempted to dispute with him the right to the empire.

⁴³ What are here termed the East Indies must not be understood of the continent of India, but of some of the islands in the eastern archipelago, perhaps the Philippines, or possibly the coast of Tsiampa, or Champa, which, in another part of the work, our author speaks of having visited. The voyage here mentioned was subsequent to the grand and disastrous expedition which the active genius of Kublaï led him to fit out against the kingdom of Japan. It should be observed that the Latin and French texts, and the Italian published by Boni, say nothing of the ships, but merely state that he was returning from an embassy to India.

⁴⁴ The suggestion of this economical motive may seem extraordinary, but attachment to money was one of the weak parts of Kublaï's character, and the practices he adopted, or connived at, for raising it, have been the subject of much reprehension.

them until they should reach the territory of king Arghun. The grand khan upon receiving this application showed by his countenance that it was exceedingly displeasing to him, averse as he was to parting with the Venetians. Feeling nevertheless that he could not with propriety do otherwise than consent, he yielded to their entreaty. Had it not been that he found himself constrained by the importance and urgency of this peculiar case, they would never otherwise have obtained permission to withdraw themselves from his service. He sent for them, however, and addressed them with much kindness and condescension, assuring them of his regard, and requiring from them a promise that when they should have resided some time in Europe and with their own family, they would return to him once more. With this object in view he caused them to be furnished with the golden tablet (or royal chop), which contained his order for their having free and safe conduct through every part of his dominions, with the needful supplies for themselves and their attendants. He likewise gave them authority to act in the capacity of his ambassadors to the pope, the kings of France and Spain, and the other Christian princes.⁴⁵

At the same time preparations were made for the equipment of fourteen ships, each having four masts, and capable of being navigated with nine sails,⁴⁶ the construction and rigging of which would admit of ample description; but, to avoid prolixity, it is for the present omitted. Among these vessels there were at least four or five that had crews of two hundred and fifty or two hundred and sixty men. On them were embarked the ambassadors, having the queen under their protection, together with Nicolo, Maffeo, and Marco Polo, when they had first taken their leave of the grand khan, who presented them with many rubies and other handsome jewels of great value. He also gave directions that the ships should be furnished with stores and provisions for two years.⁴⁷

6. After a navigation of about three months, they arrived at an island which lay in a southerly direction, named Java,⁴⁸ where they saw various objects worthy of attention, of which notice shall be taken in the sequel of the work. Taking their departure from

⁴⁵ In the Latin version it is said that he appointed ambassadors of his own to these monarchs to accompany the expedition; but as no allusion is afterwards made to such personages, although an obvious occasion (that of the mortality) presents itself, the Italian reading is considered as preferable.

⁴⁶For the modern practice, in the northern part of China, and particularly on the Pe–ho, of rigging vessels intended to be employed in foreign voyages, with four masts, we have the authority of Barrow, who says: “It is impossible not to consider the notices given by this early traveller (Marco Polo) as curious, interesting, and valuable; and as far as they regard the empire of China, they bear internal evidence of their being generally correct. He sailed from China in a fleet consisting of fourteen ships, each carrying *four* masts, and having their holds partitioned into separate chambers ... We observed many hundreds of a larger description, that are employed in foreign voyages, all carrying *four* masts.”—*Travels in China*, p. 45. In the Latin version the words are, “*quarum quælibet habebat quatuor malos, et multæ ex illis ibant cum duodecim velis,*”—“of which each had four masts, and many of them went with twelve sails.” It is well known that now Chinese vessels do not carry any kind of topsail.

⁴⁷ The sailing of this remarkable expedition from the Pe–ho, or river of Peking, we may infer, from circumstances mentioned in different parts of the work, to have taken place about the beginning of 1291, three years before the death of the emperor Kublaï, and four years previous to the arrival of the Polo family at Venice, in 1295.

⁴⁸ Some details of this part of the voyage are given in book iii. chap x., where the island here called Java, is termed Java minor, and is evidently intended for Sumatra. It will appear that they waited the change of the monsoon in a northern port of that island, near the western entrance of the straits of Malacca.

thence, they employed eighteen months in the Indian seas before they were enabled to reach the place of their destination in the territory of king Arghun;⁴⁹ and during this part of their voyage also they had an opportunity of observing many things, which shall, in like manner, be related hereafter. But here it may be proper to mention, that between the day of their sailing and that of their arrival, they lost by deaths, of the crews of the vessels and others who were embarked, about six hundred persons; and of the three ambassadors, only one, whose name was Goza, survived the voyage; whilst of all the ladies and female attendants one only died.⁵⁰

Upon landing they were informed that king Arghun had died some time before,⁵¹ and that the government of the country was then administered, on behalf of his son, who was still a youth, by a person of the name of Ki-akato.⁵² From him they desired to receive instructions as to the manner in which they were to dispose of the princess, whom, by the orders of the late king, they had conducted thither. His answer was, that they ought to present the lady to Kasan,⁵³ the son of Arghun, who was then at a place on the borders of Persia, which has its denomination from the *Arbor secco*,⁵⁴ where an army of sixty thousand men was assembled for the purpose of guarding certain passes against the irruption of the enemy.⁵⁵ This they proceeded to carry into execution, and

⁴⁹ The place where the expedition ultimately arrived is not directly mentioned in any part of the work; but there are strong grounds for inferring it to have been the celebrated port of Ormuz. With respect to the prince named Arghun-khan, see note 2, on p. 17.

⁵⁰ This mortality is no greater than might be expected in vessels crowded with men unaccustomed to voyages of such duration, and who had passed several months at an anchorage in the straits of Malacca; and although it should have amounted to one-third of their whole number, the proportion would not have exceeded what was suffered by Lord Anson and other navigators of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

⁵¹ Arghun-khan, according to the authorities followed by De Guignes, died in the third month of the year 690 of the hejrah, answering to March in the year of our Lord 1291.

⁵² The person here named Ki-akato, or Chiacato in the Italian orthography, and described as the ruler of the country in the name of the late king's son, was Kai-khatu, the second son of Abaka-khan, and consequently the brother of Arghun, upon whose death he is said to have seized the throne (although perhaps only as regent or protector), to the prejudice of his nephew, then a minor.

⁵³ The prince whose name is here written Kasan, or Casan, and by De Guignes Cazan, was Ghazan-khan, the eldest son of Arghun. He did not succeed to the throne of Persia until the end of the year 1295, nearly five years after the death of his father, who had sent him to reside in Khorasan, under the tutelage of an atabeg, or governor, named Nu-roz, by whose persuasion he afterwards embraced the Mussulman faith, and took the name of Mahmûd. It does not appear that he was molested in that province by his uncle Kai-khatu, and this recommendation, that the princess should be conveyed to him as the representative of his father, serves to show that they were not upon terms of actual hostility. It is further proved by the circumstance, that when, upon the murder of Kai-khatu, the government fell into the hands of Baidu (a grandson of Hulagu in a different line), and Ghazan marched with an army to Rey (Rages) to assert his hereditary claims, the first demand he made was, that the assassins of his uncle should be delivered up to him. After a doubtful struggle maintained during a period of eight months, the defection of his principal officers led to the destruction of the usurper, and Ghazan ascended the throne of Persia, about two years subsequently to the arrival of the princess, of whom nothing further is recorded.

⁵⁴ More circumstantial mention is made of this district, and of the tree from whence it is said to derive its appellation, in chap. xx. of this book.

⁵⁵ This is the important pass known to the ancients by the appellation of *Portæ Caspiæ* or Caspian Straits (to be distinguished from those of Derbend, as well as of Rudbar), and termed by Eastern geographers the Straits of Khowar,

having effected it, they returned to the residence of Ki-akato, because the road they were afterwards to take lay in that direction.⁵⁶ Here, however, they reposed themselves for the space of nine months.⁵⁷ When they took their leave he furnished them with four golden tablets, each of them a cubit in length, five inches wide, and weighing three or four marks of gold.⁵⁸ Their inscription began with invoking the blessing of the Almighty upon the grand khan,⁵⁹ that his name might be held in reverence for many years, and denouncing the punishment of death and confiscation of goods to all who should refuse obedience to the mandate. It then proceeded to direct that the three ambassadors, as his representatives, should be treated throughout his dominions with due honour, that their expenses should be defrayed, and that they should be provided with the necessary escorts. All this was fully complied with, and from many places they were protected by bodies of two hundred horse; nor could this have been dispensed with, as the government of Ki-akato was unpopular, and the people were disposed to commit insults and proceed to outrages, which they would not have dared to attempt under the rule of their proper sovereign.⁶⁰ In the course of their journey our travellers received

or Khawr, from a Persian word, signifying a valley between two mountains, or from a small town near the eastern entrance which bears the same name. "This remarkable chasm," says Rennell, "is now called the strait or passage of Khowar (Chora of the ancients), from a town or district in the neighbourhood. It is situated at the termination of the great Salt Desert, almost due north from Ispahan, and about fifty miles to the eastward of the ruins of Rey (or Rages). Alexander passed through it in his way from Rages towards Aria and Bactria. Della Valle and Herbert amongst the moderns, and Pliny amongst the ancients, have described it particularly. It is eight miles through, and generally forty yards in breadth."—Geographical System of Herodotus examined and explained, p. 174, note.

⁵⁶From the preceding part of the narrative we might be led to suppose the residence of Kai-khatu to have been in one of the southern provinces of Persia; but here, on the contrary, we find, that, conformably with the histories of the times, it lay in the route between the place where Ghazan was encamped, on the eastern side of the Caspian straits, and the country of Armenia, towards which our travellers were advancing. By D'Herbelot, De Guignes, and others, we are accordingly told that the capital of the princes of this dynasty was the city of Tauris or Tabriz, in Aderbijan, but that they frequently resided (especially in summer) at Hamadan, in Aljebal, in order to be nearer to the Syrian frontier.

⁵⁷ From what has been said in the preceding note, we may presume this place to have been Tabriz.

⁵⁸ The mark being eight ounces, the tablets must have been unnecessarily expensive and inconveniently ponderous. The other versions do not specify either weight or size, and some state them to be only two additional tablets.

⁵⁹ This shows that the sovereignty of the head of the family was still acknowledged by these branches, and Kai-khatu might have particular motives for courting its sanction. Ghazan is said to have been the first who renounced this slight species of vassalage, and probably did not send an ambassador to China to demand the investiture.

⁶⁰In the conduct here described we have a proof of the general doubt entertained respecting his right to the throne, although the Moghul chiefs affected to consider it as dependent upon their election. The historians all agree in reprobating his habits as debauched and infamous, and these chiefs, indignant at being governed by a prince so corrupt, "equally hated by his subjects and despised by foreigners," resolved to remove him, and made an offer of the crown, not to Ghazan, whom they might think still too young, or too feeble in bodily frame, for their purpose, but to Baidu, a grandson of Hulagu, and cousin of the late king, who was then governor of Baghdad. A battle was fought, in which Kai-khatu, personally brave, found himself deserted by a principal officer who commanded a wing of his army, was defeated, and subsequently strangled. For a circumstantial detail of these transactions on the authority of Khondemir, see the Bibliothèque Orientale, under the article Baidu. See also the article Gangiatu, "que l'on trouve aussi nommé Caictu, et Caicatu." "Khondemir remarque que le véritable nom de ce prince étoit Aicatu, ou Gaicatu." We should learn from hence to hesitate before we condemn the orthography of our author, whose mode of writing this uncouth name differs so little, if at all, from some of these high authorities. It is a circumstance extremely remarkable, that one of the principal motives assigned for the revolt of the Moghul chiefs against this prince, was his having

intelligence of the grand khan (Kublai) having departed this life;⁶¹ which entirely put an end to all prospect of their revisiting those regions. Pursuing, therefore, their intended route, they at length reached the city of Trebizond, from whence they proceeded to Constantinople, then to Negropont,⁶² and finally to Venice, at which place, in the enjoyment of health and abundant riches, they safely arrived in the year 1295. On this occasion they offered up their thanks to God, who had now been pleased to relieve them from such great fatigues, after having preserved them from innumerable perils. The foregoing narrative may be considered as a preliminary chapter, the object of which is to make the reader acquainted with the opportunities Marco Polo had of acquiring a knowledge of the things he describes, during a residence of so many years in the eastern parts of the world.

CHAPTER II. OF ARMENIA MINOR—OF THE PORT OF LAIASSUS —AND OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PROVINCE.

In commencing the description of the countries which Marco Polo visited in Asia, and of things worthy of notice which he observed therein, it is proper to mention that we are to distinguish two Armenias, the Lesser and the Greater.⁶³ The king of the Lesser Armenia dwells in a city called Sebastoz,⁶⁴ and rules his dominions with strict regard to

attempted to establish in his dominions a system of *paper-money*, like that of China.—De Guignes, *Hist. des Huns*, Liv. xvii. p. 267.

⁶¹Kublai, whose name the Chinese pronounce Hupili or Hupilé, whilst in their annals they bestow on him that of Chi-tsu, was proclaimed grand khan in the year 1260, became emperor of China upon the destruction of the dynasty of the Song, who reigned in Manji or the provinces south of the great river Kiang, in 1280, and died in the beginning of 1294, at the age of eighty years. It is not surprising that the news of an event so important to all the tribes of Moghuls or Tartars should have found its way to the court of Persia, and consequently to our travellers, with extraordinary expedition.

⁶² Their most direct route from Tabriz would have lain through Bedlis in Kurdistan to Aleppo, but at this time the sultans of Egypt, with whom the kings of Persia were continually at war, had possession of all the seaports of Syria, and would pay little respect to their passports. By the way of Georgia to Trebizond, on the Euxine, their land-journey was shorter and more secure, and when at that place they were under the protection of the Christian prince, whose family reigned in the small independent kingdom of Trebizond, from 1204 to 1462.

⁶³ This distinction of the Armenias into the Greater and the Lesser, is conformable to what we find in Ptolemy and the geographers of the middle ages; although other divisions have taken place since that part of Asia has been subject to the Ottoman empire. The Lesser Armenia is defined by Büsching as comprehending that part of Cappadocia and Cilicia which lies along the western side of the Greater Armenia, and also on the western side of the Euphrates. That in the days of Hæton it extended south of Taurus, and included Cilicia (*campestris*), which was not the case in more ancient times, we have the unexceptionable authority of that historian.

⁶⁴As it appears from the passage quoted in the preceding note, as well as from other authorities, that Sîs was the capital of the Lesser Armenia during the reigns of the Leons and Hætons, we are led to suppose the Sebastoz here mentioned to have been the ancient name of that city, or of one that stood on the same site. It is obvious, indeed, from the geography of Ptolemy, that there were many places in Asia Minor that bore the names of Sebastia, Sebaste, and Sebastopolis (besides one in Syria), and in his enumeration of the towns of Cilicia, we find a Sebaste, to which, in the

justice. The towns, fortified places, and castles are numerous. There is abundance of all necessities of life, as well as of those things which contribute to its comfort. Game, both of beasts and birds, is in plenty. It must be said, however, that the air of the country is not remarkably healthy. In former times its gentry were esteemed expert and brave soldiers; but at the present day they are great drinkers, pusillanimous, and worthless. On the sea-coast there is a city named Laiassus,⁶⁵ a place of considerable traffic. Its port is frequented by merchants from Venice, Genoa, and many other places, who trade in spiceries and drugs of different sorts, manufactures of silk and of wool, and other rich commodities. Those persons who design to travel into the interior of the Levant,⁶⁶ usually proceed in the first instance to this port of Laiassus. The boundaries of the Lesser Armenia are, on the south, the Land of Promise, now occupied by the Saracens;⁶⁷ on the north, Karamania, inhabited by Turkomans; towards the north-east lie the cities of Kaisariah, Sevasta,⁶⁸ and many others subject to the Tartars; and on the western side it is bounded by the sea, which extends to the shores of Christendom.

Latin translation, published at Venice in 1562, the epithet of “augusta” is annexed. Upon the foundations of this, Leon I. (from whom the country is called by the Arabians, Belad Leon, as well as Belad Sis), may have built the modern city, and the Greek name may have been still prevalent. We are told, however, that the city which preceded Sis, as the capital of Armenia Minor, was named Messis, Massis, or Massissa, the ancient Mopsuestia, and it must be confessed that if authority was not in opposition to conjecture, the sound of these names might lead us to suppose that the modern name was only an abbreviation of Mes-sis, and Sebastoz a substitution for Mopsueste. In a subsequent part of the chapter the city of Sevasta or Sevaste, the modern Siwas or Sivas, is spoken of under circumstances that appear to distinguish it entirely from the Armenian capital; having been recently conquered by the Moghuls from the Seljuk princes.

⁶⁵ Lajazzo, or Aías, is situated in a low, morassy country, formed by the alluvion of the two rivers Sihon and Jihon (of Cilicia), and (as observed to me by Major Rennell) at the present mouth of the latter. Its trade has been transferred to Alexandretta or Scanderoon, on the opposite or Syrian side of the gulf.

⁶⁶ Levant is a translation of the word Anatolia or Anadoli, from the Greek *anatole* “ortus, oriens,” signifying the country that lies *eastward* from Greece. As the name of a region therefore it should be equivalent to Natolia, in its more extensive acceptation; and it is evident that our author employs it to denote Asia Minor. Smyrna is at present esteemed the principal port in the Levant, and the term seems to be now confined to the sea-coast and to mercantile usage.

⁶⁷ For the Land of Promise, or Palestine, which extends no further to the north than Tyre, is here to be understood Syria, or that part of it called Cœlo-Syria, which borders on Cilicia or the southern part of Armenia Minor. As the more general denomination of Syria includes Palestine, and the latter name was, in the time of the Crusades, more familiar to Europeans than the former, it is not surprising that they should sometimes be confounded. The Saracens here spoken of were the subjects of the Mameluk sultans or soldans of Egypt, who recovered from the Christian powers in Syria, what the princes of the family of Saladin, or of the Ayubite dynasty, had lost. In other parts of the work the term is employed indiscriminately with that of Mahometan.

⁶⁸ The Turkomans of Karamania were a race of Tartars settled in Asia Minor, under the government of the Seljuk princes, of whom an account will be found in the following note. Kaisariah or Cæsarea, and Sevasta or Sebaste, the Sebastopolis Cappadociæ of Ptolemy and Siwas or Sivas of the present day, were cities belonging to the same dynasty, that had been conquered by the Moghuls in the year 1242.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE PROVINCE CALLED TURKOMANIA, WHERE ARE THE CITIES OF KOGNI, KAISARIAH, AND SEVASTA, AND OF ITS COMMERCE.

The inhabitants of Turkomania⁶⁹ may be distinguished into three classes. The Turkomans, who reverence Mahomet and follow his law, are a rude people, and dull of intellect. They dwell amongst the mountains and in places difficult of access, where their object is to find good pasture for their cattle, as they live entirely upon animal food. There is here an excellent breed of horses which has the appellation of Turki, and fine mules which are sold at high prices.⁷⁰ The other classes are Greeks and Armenians, who reside in the cities and fortified places, and gain their living by commerce and manufacture. The best and handsomest carpets in the world are wrought here, and also silks of crimson and other rich colours.⁷¹ Amongst its cities are those of Kogni, Kaisariah, and Sevasta, in which last Saint Blaise obtained the glorious crown of martyrdom.⁷² They are all subject to the great khan, emperor of the Oriental Tartars, who appoints governors to them.⁷³ We shall now speak of the Greater Armenia.

⁶⁹By Turkomania we are to understand, generally, the possessions of the great Seljuk dynasty in Asia Minor, extending from Cilicia and Pamphylia, in the south, to the shores of the Euxine sea, and from Pisidia and Mysia, in the west, to the borders of Armenia Minor; including the greater part of Phrygia and Cappadocia, together with Pontus, and particularly the modern provinces of Karamania and Rumiya, or the country of Rûm. Of the former of these, the capital was Iconium, corrupted by the oriental writers to Kuniyah, and by those of the Crusades to Kogni; of the latter, Sebaste or Sebastopolis, corrupted to Siwas or Sivas. The chief from whom the dynasty of Seljuks derived its appellation, was by birth a Turkoman, of Turkistan, on the north-eastern side of the river Sihon or Jaxartes, but in the service of a prince of Khazar, on the Wolga, from which he fled and pursued his fortune in Transoxiana; as did some of his family in Khorasan. Having acquired great celebrity, they were at length enabled, by the means of numerous tribes of Turkomans who joined their standard, to establish a sovereignty, or, in point of extent, an empire, the principal seat of which was in Persia. Another branch, about the year 1080, wrested the fine provinces of Asia Minor from the Greek emperors, and formed the kingdom of which we are now speaking. Through its territory the Christian princes repeatedly forced their way in their progress to the Holy Land, and it is computed by historians that not fewer than six hundred thousand men perished in this preliminary warfare. At length the power of the Seljuks yielded to the overwhelming influence of the house of Jengiz-khan, and in our author's time they were reduced to insignificance; but from their ruins sprang the empire of the Ottomans, the founder of which had been in the service of one of the last sultans of Iconium.

⁷⁰ The pastoral habits of the Turkoman Tartars are preserved to this day, even in Asia Minor, and the distinction of their tribes subsists also. The Turki breed of horses is esteemed throughout the East, for spirit and hardiness.

⁷¹ "Et ibi fiunt soriani et tapeti pulchriores de mundo et pulchrioris coloris" are the words of the Latin text.

⁷²"Blaise, bishop of Sebasta, in Cappadocia, in the second and third centuries," says the Biographical Dictionary, "suffered death under Diocletian, by decapitation, after being whipped and having his flesh torn with iron combs ... It is difficult to say how the invention (of wool combing) came to be attributed to him; but it had probably no better origin than the circumstance of his being tortured with the instruments used in the combing of wool."

⁷³It is the family of Hulagu, and the tribes who followed his standard from the north, whom our author always designates by the name of Oriental Tartars, to distinguish them from the descendants of Batu, who settled near the Wolga, on the north-western side of the Caspian, and extended their conquests towards Europe; whilst the former entered Persia from the Eastern quarter, by the way of Transoxiana and Khorasan.

CHAPTER IV.
OF ARMENIA MAJOR, IN WHICH ARE THE CITIES OF ARZINGAN, ARGIRON, AND
DARZIZ—OF THE CASTLE OF PAIPURTH—OF THE MOUNTAIN WHERE THE ARK
OF NOAH RESTED—OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PROVINCE—AND OF A
REMARKABLE FOUNTAIN OF OIL.

Armenia Major is an extensive province, at the entrance of which is a city named Arzingan,⁷⁴ where there is a manufacture of very fine cotton cloth called bombazines,⁷⁵ as well as of many other curious fabrics, which it would be tedious to enumerate. It possesses the handsomest and most excellent baths of warm water, issuing from the earth, that are anywhere to be found.⁷⁶ Its inhabitants are for the most part native Armenians, but under the dominion of the Tartars. In this province there are many cities, but Arzingan is the principal, and the seat of an archbishop; and the next in consequence are Argiron⁷⁷ and Darziz.⁷⁸ It is very extensive, and, in the summer season, the station of a part of the army of the Eastern Tartars, on account of the good

⁷⁴ Arzengân, or, as written by the Arabians, who have not the Persian g, Arzenjân, is a city near the frontier of Rumiyah, but just within the limits of Armenia Major. "Cette ville," says D'Herbelot, "appartient plutôt à l'Arménie, et fut prise par les Mogols ou Tartares l'an 640 de l'Hégire, de J. C. 1242, après la défaite de Kaikhosrou, fils d'Aladin le Selgiucide, aussi bien que les villes de Sébaste et de Césarée." By an oriental geographer it is said to be, "Oppidum celeberrimum, elegans, amœnum, copiosum bonis rebus, incolisque: pertinens ad Armeniam: inter Rumæas provincias et Chalatam situm, haud procul Arzerroumo: essequé incolas ejus maixmam partem Armenios" Alberti Schultens Index Geographicus in Vitam Saladini. Josaphat Barbaro, a Venetian, who travelled into Persia, in the fifteenth century, speaks of Arsengan as a place that had formerly been of consequence, but was then mostly in ruins.

⁷⁵ The name of a species of cloth which I have here translated "bombazine," is in the Italian of Ramusio, "bochassini di bambagio," and in the Latin versions "buchiramus, buchramis, and bucaramus." Its substance or texture is not clearly explained in our dictionaries. That of Cotgrave, printed in 1611, defines "boccasin," to be "a kind of fine buckeram, that hath a resemblance of taffata, and is much used for lining; also the stuffe callimanco." But this, it is evident, cannot apply to a manufacture of bambagio or cotton; and the Vocabolario della Crusca, as well as the Glossary of Du Cange, speak of "bucherame bianchissima," and "bucherame bambagino," and both of them quote our author for the use of the word. All the examples convey the idea of fine, white, and soft cotton cloth; the reverse of what is now called buckram. The early Latin text speaks of boccorame and bambace as two distinct things.

⁷⁶ Natural warm baths are found in many parts of Asia Minor, and particularly near Ancyra, the modern Angora or Anguri, which are still much frequented. Their situation is denoted by the word Thermæ, in Rennell's map explanatory of the Retreat of the Ten thousand. They are also spoken of at Teflis in Georgia; but of their existence at Arzengan I have not been able to find notice in the works of the Eastern geographers.

⁷⁷ Argiron, or, in the Latin versions, Argyron, is a corruption of Arzerûm, Erzerûm, or Arzen er-rûm, a distinctive name given to a city called Arzen, as being the last strong place, in that direction, belonging to the Greek empire. "Arzerûm," says Abulfeda, "est extremus finis regionum Rumæorum ab oriente. In ejus orientali et septentrionali latere est fons Euphratis."

⁷⁸ Darziz, which in the Basle edition is Darzirim, in the older Latin, Arziu, and in the Italian epitomes, Arciri and Arziri, is the town now called Arjîs, situated on the border of the Lake Van, anciently named Arsissa palus. "Argish," says Macdonald Kinneir, "is a town containing six thousand inhabitants, situated on the north-west side of the lake, three days' journey from Van. There are four islands in the lake, on one of which is an Armenian monastery, and three hundred priests." Memoir of the Persian Empire, pp. 328, 329. These places, it may be observed, lay in our author's returning route, from Tauris to Trebisonde.

pasture it affords for their cattle; but on the approach of winter they are obliged to change their quarters, the fall of snow being so very deep that the horses could not find subsistence, and for the sake of warmth and fodder they proceed to the southward. Within a castle named Paipurth,⁷⁹ which you meet with in going from Trebisonde to Tauris, there is a rich mine of silver.⁸⁰ In the central part of Armenia stands an exceedingly large and high mountain, upon which, it is said, the ark of Noah rested, and for this reason it is termed the mountain of the ark.⁸¹ The circuit of its base cannot be compassed in less than two days. The ascent is impracticable on account of the snow towards the summit, which never melts, but goes on increasing by each successive fall. In the lower region, however, near the plain, the melting of the snow fertilizes the ground, and occasions such an abundant vegetation, that all the cattle which collect there in summer from the neighbouring country, meet with a never-failing supply.⁸² Bordering upon Armenia, to the south-west, are the districts of Mosul and Maredin, which shall be described hereafter, and many others too numerous to particularize. To the north lies Zorzania, near the confines of which there is a fountain of oil which discharges so great a quantity as to furnish loading for many camels.⁸³ The use made of it is not for the purpose of food, but as an unguent for the cure of cutaneous distempers in men and cattle, as well as other complaints; and it is also good for

⁷⁹ Paipurth, the Baiburt of D' Anville's and Rennell's maps, is situated among the mountains, in a northerly direction from Arzerûm. As the word *purt* signifies a castle in the Armenian language, and as the Arabian geographers, from not having the letter *p* in their alphabet, are obliged to substitute the *b*, it is probable that the former is the more genuine orthography. This castle is particularly noted by Josaphat Barbaro, who says, "Partendo d' essa (Trabisonde) per andar à Thaurisil primo luogo notabile che si trova, è uno castello in piano in una valle d' ognitorno circondata da monti, nominato Baiburth, castel forte e murato ... Cinque giornate piu in la, si trova Arsengan ... Poi si ritrova un castello nominato Carpurth."—*Viaggio in Persia*, p. 48, ed. 1545, 12mo.

⁸⁰ Although this particular mine may have been exhausted, silver mines are known to exist in this part of Armenia.

⁸¹ The mountain of Armenia (the Ararat of Scripture) upon which the ark is believed by the Christians of that country to have rested, stands not far from the city of Erivan or Irwân. The Mahometans, however, assign to it a different situation. "L'opinion commune des Orientaux," says D'Herbelot, "est que l'arche de Noë s'arrêta sur la montagne de Gioudi, qui est une des croupes du mont Taurus ou Gordiæus en Arménie, et cette tradition est autorisée en ce pays—là par plusieurs histoires qui approchent fort de la fable." "Joudi," says Ibn Haukal, "is a mountain near Nisibin. It is said that the ark of Noah (to whom be peace,) rested on the summit of this mountain." Ouseley's translation, p. 60. Major Rennell observes, that Jeudi is the part of the Carduchian mountains opposite to the Jezirat ibn Omar, and that the dervishes keep a light burning there, in honour of Noah and his ark.

⁸² This fertility of the country in the vicinity of the mountains, is noticed by Moses Chorenensis, who says, "Habet autem Araratia montes camposque, atque omnem fœcunditatem."—*Geographia*, p. 361.

⁸³ Springs of petroleum or earth (properly, rock) oil, are found in many parts of the world. The spring or fountain here spoken of is that of Baku in Shirvan, on the border of the Caspian. "Near to this place," says John Cartwright, in what are termed the Preacher's Travels, "is a very strange and wonderful fountain under ground, out of which there springeth and issueth a marvellous quantity of black oyl, which serveth all the parts of Persia to burn in their houses; and they usually carry it all over the country upon kine and asses, whereof you shall oftentimes meet three or four hundred in company."—*Oxford Coll. of Voyages*, vol. i. (vii.) p. 731. Strahlenberg speaks of this as a spring of white naphtha, which he distinguishes from the black sort of bitumen; but the most satisfactory account of both white and black naphtha in this district is given by Kæmpfer, in his *Amœnitates Exoticæ*, p. 274–281.

burning. In the neighbouring country no other is used in their lamps, and people come from distant parts to procure it.

**CHAPTER V.
OF THE PROVINCE OF ZORZANIA AND ITS BOUNDARIES—OF THE PASS
WHERE ALEXANDER THE GREAT CONSTRUCTED THE GATE OF IRON—AND OF
THE MIRACULOUS CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING
A FOUNTAIN AT TEFLIS.**

In Zorzania⁸⁴ the king is usually styled David Melik, which in our language signifies David the king.⁸⁵ One part of the country is subject to the Tartars, and the other part, in consequence of the strength of its fortresses, has remained in the possession of its native princes. It is situated between two seas, of which that on the northern (western) side is called the Greater sea (Euxine), and the other, on the eastern side, is called the sea of Abakù (Caspian).⁸⁶ This latter is in circuit two thousand eight hundred miles, and partakes of the nature of a lake, not communicating with any other sea. It has several islands, with handsome towns and castles, some of which are inhabited by people who fled before the grand Tartar, when he laid waste the kingdom or province of Persia,⁸⁷ and took shelter in these islands or in the fastnesses of the mountains, where they hoped to find security. Some of the islands are uncultivated. This sea produces abundance of fish, particularly sturgeon and salmon at the mouths of the rivers, as well as others of a large sort.⁸⁸ The general wood of the country is the box-tree.⁸⁹ I was told

⁸⁴ By Zorzania is meant the kingdom of Georgia, bordering on Armenia, and of which Teflis was the capital. The substitution of the *z* for the soft *g*, belonged to the old Venetian dialect, in which the original of our author's work is understood to have been written, and the orthography has been preserved in some of the Latin, as well as in the vulgar Italian versions. The early Latin text reads Georgia.

⁸⁵ The name of David or Davit frequently occurs in the list of kings who have reigned in Georgia, and their predilection for it is traced to a very remote source. It is not surprising, therefore, that a traveller should suppose the names of the Georgian kings to have been, invariably, David. The title of Melik shows that our author's information was derived from Arabs or Moghuls, who would naturally substitute it for the native title of Meppe.

⁸⁶ The Caspian, which is generally termed by oriental writers the sea of Khozar, was also called by the Persians the sea of Baku, and by this name (*Mar di Bachau*) it appears in the maps to an edition of Ptolemy, printed at Venice in 1562. It derives the appellation from the celebrated city and port of Baku, on its south western coast.

⁸⁷ This refers to the conquest and devastation of Persia by the armies of Jengiz-khan, about the year 1221. The islands, to which it is not improbable a number of the wretched inhabitants fled for security, are at present uninhabited, or frequented only by fishermen.

⁸⁸ The fishery of the Caspian, especially about the mouths of the Wolga, has at all periods been important. "Among the great variety of fish with which this river abounds," says P. H. Bruce, "the sturgeon is none of the least considerable, whose eggs afford what the Russians call *ikari*, and we caviar: the beluga, or white fish, deserves also to be mentioned; they are from five to six yards long, and thick in proportion. Besides these it yields also the *osotrin*, another very large fish, very fat and delicious: this river also abounds with salmon *sterlitz*, a most delicious fish, and innumerable other sorts too tedious to mention."—*Memoirs*, p. 236. Strahlenberg also notices the beluja as "the largest eatable river-fish in the world, having seen one fifty-six feet in length, and eighteen in girth."—P. 337.

that in ancient times the kings of the country were born with the mark of an eagle on the right shoulder.⁹⁰ The people are well made, bold sailors, expert archers, and fair combatants in battle. They are Christians, observing the ritual of the Greek Church, and wear their hair short, in the manner of the Western clergy. This is the province into which, when Alexander the Great attempted to advance northwards, he was unable to penetrate, by reason of the narrowness and difficulty of a certain pass, which on one side is washed by the sea, and is confined on the other by high mountains and woods, for the length of four miles; so that a very few men were capable of defending it against the whole world. Disappointed in this attempt, Alexander caused a great wall to be constructed at the entrance of the pass, and fortified it with towers, in order to restrain those who dwelt beyond it from giving him molestation. From its uncommon strength the pass obtained the name of the Gate of Iron,⁹¹ and Alexander is commonly said to have enclosed the Tartars between two mountains. It is not correct, however, to call the people Tartars, which in those days they were not, but of a race named Cumani,⁹² with a mixture of other nations. In this province there are many towns and castles; the necessities of life are in abundance; the country produces a great quantity of silk, and a manufacture is carried on of silk interwoven with gold.⁹³ Here are found vultures of a large size, of a species named *avigi*.⁹⁴ The inhabitants in general gain their livelihood by trade and manual labour. The mountainous nature of the country, with its narrow and

⁸⁹ By modern travellers the box-tree is merely enumerated amongst the vegetable productions of the country, without any notice of its prevalence; but by Ambrogio Cantareno, who travelled in the fifteenth century, it is more particularly distinguished. "Era in detta pianura," he says, in speaking of Mingrelia, "di molti arbori in modo di bussi, ma molto maggiori."—P. 65, 12mo.

⁹⁰ By this pretended tradition it may be understood that they were, or affected to be thought, a branch of the imperial family of Constantinople, who bore the Roman eagle amongst their insignia.

⁹¹ This is the celebrated pass between the foot of Mount Caucasus and the Caspian sea, where stands the small but strong city of Derbend, called by the Arabs, Bab-al-abuab, or the "Gate of gates," by the Turks, Demir-capi, or the "Gate of iron," and by the Persians, Derbend, or the "Barrier," between Georgia and the Persian province of Shirvan. "The natives in general are of opinion," says P. H. Bruce, "that the city of Derbent was built by Alexander the Great, and that the long wall that reached to the Euxine, was built by his order, to prevent the incursions of the Scythians into Persia."—Memoirs, p. 284. The wall is said to have been repaired by Yezdegerd II. of the Sassanian dynasty, who reigned about the middle of the fifth century, and again by Nushirvan, of the same family, who died in 579.

⁹² The notices we have, respecting the people named Comani or Comanians, are in general obscure and vague. It appears, however, that in the thirteenth century they were the inhabitants of the countries lying on the north-western side of the Caspian, and extending from the Wolga towards the Euxine, who were afterwards subdued and supplanted by the Kapchak Tartars. "The Comans," says Gibbon, "were a Tartar or Turkman horde which encamped in the XIth and XIIth centuries on the verge of Moldavia. The greater part were pagans, but some were Mahometans, and the whole horde was converted to Christianity (a.d. 1370) by Lewis, king of Hungary."

⁹³ Some of the provinces of Georgia, as well as of Armenia and the adjoining parts of Persia, have in all ages been famous for the culture of the silk-worm and commerce in silk.

⁹⁴ I know not what species of vulture is here meant, nor can we be certain of the correctness of the orthography of the word *avigi*. That the country is noted for birds of this class, appears from the writings of several travellers. When Chardin arrived in Mingrelia he found it necessary to deceive the Turks by giving out that he was a merchant, whose object in visiting the country was to procure birds of prey for the European market.

strong defiles, have prevented the Tartars from effecting the entire conquest of it. At a convent of monks dedicated to Saint Lunardo, the following miraculous circumstances are said to take place. In a salt–water lake, four days' journey in circuit, upon the border of which the church is situated, the fish never make their appearance until the first day of Lent, and from that time to Easter–eve they are found in vast abundance; but on Easter–day they are no longer to be seen, nor during the remainder of the year. It is called the lake of Geluchalat.⁹⁵ Into the before–mentioned sea of Abakù, which is encompassed with mountains, the great rivers Herdil,⁹⁶ Geihon, Kur, and Araz, with many others disembogue. The Genoese merchants have recently begun to navigate it, and they bring from thence the kind of silk called *ghellie*.⁹⁷ In this province there is a handsome city named Teflis,⁹⁸ around which are suburbs and many fortified posts. It is inhabited by Armenian and Georgian Christians, as well as by some Mahometans and Jews;⁹⁹ but these last are in no great numbers. Manufactures of silks and of many other articles are carried on there. Its inhabitants are subjects of the great king of the Tartars.¹⁰⁰ Although we speak only of a few of the principal cities in each province, it is to be understood that there are many others, which it is unnecessary to particularise, unless they happen to contain something remarkable; but should the occasion present itself, these will be hereafter described. Having spoken of the countries bordering on Armenia to the north, we shall now mention those which lie to the south and to the east.

⁹⁵ Within the proper boundaries of Georgia I am unable to identify this large salt–water lake of Gelu–chalat. Upon an island in that near Erivan, which D'Anville names Gheuk–sha ou Eau bleu, stands a very ancient monastery, which Chardin tells us was founded six hundred years before his time, or in the eleventh century, and must therefore have existed in our author's days; but on the other hand, its waters are described as being fresh and sweet, and it is separated from Georgia by a ridge of mountains. There is more reason for supposing it to be the lake now called Van or Wan, and formerly Arjish, although this lies still further within the boundary of Armenia. In its neighbourhood was situated a town of some celebrity, named Khalât and Akhlât. Its circumference is described by Abulfeda as being of four days' journey, and he says it is noted for a peculiar species of fish called tharnag, said to resemble the herring.

⁹⁶ By the Arabians and Turks the name of Etol is given to the Wolga, and it is here corrupted to Herdil. This river, according to Ibn Haukal, comes from the countries of Rûss and Bulgar, and at the season when its waters are collected, it is said to be greater than the river Jihun, rushing into the sea with such a body that it seems to conquer the waters of the Caspian. See Ouseley's translation, pp. 185—187. The names of Jihon or Oxus, Kur or Cyrus, and Araz or Araxes, do not require any particular remark.

⁹⁷ The province of Ghilan (called also al–Ghil), on the Caspian, being famous for its trade in silk, we can scarcely doubt that this word *ghellie* or *ghilli* was a name given to the article on that account; as florentine, a species of silk, has (or may be presumed to have) its appellation from Florence. The red silk of Ghilan is mentioned by Niebuhr; and Elphinstone, speaking of the trade of Caubul with Persia, says, “The imports are raw silk of Gheelaun and Resht, silken stuffs made at Yezd and Kashaun.”—P. 295.

⁹⁸ For a particular account of the city of Teflis, the capital of Georgia, see Chardin, p. 220, fo. with the Plate. Our author's route from Tabriz to Trebisonde did not carry him to this city, and there is reason to conclude that what little he says of it is from the report of others.

⁹⁹ In Chardin's time this city contained fourteen churches, of which six belonged to the Georgian, and eight to the Armenian Christians. Being then subject to the Persian government, frequent attempts were made by the Mahometans to erect mosques, but without success; the populace never failing to demolish the work.

¹⁰⁰ By the king of the (Moghul) Tartars must here be understood the descendant of Hulagu, who ruled over Persia and the neighbouring countries; not the grand khan.

DOCUMENTS: ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

**THE SWORD OF ISLAM OR SUFFERING ARMENIA. ANNALS OF
TURKISH POWER AND THE EASTERN QUESTION
BY J.CASTELL HOPKINS
BRANTFORD AND TORONTO 1896**

**CHAPTER XVIII
THE SHADOW OF THE SWORD IN ARMENIA**

With the incidents surrounding the inception and progress of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 came the first warning and shadow of what might ultimately be expected in Armenia. The horrors perpetrated in Bulgaria at that time not only roused England from end to end, and shocked the sense of the civilized world, but indicated the worn and slender thread by which Christian lives and homes were protected throughout the Turkish Empire. In Armenia, which became the Asian theatre of the war, evidences of misgovernment and oppressive cruelty had already been so numerous as to prove only second in extent and volume to what had transpired in the miserable European province.

Every now and then throughout the present century stories have reached civilized Europe concerning the state of things in Armenia, as well as in Bulgaria, and Bosnia, and Greece. Mr. Robert Curzon, for instance, writing in his journal on August 2nd, 1843, tells us of an incident which came under his own observation at Erzeroum. A Turkish soldier had been seen stealing and concealing some merchandise. He was arrested, but only one-half of the goods were found. The rest, he alleged, had been taken by an Armenian named Artin. The latter, on the word of this admitted thief, and against the evidence of several Christians - which was of no avail under Moslem law - was dragged before the local Mahometan tribunal. The result may be left to Mr. Curzon to describe:

"The Pasha ordered him to be tortured. A metal drinking cup of hot brass was put upon his head; afterwards a cord was tied around his head, two sheep's knuckle-bones were placed upon his temples, and the cord tightened till his eyes nearly came out. As he would not confess, his front teeth were then drawn one at a time; pieces of cane were run up under his toe nails and his finger nails. Various tortures have been inflicted on him in this way for the last twelve days, and he is now hung up by the hands in the prison of the Seraskier."

This occurred fifty years ago, and is given, in passing, merely as an ordinary illustration of the treatment meted out to Christians in many parts of Turkey under the auspices of local governing bodies. What can be expected under such circumstances from lawless bands of Bashi-Bazouks or Kurds? When the law itself is thus utilized and administered for purposes of cruel oppression, it is not difficult to understand what lawlessness must mean. During 1876 the condition of Turkish Armenia became more and more deplorable. It had always been in a state of more or less disorder, but in this

year matters seemed to get worse - if that were possible. Perhaps it only appears so because of the evidence given us in a British Blue Book dealing with the condition of the Christians in Turkey during this period. The oppression, therefore, looms up more distinctly and vividly. Just as the lurid flash of 1894-5 lit up the Eastern sky and revealed the Armenians in their desolation and suffering, so in a more limited degree we are able, from the pages of those reports, to see the state of affairs twenty years ago, and perceive its preliminary bearing upon the massacres of to-day.

The first witness who may be quoted is Mr. Consul Zohrab of Erzeroum. He draws a graphic picture of the crushing taxation under which the population groaned, and which included arrears of taxes impossible to collect in any court of modern law, current taxes, taxes in advance, aid in money for the coming war, contributions in kind for the army, means of transport for munitions of war and provisions, besides various exactions of the most unscrupulous nature. This "systematic spoliation of the people," which extended, so far as taxation was concerned, to the Moslem peasant as well as the Christian, was intensified by the personal demands of the corrupt officials, until thousands of families were so reduced as to live only by public charity. But the plundering in this extreme degree was not limited to taxation, and was directed far more against the Armenian than the Turk. In a fire, for instance, which took place at Van in December, 1876, the officials and soldiers openly broke into the burning houses and carried off any property they could conveniently seize. It was, indeed, nothing unusual. During the Damascus massacres of years before, the officers of the Sultan had been seen by Europeans returning from the Christian quarter laden with plunder.

There appears to have been a perfect reign of terror at this time. On January 30th, 1877, Consul Zohrab telegraphed Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador in Stamboul, to the following effect: "Panic in Bitlis district, several murders, many villages devastated, others deserted by inhabitants from dread of Kurds, who threaten the towns." On the 14th of March he telegraphed that 175 Turkish Redifs, or troops, on their way Erzeroum, had stopped in three villages of the district of Bunis, desecrated the churches, maltreated the priests, beaten the Christians, and brutally ill-treated the women. He adds significantly: "Christians begin to suffer severely. Acts of oppression and cruelty occur daily." It must be remembered amid all these occurrences, and the chronic condition of the country, past and present, that no Christian was allowed to carry arms, while the Christian oath was of no value against a Mahometan. This in itself is sufficient to reveal the horrible helplessness of the Armenian inhabitant as regards himself, his family, and his goods.

Mr. Consul Taylor, in his reports, covers wide ground. He gives details of the condition of the Western Armenians in the range of heights occupied by the Kurds between Turkish and Persian Armenia. Cruelty and outrage were, of course, common occurrences, plunder was the ordinary method of transacting business, several villages he had seen were pillaged of literally everything, and a varied array of crimes had been committed by the Kurdish "Government Police." On more than one occasion the Turks

or Kurds yoked Christian women to their ploughs. In the district of Moosh, he describes a society of holy men called Sheiks, who preached war incessantly against the infidels or Christians, and represented every outrage as being lawful and meritorious. As far back as 1868 these people had stormed and plundered the venerable church and convent of Moosh, which dates from the time of Gregory the Illuminator. Of course no redress was possible, although the injury had been intensified by the wanton destruction of an invaluable manuscript library. In the country around the collection of hovels which represented the once splendid Armenian city of Klat, Mr. Taylor saw nothing at the time of writing but "deserted villages, ruined churches, crumbling mosques, abandoned fields." The ruthless conduct," he adds," of these ruffian Kurds have rendered what ought to have been a paradise a desert." Here, as elsewhere in unfortunate Armenia, "great crimes always unpunished, grievous oppressions unredressed," developed into a condition of lawless wickedness which the Kurds seemed to consider warranted by custom, and entirely permissible.

As an illustration of what might occur in any populous place where Mahometans and Christians live together, the Consul gives us the following incident. Khachatoor Effendi was a wealthy Christian of Erzeroum, living in an Armenian district, and under the shadow of a British consulate. He was, like a few opulent Christians in other lands, anxious to improve the material condition of his fellow-beings, and therefore purchased a portion of the city covered with mean and poverty-infested buildings, and erected in their place rows of excellent houses, shops, and public buildings. Their completion, including repairs to a ruined mosque, was signalized by an evidently incendiary fire, in which the whole quarter and \$100,000 of capital went up in smoke and flame. During the conflagration not a Moslem offered aid, though many plundered wherever the opportunity offered. But Khachatoor Effendi was a determined as well as a rich man, so he set himself to the work of rebuilding his quarter. Shortly afterwards, however, while seated in a café, a Mahometan rode up and shot him dead. Not a finger was raised against the murderer, and the Consul states that he was known to be one of a gang to which the important official in the Vilayet - or administrative province - corresponding with a British Chief Justice, himself belonged.

Such was the state of affairs in Armenia when the Russo-Turkish war began, and it became once more the battle-ground of struggling nations. To the miserable Armenians the war offered neither relief nor prospect of relief. It enhanced the exactions of the Turks and the power of the Kurds. In periods of Russian success it gave an additional burden for local towns and villages to carry, and where they had before to feed the Moslem they had now to purvey for the Russian. The invaders were kinder and less addicted to individual acts of cruelty than the Turks, but the weight of armed men proved almost crushing to the unhappy population.

It was on the 24th of April, 1877, that the forces of the Czar entered, simultaneously, the territory of the Turk in European Roumania and in Asiatic Armenia. Under the Grand Duke Michael and General Loris Mekoff (Melikoff – ed.), they invaded

this latter and historic region of Eastern warfare, defeated the Turks, stormed Ardahan, invested Kars, and were in turn defeated at Kizel-Tepe. After prolonged battles, advances and retreats, successes and failures, they took Kars by storm, entered Erzeroum, and became masters of Armenia about the time the Russian armies in Europe had reached the hills around Stamboul and forced the Treaty of San Stefano from the now helpless and beaten Turk.

The net result of the war to Armenia and its suffering people was the transfer of a portion of their territory and of several important fortified or strategic places, such as Kars and Batoum, to Russia. It may be said here that the condition of the Armenian Christian in the land of the Czar is infinitely better than it is upon Turkish soil. It could not, of course, be worse. But the kindness shown by Russia in this case is purely political. Neither its government nor its people have any fondness for sectaries, and some of the most cruel religious persecutions in history have taken place upon their soil. Had the Armenians been of the orthodox Greek Church the situation might be somewhat different, but even then they would be used simply to forward Russian ambitions.

Years ago, Armenians, as elsewhere mentioned, suffered considerably at their hands, and it was not until the occupation of the entire country - the ancient Asiatic path to Stamboul - loomed into view as a possible future policy that this kindly treatment of resident Russian Armenians became apparent.

One deplorable consequence followed the cessation of the struggle. The Kurds, to the number of fifteen thousand or more, had been freshly armed and uniformed by the Sultan during the war, and had signalized their services by blood-curdling atrocities upon all enemies, or suspected enemies, who fell into their hands. Without discipline or object, aside from plunder and lawless liberty, they had been a curse to the country while hostilities lasted, and, now that they were over, became a still greater and more pressing infliction. Unable to obtain their full and regular pay, many of them became scattered through the land in bands of disaffected and ruthless robbers - nominally soldiers, but really thieves and murderers.

Aside from this terrible fact, the Armenians, in the ten or fifteen years preceding the immediate present, have had to face a majority of armed Moslems; a system of absolute helplessness in the Mahometan courts; a weakness intensified by the inability to carry arms; an absolute lack of privacy, comfort, or safety in their homes; the confiscation of all works by their national authors; the proscription even of leading English books; the destruction of their cherished printing processes; the imprisonment of their young men for reading a poem or singing a song the constant and indescribable dangers to their households and families at the hands of either Turk or Kurd, soldier or Moslem civilian.

Upon this latter subject something must be said, unpleasant as it is to either discuss or read. During these years no Christian woman could depend upon preserving either honour or life. They were both at the mercy of travelling Turks, visiting officials, or

marauding Kurds. The husband who endeavoured to protect his wife, the brother who sought to save his sister, were alike slaughtered without mercy. Helpless, unarmed, and cowed, what, indeed, could the men do, and what had the women to hope for? Writing on January 30th, 1891, three years before the recent massacres, Mr. Charles S. Hampson, British Consul at Erzeroum, narrates the following amongst a long list of similar instances:

"A band of thirty mounted police which were on the march were billeted for the night in a small Armenian village of ten houses, a few miles distant from Bitlis. Four of them were quartered in the house of a young married Armenian. Overhearing them discussing plans against his wife's honour, he secretly sent her to the house of a neighbour. When the Zaptiehs learnt this they ordered him to send for her, and, on his refusing to do so, beat him most cruelly. He fled to a neighbour's house, but two days later died from the effects of the ill-treatment he had received. In the houses where the other Zaptiehs were quartered their designs against the female members of the family were carried out without resistance."

A few months later, the same Consul reports that Hussein Agha, the district Governor of Patnos, with his nephew, had entered by night the home of a local Armenian named Caspar, in order to carry off the latter's beautiful daughter-in-law. On the people of the house being aroused and crying for help, this Turkish governor drew his revolver and shot the young woman dead. A little later he was raised to high rank in the Hamidieh forces. Under date of September 19th, Mr. Hampson describes a case in which several Turks entered the village of Havar and seized and outraged a number of Armenian women in broad daylight. So also in Zartarich, a village near Kharput. The Consul gives numerous similar instances of brutality and violence. But the evidence of Dr. E. J. Dillon, who has spent months on the spot, and dealt in detail with the whole subject - especially with this most horrible feature of it - in the columns of the *London Daily Telegraph*, is as ghastly as it is reliable. He gives a large number of cases where Kurdish police have taken possession of some village, seized and dishonoured the women, and killed any men who opposed them. Dr. Dillon sums up his statements in this particular connection by describing the manner in which these fiends levy taxes upon a community, give a receipt, and return again in a week to seize another instalment or anything they can lay their hands upon. "Then they demand the surrender of the young women and girls... and refusal is punished with a series of tortures over which decency and humanity throw a veil of silence. Rape, and every kind of brutal outrage conceivable to the diseased minds of Oriental profligates, varied, perhaps, with murder or arson, wind up the incident."

Torture and robbery, murder and outrage, have, indeed, been the lot of Armenian men and women for years before the last lurid light was let in upon their conditions. Tahsin Bey, the late Governor of Bitlis, used, for instance, to imprison scores of wealthy Armenians, and then torture them until they surrendered such of their money or goods as he might desire. His methods were as ingenious as they were cruel. "Some men,"

says Dr. Dillon," were kept standing up all day and all night, forbidden to eat, drink, or move. If they lost strength or consciousness, cold water or hot irons soon brought them round, and the work of coercion continued. Time and perseverance being on the side of the Turks, the Armenians generally ended by sacrificing everything that made life valuable for the sake of exemption from maddening pain."

This species of financial pressure was naturally hard to resist. In 1890, the village elder of Odandjor was a wealthy man in local estimation. He owned fifty buffaloes, eighty oxen, six hundred sheep, besides horses, etc. In 1894 he was a poverty-stricken peasant, familiar with misery and accustomed to hunger, while his once prosperous village and the entire surrounding district had been plundered and stripped absolutely bare, under the smiling approval of the Turkish authorities. As an illustration of Mahometan justice, the following incident is also instructive: During August, 1893, the Kurds attacked and plundered the village of Kaghkik, wounding a merchant named Oannes in the course of their raid. The latter went next day to the Deputy Governor of the district and lodged a complaint, but was promptly put in prison - a hotbed of typhoid and filth - for "lying." A week later his neighbours brought a Kurd (their own oaths being valueless) to prove that the unfortunate prisoner was not lying. Then the authorities actually consented to let the people pay a bribe of fifty dollars for the release of the wounded man.

This same village of Odandjor, and several neighbouring ones, were flourishing and prosperous places in 1890, but in 1894 did not contain a single sheep, or buffalo, or horse. The stables were empty, the houses in ruins, the stacks of corn in ashes. Yet during all this period two hundred cavalry of the regular forces were stationed at half an hour's distance. But these Imperial troops are as bad as the Kurds. In 1893 a couple of hundred entered one of the villages, under the command of Rahim Pasha. After being quartered with reckless brutality upon the people, they remained there some forty days. The following incident of their stay is a striking but not uncommon one: "Rahim Pasha, angry with his host, Pare, for grumbling, had a copper vessel hung over the fire, and, when heated, ordered it to be placed on Pare's head. Then he had him stripped and little bits of flesh nipped out of his quivering arms with pincers."

The tale of the village of Avzood in the Moush district sounds incredible, but has been fully verified. In 1892 a young Armenian who had been working, and was now settled in Russia, came back on a visit. Hearing of this, Isaag Tshaush was sent to arrest him. Entering the house alone, while his troops guarded the entrance, pistol shots were shortly heard, and Isaag and the young Armenian were both found lying dead. The authorities in Bitlis at once sent a Colonel of the Zaptiehs, or police, to Avzood to see that justice was done - in Turkish style. The Colonel sent for the men of the village and threw them temporarily into prison. All the girls and the young women were then dealt with in the way characteristic of Zaptiehs and Turks. Some of the prisoners were permanently retained, and it was decided to charge a young Armenian named Markar, belonging to another village, with the murder of Isaag. There was, of course, no

evidence, but the prisoners were tortured in order to obtain some. "They were stripped, and burned in various parts of the body till they yelled with pain. Then they were prevented from sleeping for several nights, and tortured acutely again, till, writhing and quivering, they promised to swear anything, everything. A document declaring that Markar was in the village when Isaag arrived there, and had shot Isaag in their presence, was then drawn up in their names."

Meanwhile, Markar himself was being tortured in another part of the prison. When the trial came on the signatories to the document stripped themselves in Court, detailed the torture to which they had been subjected, and declared the statements a lie. Markar swore that he had not been in the village that night at all, but was none the less hanged for his alleged crime, while some of the women in the village died about the same time, from the brutal treatment received at the hands of the Zaptiehs. Such are some of the preliminaries to the recent massacres.

But they do not fully illustrate the responsibility of Constantinople, and the share taken in this organized harrying of the Armenians out of Armenia by the Turkish authorities. It will be remembered that Bedir Khan Bey had, in the early fifties, organized some regiments of irregular Kurdish troops in Kurdistan. These had expanded during the Russian war, but had afterwards been more or less disbanded, or been quartered upon the miserable Christians as "police," or Zaptiehs. In 1891, however, it was resolved to organize them into a military force of cavalry under the generic name of Ertoghrul regiments; and the subsequent official announcement stated that the initiative of this happy idea, and the great success which will certainly crown its execution, are due to the wisdom and foresight of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan." This "happy idea" was received with unmixed terror by the Armenians, while the British Foreign Office was advised by the ambassador at Stamboul that he received it with apprehension." And Mr. Hampson reported to the latter from Erzeroum regarding the proposal that:

"This measure of arming the Kurds is regarded with great anxiety here. This feeling is much increased by the conduct of the Kurds themselves, many of whom openly state that they have been appointed to suppress Armenians, and that they have received assurances that they will not be called to answer before the tribunals for any acts of oppression committed against Christians.

"The Armenians in this town are very uneasy, and very many of those who are in a position to be able to do so have expressed their intention of leaving Erzeroum as soon as the roads are open."

On March 30th, the interesting announcement was made that a contingent of the new Kurdish cavalry had embarked on board a special steamer for Constantinople, in order to be presented to the Sultan. Along the route they were everywhere fêted, and at Trebizond were greeted with civic and military honours. It was also stated that that this "new auxiliary force of the Ottoman army is to find its own equipment and depend on the State for its arms and ammunition only," which meant that some 30,000 Kurds, after being armed by the Government, were to live upon the Armenian Christians. Then comes

the further official description of their reception by the Sultan, their welcome by Dervisch Pasha, and the Caliph's orders that "their smallest wants are to be attended to."

The general result of this new military formation was the organized effort at destroying the Armenians; the immediate consequence was an increase of outrage and crime. In July, 1892, a captain of the Hamidieh cavalry, Idris by name, went with his brother to demand a contribution of fodder from the villagers of Hamsisheikh. They accosted two of the local head men, and ordered them to provide the hay. "We do not possess such a quantity in the whole village," was the reply. Produce the hay or I'll shoot you dead," said Idris. They replied that it did not exist, and that they could not create it. "Then die," said the captain, and shot them both on the spot. The people were, however, lucky if the village was spared, or their families and property were allowed to remain safe from destruction and outrage. It did not often happen so, even before the massacres of 1895. For instance, five villages east of Kara Kilisse had a population of some 3,000 Christians. But, in 1893, Eyoob, a general officer in the Hamidieh, sent his three sons - also officers - to take possession of these villages. To-day they have not an inhabitant, and their houses are ruins.

But it is not necessary to say more. At a moment when the horrors of Sassoun were beginning to reach Europe, 306 of the principal residents of the district of Khnouss signed the following statement, addressed to the "humane and noble people of England":

"We now solemnly assure you that the butchery of Sassoun is but a drop in the ocean Armenian bloodshed gradually and silently all over the Empire since the late Turko-Russian war. Year by year, month by month, day by day, innocent men, women, and children have been shot down, stabbed, or clubbed to death in their houses and their fields, tortured in strange, fiendish ways in fetid prison cells, or left to rot in exile under the scorching sun of Arabia. During the progress of that long and horrible tragedy no voice was raised for mercy, no hand extended to help us."

And this pictures truly, though sternly, the situation which had grown by official encouragement and natural Turkish and Kurdish depravity, until it burst into the flaming atrocities of the recent Armenian massacres.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SWORD OF ISLAM FALLS

From 1878 onwards, there had been little of peace, happiness, or security in Armenia. Its Christian population lived under the shadow of that awful prayer breathed daily from millions of Moslem throats throughout Turkey, and which embodies the creed of Islam, and the condition of Christians under its control, as no amount of learned exposition or fierce denunciation could possibly do:

"I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed. In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful! Oh, Lord of all Creatures! Oh, Allah! Destroy the infidels

and the polytheists, thine enemies, the enemies of the religion! Oh, Allah! Make their children orphans, and defile their abodes, and make their feet to slip; and give them, and their families, and their households, and their women, and their children, and their relations by marriage, and their brothers, and their friends, and their possessions, and their race, and their wealth, and their lands, as booty to the Moslem. Oh, Lord of all Creatures!"

It is true that during many centuries the Armenians, as well as other Christians in Turkey, have lived and suffered and been slaughtered in isolated batches under this Islamic injunction. It is true that in an extract from a private letter, dated April 3rd, 1894, five months before the first of the recent massacres, the writer stated that there was "no computing the lives that are going, not in open massacre, as in Bulgaria, but in secret, silent, and secluded ways." But as yet the Armenians had not been revealed to a world which seemed to have forgotten them and their Christian heroism and endurance, in the fall glare of the national holocaust upon the altar of Mahometan cruelty.

To those who followed British Parliamentary proceedings, or were interested in the Eastern Question, or read Blue Books, or sympathized with the exertions of Eastern missionaries, something was known of the dangers menacing the suffering Armenian race. Mr. Clifford Lloyd, at one time Consul-General at Erzeroum, summarized in an official despatch, as late as October, 1890, the condition of the country under the following heads:

- I. The insecurity of the lives and properties of Christians.
- II. The insecurity of their persons, and the absence of all liberty of thought and action.
- III. The unequal status of Christian and Mahometan in the eyes of the Government.

But the instructed inaction of European Consuls; the delicate and difficult position of the missionaries under a despotic government, and amid a hostile, ignorant, and all-powerful Mahometan population; the absolutely false reports of the Turkish authorities; combined to keep Armenia in the shadow of the Moslem sword, and away from the help and countenance of international Christianity. When, therefore, late in 1894, rumours reached Constantinople from distant and mountainous Sassoun of some terrible massacres and cruelty to the Armenian Christians in that district, the news was at once suppressed, so far as the Sultan's Government could do so. But, gradually, intelligence of the frightful nature of the occurrences crept into English and American newspapers: private letters began to come to hand by messengers who had eluded Turkish surveillance; missionaries, though afraid to give their names, described incidents coming within their own experience; British Consuls reported concerning the atrocities they had heard of, and, in some cases, seen. Isolated as Sassoun was; despairing as were the miserable survivors of the massacres; emphatic as was the denial of Turkish Ministers, the truth could not be long concealed.

At first the reports were disbelieved in England. British newspapers, of Conservative complexion, did not wish to amplify or dwell upon stories which gave another hard blow to the British friends of Turkey. The Liberal press was not particularly anxious to add another foreign complication to the many which Lord Rosebery then had to deal with. The terrible news was therefore minimized and discredited, and, even when reliable information came to hand, it was thought that Armenian revolutionists might have had a considerable hand in provoking the massacres. And British political leaders were still more limited in their expressions of belief or sympathy, with the notable exceptions of Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Argyll, and the Duke of Westminster. But eventually conviction came to every one that a great national crime had been committed. To quote the *London Times*, early in December, 1894:

"There seems to be no longer any possibility of doubting that revolting cruelties have been committed on a very large scale, not by fanatical villagers or savage Bashi-Bazouks, but by regular troops, acting on the express orders of a Turkish general, and regardless of the protest of a Turkish district-governor. Worst of all, the conduct of the general has been not only condoned, but rewarded by an imperial decoration, while the human protesting official has been summarily removed from his post."

The first massacres seem to have risen out of a temporary alliance between the lamb and the wolf - the Armenian peasant and his Kurdish oppressor - for the purpose of enabling the former to refuse payment of certain additional Turkish taxes. The Armenians in this isolated Sassoun district, having to pay the almost intolerable exactions of the Kurds, seem to have thought that through the latter's help they might defy their Ottoman oppressors, and thus let wolf eat wolf. Hence the driving away of the troops sent to collect certain taxes, and the immediate representation to Constantinople that a serious Armenian rebellion had broken out. Orders were at once sent to Zekki Pasha, the military commander at Erzinjan, to proceed to the disturbed district with a force sufficient to suppress the alleged troubles. What his orders were will perhaps never be exactly known, but they were enough to inspire the commander with a brutally unique vigour, and to draw to his aid the Kurds themselves. Both the troops and Kurds seem to have then fallen upon the villagers - unarmed, it must be remembered, as a rule - and to have murdered, tortured, and pillaged to the very extreme point of Moslem cruelty.

Such, at least, was the immediate origin of the troubles, according to what the *London Times* termed "the best authenticated account." But refugees have since stated that for eighteen months prior to the massacres the district of Sassoun was surrounded by Turkish troops, who allowed no one to pass their lines. Upon one occasion, however, they learned that people in the village of Vartimis, just outside the district, had managed to smuggle some food through the lines into the neighbouring village of Dalvorig. For this offence Vartimis was raided, and the majority of its inhabitants slaughtered - 25 Armenian houses out of 325 being left standing as memorials of mercy. There have, of course, been many other and varied versions of the first cause of the massacres, outside of the generally accepted belief amongst local Turks, and Kurds, and

Armenians, that they formed part of an official scheme of prearranged extermination. One story is that the Armenians fought and drove away the Kurds in 1893, and that the latter came back with the regular troops in 1894, and performed the horrible work they had before attempted.

But whatever the exact origin of the occurrences, there is no doubt as to their nature. The details indeed are too horrible to be more than briefly indicated. A letter dated Bitlis, October 9th, declared that some of the Turkish soldiers actually shrank back shuddering from the picture and record of what they had themselves done, and claimed that the Kurds had committed the worst of the crimes. No compassion," says the writer, "was shown to age or sex, even by the regular soldiery - not even when victims fell suppliant at their feet. Five to ten thousand met such a fate as even the darkest ages of darkest Africa had hardly witnessed." The torments which were inflicted on the helpless women and children are as indescribable as they are inconceivable to Christian minds. The letter concludes by saying that the writer could not further prolong the sickening tale. "There must be a God in heaven who will do right in all these matters, or some of us would lose faith."

Another letter declares that twenty-seven villages were annihilated in Sassoun, and six thousand men, women, and children massacred by the Turks and Kurds. It adds October 31st - that "the awful story is only just beginning to be known in Constantinople, though the massacres took place early in September. The Turks have used infinite pains to prevent the news leaking out, even going to the length of sending back from Trebizond many hundreds from the Moush region who had come this way on business." An epistle published in the "Artzakank" of Tiflis, and written by one whom the *Times* described as an "able and careful correspondent in Armenia," gives the following account of a portion of the slaughter:

"Zekki Pasha, that prowling enemy to the peace and life of mankind, who was quite recently rewarded with the Osmanieh of the first class, marched against Sassoun with the troops under his orders, consisting of regulars and the Hamidieh rabble, and, having been repulsed, could only attack the eleven villages in the Shadakh district between Sassoun and Moush. ... The inhabitants of these villages consisted of unarmed, defenceless, decrepid old men, old women, housewives, boys and girls. The Pasha has pitilessly hacked to pieces and stabbed these people with swords and bayonets, some 900 souls, and about 150 of them were led as prisoners horribly maltreated and half dead, in heavy chains - and incarcerated in the central prison at Moush... The villages were given up to pillage and fired."

These Turkish-Armenian prisons, by the way, have been described by Dr. Dillon as the home of filth, disease, deformity, pain in forms almost inconceivable to civilized peoples, torture, and madness - "the whole incarnated in grotesque beings whose resemblance to man is a living blasphemy on the Deity." Reports such as the above continued to pour in upon private individuals at Constantinople, in London, and in New York, from men of undoubted position and probity, the use of whose names, however,

would have placed them in the greatest danger. One letter, for instance, states that the details which had then reached Bitlis - a few miles from the scene of massacre - indicated a repetition of the sickening horrors of 1876 in Bulgaria. Another adds the statement that the massacres, even as reported by the regular soldiers themselves, were "most fiendish." Many of the latter admitted to him, without any particular shame, of having disposed of a hundred persons each - by torture, outrage, and the bayonet. "Twenty to thirty villages were wholly destroyed; people were burned with kerosene in their own homes." The London *Times*' correspondent reported a number of individual cases of Turkish cruelty which illustrate the horrors of the more general massacres.

In the village of Semal, for instance, a Kurd commander of regular troops, named Selo Bey, took the local priest from his church, placed him and the sacred vessels upon a donkey, and then, going a little distance away, shot the man dead. Selo also forcibly seized a number of Armenian girls in the village, and sent them to his harem at Quitzoom. The village of Kelichuzen was set on fire by a body of troops in the early dawn, before its people were stirring, and priest named Margos, with twenty other persons, were burned alive in a single house, not one being allowed to escape. The chief of the village - Cheneg by name - was bound up with his two daughters, and all three scalded to death. A man named Arakiel and his wife were tortured with red-hot irons and then killed. Ibo Bey, another Kurd brigand and a Colonel in the regular army, took his troops to the villages of Bahlow, Hatzgent, and Komk, and there committed outrages of the most abominable and indescribable nature. In one case two hundred women were collected together, brutally maltreated, and then shot or bayoneted.

A number of letters, necessarily anonymous, but written by Americans resident in Turkey whose standing has been vouched for by the Governor of Massachusetts and others, have been recently published, and throw considerable detailed light on these scenes of horror. In some cases small companies of troops entered the villages declared their intention of protecting the people, and then, in the middle of the night, "arose and slaughtered the sleeping villagers, man, woman, and child." Upon one occasion a priest and some leading men went out to meet the officer, declared their loyalty, presented their tax-receipts, and pleaded for mercy. But "the village was surrounded, and all human beings put to the bayonet." A large and strong man, the chief of another village, was captured by the Kurds," who tied him, threw him on the ground, and squatting around him stabbed him to pieces. "By this time," says a correspondent:

"Those in other villages were beginning to feel that extermination was the object of the government, and desperately determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible. And then began a campaign of butchery that lasted some twenty-three days, or, roughly, from the middle of August to the middle of September. The Ferik Pasha (Marshal Zekki Pasha), who came post-haste from Erzinjan, read the Sultan's firman for extermination, and then, hanging the document on his breast, exhorted the soldiers not to be found wanting in their duty. On the last day of August, the anniversary of the

Sultan's accession, the soldiers were especially urged to distinguish themselves, and they made it the day of the greatest slaughter."

The details of torture and death are awful. At Galagozan, for instance, many young men were tied hand and foot, laid in a row, covered with brushwood, and burned alive. "Others were seized and hacked to death, piecemeal." The men of another village, when fleeing, took the women and children, some 500 in number, and concealed them in a sort of cave. "After several days the soldiers found them, and butchered those who had not died of hunger." Children were massacred without mercy, sometimes literally torn to pieces. In one instance a little boy ran out of the flames of his burning home, but was caught on a bayonet and thrown back. A portion of the doomed population, about 1,000 in number, sought refuge on Mount Andoke, and for fifteen days, despite almost continuous attack by fresh relays of Kurds, managed to hold their own. But food and ammunition gave out, and exhaustion finally enabled the enemy to capture their position. Hardly an Armenian survived to tell the tale of the result.

The troops and Kurds then turned their attention to the Dalvorig district, where some 4,000 survivors still clung together. They were soon decimated, however, by rifle shots, and the remainder slaughtered with sword and bayonet. The fate of the women during these occurrences cannot be described. But in nearly every case they refused to accept Mahometanism and a Turkish harem as the price of life. In one village 400 women, in another 200 women, in another 60 girls, and hundreds of isolated individuals throughout these districts, accepted their dreadful fate, rather than repudiate Christianity. The Armenian estimate of the total number slaughtered in these preliminary massacres is 16,000; the Turkish admission is about 1,000; the probable number is about 10,000.

As soon as these facts became reasonably substantiated and publicly known, steps were taken in the English-speaking countries to express sympathy, proffer aid to the survivors, and urge international action. In London the Armenian Relief Committee was formed, with the Duke of Argyll as President, and the Duke of Westminster and the Archbishop of York as Vice-Presidents. Amongst its members were the Bishops of Salisbury, St. Asaph, and Hereford, Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Mr. James Bryce, M.P., Canon McCall, Rev. Dr. Guinness Rogers, and Mr. Edward Atkin (Secretary and Treasurer). Thousands of pounds were soon collected and sent out to the starving people still scattered over the Sassoun district, and wandering amid the ruins of their homes and the wrecks of household happiness. In the United States a large Committee was also organized, to which New York contributed its leading men, and the great republic many thousands of dollars. The Hon. Seth Low, Mayor Strong, Bishop Potter, Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott, General Horace Porter, and many others took an active interest in the work, which was supervised by Mr. Bleecker Miller, the chairman; Mr. C. H. Stout, the treasurer; and an earnest Armenian resident, Herant Mesrob Kiretchjian, as general secretary. Canada was not behindhand in its aid, and through the energetic

efforts of Dr. Walter B. Geikie, of Toronto, as treasurer of a large Committee, it contributed as much proportionately as the richer and more populous countries.

But, naturally, this work of sympathy and Christianity did not have immediate effect. Many delays occurred in the organizing of relief, owing to Turkish deception and intrigue, while the funds themselves did not grow as rapidly as was the case when, a year later, there came the news of still more awful massacres if such were possible. Meanwhile events and knowledge alike progressed. At a mass meeting in New York, Mr. Varton Dilloyan, a survivor and witness of the Sassoun horrors, explained the nature of the occurrences, and pleaded for aid to the starving remnant in that once beautiful district. "I saw with my own eyes," said he, "how the soldiers rushed through our village – Dalvorig - and picked up the little children and cut them to pieces, and then rushed on to slay others, calling to those behind them, "Come on! Come on!" After going into some other details, he went on to describe how the Moslems had desecrated their churches, murdered their priests, tied the Cross to the necks of dogs, and tortured and killed the women.

In January, 1896, more than a year after these events, two large British blue-books were issued dealing with them, so far as it was possible for the Consular Delegates accompanying the farcical Turkish Commission of Inquiry to do so. They were, of course, hampered by the presence of the Turkish officials, and prevented from obtaining any really serviceable information by the fact that no Armenian could dare to tell the truth, while all Moslems felt bound to tell the reverse. They, therefore, found hundreds to have been slaughtered where the private evidence of myriads of witnesses - European and American residents, missionaries and Armenian refugees - proved thousands to have been openly massacred. Still, they found that the details were sufficiently atrocious, and Mr. H. S. Shipley, the British Commissioner, in a report which was presented to Sir Philip Currie and Lord Salisbury, says:

"I do not think, seeing as I did, in company with my colleagues, the entire ruin of a whole district, not a house being left standing, the fields even having been wantonly devastated, as well as the abject misery and destitution to which these Armenians have been reduced, that the epithets applied to the conduct of the Turkish soldiers and Kurds by the press are in any way too strong. We have in our report given it as our conviction, arrived at from the evidence brought before us, that the Armenians were massacred without distinction of age or sex, and, indeed, for a period of three weeks - August 12 to September 4 - it is not too much to say that the Armenians were absolutely hunted like wild beasts, being killed wherever they were met."

He goes on to say that the story of revolt on the part of the Christians is false, and that all indications favour the belief that the Turkish authorities desired the extermination, pure and simple, of the Christian population of these districts. And he adds his own conviction that "whether they instigated the above attack or not they were responsible for it; it took place with their knowledge and consent, as is shown by the fact that the soldiers sent nominally to keep order sided with the Kurds, and so contributed

to the ruin of the Talori Armenians." It might well be asked where in all Armenian, or, indeed, Turkish history was the Moslem soldier ever known to side with, or defend, his Christian fellow-subject? In addition to the analysis of the evidence received, the Consular Delegates had been instructed to take depositions from certain reliable Armenian witnesses, and six of these sworn statements are included in the blue-books. They furnish the most horrible accounts of outrage and massacre, describe events which have either been already referred to, or the nature of which may be easily understood from what has been previously stated.

To return to an earlier stage of the subject and when news had reached the authorities at Constantinople concerning the suppression of this "rebellion," the Sultan at once despatched a special officer to Zekki Pasha, the "hero" of Sassoun, and chief representative of military power in that division of the empire, with a message of thanks, and a very high decoration set in brilliants. Accompanying this were new flags to be given, as a special token of honour and appreciation, to the Kurdish cavalry, or Hamidieh. This action was in reality a challenge to Christendom, and a more open approval than even that accorded to Chefketh Pasha for the Bulgarian massacres of twenty years before. And it should have been accepted as such, when the proofs came fully to hand of the atrocities which it practically approved and praised. But, although universal sympathy in all English-speaking countries was aroused, this sentiment did not assume the form of a sufficiently acute indignation to make the Sultan feel that he had gone too far - or let his myrmidons go too far. The result was seen in the massacres of 1895. Yet these events, even as far as they had gone in December, 1894, amongst the valleys and hills of Sassoun, were worse than any recorded of the Reign of Terror or the Sicilian Vespers. These latter occurrences are famous amongst the tragedies of history, although the estimated direct deaths in neither case exceeded 2,000 in number, and were certainly unaccompanied by the unique brutalities of the Kurd and Turk. True, indeed, is the sentiment of William Watson in those forceful lines:

"The panther of the desert, matched with these,
Is pitiful; beside their lust and hate
Fire and the plague-wind are compassionate,
And soft the deadliest pangs of ravening seas."

Still, Abdul-Hamid denied the massacres, and made great protestations in appointing his Committee of Inquiry, when their truth was publicly forced upon him. And England, as well as America, hoped that he would prove not only innocent of all complicity, but determined in the prevention of further crime. Events and investigations already described have, however, indicated how greatly the authorities at Constantinople were in reality responsible, and even at that time thoughtful persons must have seen and felt the strength of the ties binding the Sultan and his officials, to say nothing of the significance of his having so speedily rewarded the chief criminal. The light of many other occurrences have, since then, shown the Sultan's true position in these Sassoun horrors.

He was, in fact, directly responsible through his creation of the Hamidieh or Kurdish cavalry, and the share of his officered and regular troops in the deepest depths of murder and outrage. He was indirectly responsible through the general disarmament of the Christians over a long term of years; through his knowledge of preceding and multitudinous crimes against the Armenians; through his memory of many historic Turkish massacres, especially the Kurdish one of 1846; through his refusal to accept the advice and requests of Christian ambassadors regarding Armenian reform; through his intimate knowledge of the character of Turkish officials, and the particularly villainous character of those in Armenia. And these proofs of responsibility were enhanced a thousand times by the circumstances surrounding Turkish policy and the Eastern Question during the ten or twelve months which succeeded Sassoun, and preceded the still more widespread slaughter.

CHAPTER XXII

RENEWAL OF THE OUTRAGES

Meanwhile a year had slowly passed since the massacre of Sassoun - a year of trembling terror amongst the Armenians; a year of vigorous and sympathetic exertion amongst a few earnest men in England and the States; a year of diplomatic doubts, delays, and futile declarations. But as the month of October, 1895, brought the annual Christmas celebration of "Peace on earth, and good will toward men," into the minds of the Christian world, reports came from Armenia of horror upon horror; of murder, misery, and the very madness of crime and cruelty. All the concentrated evils of Mahometanism, in its most barbarous and brutal mood, seemed to have been poured out upon the Christians of Armenia. The dark and wretched annals of the Turk appeared to have been ransacked for methods of maltreatment and the expression of a malignant hatred.

It was not for want of warning that the people of this beautiful land were now to be destroyed by thousands, with every accompaniment of pitiless ferocity. The records of Bulgaria and Greece, Crete and Syria, should have been sufficient to make the powers realize that the Turk never undertakes a work of massacre in any half-hearted way, and that the events in Sassoun were sure to be repeated in other and worse forms. As far back as February, 1878, Dr. Humphrey Sandwith, the well-known authority upon Asiatic Turkey, had protested against the giving back of Armenia to the Turk, declaring it to be a crime, and one which showed that the English people did not understand what Turkish rule meant for the helpless populations who were subject to its tender mercies. How much more fierce would have been his denunciations had he known that the saving clause in the Berlin Treaty the British protectorate over Asia Minor and its Christians was to be abandoned by the succeeding English Government! But to him and others, who understood the evils of Moslem rule, Turkish occupation of these naturally lovely, fertile, and resourceful countries was not unlike Shakespeare's "dragon in a cave of beauty"; a ravening wolf amongst sheep and lambs.

The massacres, which began early in October, and included Trebizond, Bitlis, Erzinjan, Marash, Kharput, Cesarea, Orfah, Aintab, Erzeroum, Zeitoun, and a myriad minor places in their terrible scope, are, like those of Sassoun, indescribable in detail. Dr. E. J. Dillon, the Armenian correspondent of the *London Daily Telegraph*, writing from the spot, under his own signature, and in the responsible pages of the *Contemporary Review*, declared that butchery to have been "a divine mercy compared with the hellish deeds that are being done every week and every day of the year. The piteous moans of famishing children; the groans of old men who have lived to see what can never be embodied in words; the shrieks of mothers made childless by crimes compared with which murder would be a blessing; the screams, scarcely human, of women writhing under the lash; and all the vain voices of blood and agony that die away without having found a responsive echo on earth or in heaven, combine to throw, Sassoun and all its horrors into the shade."

The occurrences at Trebizond are described by a *London Times* correspondent at Odessa, who obtained the facts from a reliable eye-witness on board a Russian vessel in the harbour. About ten o'clock in the morning a terrible noise was heard in the town, and then the report of firearms. Suddenly a number of Armenians appeared flying before a horde of Turks, who were shooting them down or stabbing them as they caught up. Upon reaching the shore the Christians were, of course, helpless, being without arms, and were butchered before the very eyes of the persons on the vessel. Some attempted to escape by swimming, but were pursued in boats and hacked to pieces in the water. Later on, the Armenians who had been hiding were driven out of the town in a body and massacred by hundreds. The neighbouring Armenian villages were set on fire at the same time that the murders in Trebizond commenced, and in these outlying places the same system of destruction took place. Some 800 people, chiefly men, were killed in this neighbourhood. The troops and police - when they did not actually assist - looked on and approved the proceedings.

The scenes at Sivas were even worse. The outbreak of the Turks began on November 12, and was allowed to continue seven days, during which 1,200 Armenians were slaughtered. Suddenly, at noon on the date mentioned, and as if by a given signal, the Turkish labourers seized their tools, clubs, or whatever was at hand, the soldiers, Circassians, and police, took their arms; and all, under the command of officers, rushed into the market place and commenced the work of murder and pillage. No resistance was possible by the Armenians, who were killed in their offices, at their desks, and in their houses, with indiscriminate cruelty and outrage. In the Erzinjan district the Christians had sent some of their priests to the infamous Zekki Pasha, expressing their fears and asking for protection. On the morning of the day upon which the local massacres occurred an order came from the authorities to disarm any Armenians who might possess weapons of any sort. The latter thought that the order applied also to the Turks, and quietly gave up what was demanded. During the massacre which ensued in

Erzinjan, and in surrounding villages, more than 1,000 men and women were killed, over 800 wounded or maltreated, and thousands rendered homeless.

The events at Erzeroum, where there are 10,000 Armenians and over 30,000 Mahometans - including a large body of Turkish troops - were still more atrocious. For some time there had been open threats of violence by the Turks, and, as the fatal day approached, it was generally rumoured and believed that the Government officials had given orders to the soldiers to soon begin killing. Preparations were commenced by the troops being placed in front of the various Consulates, in order to prevent any victims from finding refuge there. The English Consul stopped this in his vicinity by threatening some shooting on his own account. His "dragoman," who passed through the streets about this time, heard an officer of one of the bands of soldiers say to an unruly Turk: "Can't you keep quiet now? Wait until it begins, and then you can do what you like." It was in the market that, as usual, the massacre opened. There the troops fired steadily on the defenceless people, and the dragoman already mentioned saw one Armenian run up to a Turkish officer, throw his arms around his feet, and beseech him for protection. But the brute only pushed his suppliant away and shot him with his own hand.

In the afternoon of the day on which the massacre took place, the English and Italian Consuls, accompanied by Tewfik Bey, made a tour of the Armenian quarter. Hardened as the latter was, the surrounding rain and misery affected even his equanimity and characteristic Turkish calm. The soldiers had fired volley after volley into the houses and then looted them, slaughtering any survivors - men, women, or children who might be found cowering in the corners. In one home were seen two young brides who had been brutally murdered, lying on carpets saturated with their blood. Detailed description of the horrors perpetrated can hardly be given. "What I myself saw this Friday afternoon," writes a correspondent of the *Times*, "is forever engraved on my mind as the most terrible sight a man can see. I went to the Armenian cemetery. Along the walk on the north, in a row, lay 321 dead bodies of the massacred Armenians. Many were fearfully mangled and mutilated. Everybody seemed to have at least two wounds, and some a dozen." His estimate of the total killed in Erzeroum is 1,000, with possibilities running up to double that number. His concluding remarks are very pathetic:

"This Erzeroum slaughter was purely a massacre of innocent inhabitants by enraged Turks. The Armenians in this city kept quiet by the solicitation of foreigners living in the city, who said, 'Have patience: England, France, and Russia will help you.' But as month after month rolled by, the Moslems became more rabid, until the helpless Armenians fell victims. Had it not been for the Consuls in this city, the British particularly, I believe things would have been far worse. Now, winter is before those penniless people, the bread-winners of the families are gone, and the misery will, I think, be terrible."

In the village and district of Kharput, a large number of Christians fell victims to the local massacre; eight of the American missions in the village were burned down and great distress and desolation were caused in the surrounding district where thousands of the inhabitants were murdered, outraged, or deprived of even the barest means of subsistence. At Caesarea, on Saturday, November 23rd, the Turks organized, and for three hours murdered, burned houses, and plundered, undisturbed by the local troops. Only a few houses immediately surrounding that of Reuter's correspondent - a schoolmaster - found immunity, and he, apparently by orders from Constantinople, was allowed to go unscathed, though sheltering upwards of a hundred refugees. He described the condition of the corpses as "literally hacked to pieces," and estimated the number killed as anywhere from several hundred to 1,000. Turks came from neighbouring villages to help, and many Christian women were maltreated or carried off. Some perished in the flames of their burning houses. At least one local preacher - Dr. Avedis - his wife and eldest son, were killed, while his two daughters were afterwards reported as "missing."

Another correspondent, who is described as entirely trustworthy, wrote from Caesarea, that, "to judge from the wounded," all kinds of weapons must have been used, and he mentions axes, sickles, and daggers. "The first wounded person I took care of was an old man who had a large wound made by a meat-axe on the back of his neck. Besides this, there were seven or eight other wounds about his head and face. He lived fifteen days, and died in great agony. His wife and son also were wounded severely, and his two young daughters were maltreated." In another case which he refers to, Mr. Yeretian, a medical man and preacher, his wife, son, and brother-in-law, were all ruthlessly butchered, and thrown into the flames of their burning home. A pathetic incident is also told of four young women whose house was attacked by the Turks. Two of them were carried off, and the marauders promised to return shortly for the others. Seeing that there was no hope, the latter filled the Oriental oven - dug in the floor of the kitchen - with and threw themselves into the flames.

Still another witness wrote to the *New York World* that the mob in this case had divided into four parts. The first plundered the Armenian stores, the second looted the houses, the third secured the young women, while the fourth, whom he describes as "fiends incarnate," attacked the public baths for women, killing some, dragging others through the streets by their feet, and maltreating all. "My hand almost fails me to write the awful particulars. It took three or four days to remove the bodies of the dead with forty carts. Add to this the want, the desolation!"

The massacres at Harpoot and surrounding villages were of a most horrible nature. The Rev. O. P. Allen wrote shortly after the event that they were hardly themselves aware of the full extent of the outside pillage and murder, and abduction of women and girls. But the pressure upon the people to become Mahometans was known to be terrible, and "large numbers have been instantly shot down or butchered who would not abjure their faith". He had already heard of the murder of thirteen of their

native pastors and preachers. The story of one amongst the 176 villages which had been plundered or burned in this district is typical. About 400 Kurds surrounded it and commenced firing at random into the place. Thinking their object was plunder, the head men appeared and proffered £100 (Turkish) as ransom. This they took and then demanded all the watches in the village, then any weapons which might be there, then the grain, the oxen and the cattle. All of these they received, and then proceeded to go through the houses so as to take any other valuables which might be left. And after all this they drove the people out of the houses; stripped them - men, women, and children - of their clothing, and even shoes; burned down their homes, and killed the pastor because he would not change his religion. Finally, they took forty-five of the young men away in the night, and two by two offered them the choice of Islam or death. All but five, who managed to escape, were slaughtered because of their prompt refusal to deny Christianity.

In this Province of Harpoot an estimate of the massacres, published in February, 1896, gives the total number of men, women, and girls murdered as being about 29,000; persons burned to death in the fires as 1,300; ministers, preachers, and school teachers killed as 51; deaths from hunger and cold as 3,200; deaths from exposure in the mountains and snow as 4,000; the number wounded as 8,000; the number of persons forcibly circumcised and converted to Islam as 15,000; the number of violations as 5,500; the number of women forcibly taken in marriage by the Moslems as 1,500; the number of men, women, and children in destitute condition as 54,000. Of course, these figures are purely approximate, and could not in existing conditions be exactly verified, either then or afterwards. But they are probably as near the truth as it will ever be possible to get - Sultan's commissions and European official investigations of the future notwithstanding. And whether within or without the mark they indicate the horrible nature of the crimes committed as well as the wholesale and widespread character of a slaughter which covered not only this entire province, but a whole country. At Marash the murders and outrages were much like those of Caesarea and Erzeroum, and so many other places. But an especially full and authentic account is available from the pen of Miss Hess, in a letter written to a friend in Constantinople, and by her forwarded to Miss Barker, of Toronto. "For four weeks," she writes, "we have been having a reign of terror. Armenians were shot down at night in the streets, shops and houses were plundered, children disembowelled (I know of two), men's heads put on poles or used as balls in the streets, and every other horrible thing. The city was first filled with soldiers - estimated at 7,000 - and then the Turks were let loose. Fire and murder and outrage soon filled the air with shrieks of pain and fear, and the hearts of the trembling girls in the Missionary College with more than terror. Miss Hess herself saw from its windows a band of ruffians seize two theological students of the neighbouring and now blazing Seminary, and beat them and shoot them over and over again.

Afterwards, when a guard of soldiers had been sent to the College - the presence of women of other nationalities alone saved its inmates from a horrible fate - these two

wounded students were brought in, and the narrator describes them as being a perfect mass of wounds. Instances are given in which whole families were slaughtered; two churches were burned in which a large number of women and children had taken refuge, and Miss Hess adds pathetically that "they were all lost, of course." She heard an estimate of 4.700 as the total number killed, and describes the plunder as being something tremendous. From the victims everything was taken, "dishes, clothes, provisions - every single thing." The letter concludes with an appeal for aid: the statement that ten cents a week will keep body and soul together amongst these people; and the charge that "we have every reason to think that the order (for the massacres) came from the Capital."

The events at Aintab took place three weeks after those at Marash, and were commenced in the markets by a mixed mass of Turks and soldiers, armed with either axes or clubs, or stones, or knives, or guns, or pistols, rushing through the city in a storm of plunder and murder. After the massacre Dr. Caroline T. Hamilton declared that: "It was a sight to sicken the bravest. Most of the wounds were made with axes and large knives, and little children, women, and old men, as well as the young and strong, had been attacked as they fled. Covered with blood which had dried on head and hands and clothing, weak from lack of food and the pitiless cold, frightened so that several were wildly insane, one could not endure the sight of the survivors. Efforts are being made to provide food and clothing. Industry is paralyzed, and there are multitudes to be cared for."

The slaughter which took place at Orfah on the 28th and 29th of December included some five thousand victims and a peculiarly awful scene in the Armenian church. Like a similar building at Batak, in Bulgaria, some twenty years before, it proved too strong for the party of Moslems which sought to enter it and massacre the three thousand people within, or to burn it to the ground. The result was that they climbed upon the roof, got down to the galleries surrounding the interior of the church, and there poured thirty cases of petroleum oil upon the writhing mass below. Into the midst of them they then threw lighted torches, and hardly a hundred escaped from the ensuing hell of fire and murder. The Kurds, who in this case were the criminals, afterwards cast one hundred and fifty wounded Armenians down a well, and the correspondent of the London *Times* adds the almost incredible statement - incredible regarding any but Kurds or fanatical Turks - that they poured petroleum over this mass of living human beings and set it on fire. Terrible as this slaughter was, it had been in some measure anticipated, and several days before it occurred the Armenian clergy of Orfah - most of whom were afterwards killed - sent out a secret message and warning. It was a most pathetic document, and the following passages deserve respect and consideration:

"We are doomed to die. Everywhere it is whispered that the Armenians of Orfah have but the fearful alternative of Islam or the sword. Before this reaches you we may have joined these who have gone before to the city of God. The attitude of relentless hostility in the Sultan and the ferocious aspect of our Moslem neighbours has not

abated. We are as sheep waiting to be slaughtered, and, while waiting with bleeding hearts for the last act in this tragedy, we desire to send a farewell message to our fellow-men.

"To our sovereign, the Sultan, Abdul-Hamid, we say: For such as you this destruction of a whole people, no doubt, an easy task, and in accomplishing it you will perhaps win from your admirers the proud title of The Victorious. For ourselves, we can only make our last solemn protest that we are not, and never have been, rebels, and we regret that your energy and valour, and that of your soldiers, should have been displayed, not against the enemies of your Empire, but in the massacre and plunder of your unarmed and loyal subjects.

"To our Moslem fellow-countrymen our message is: Our complaints and appeals have been based solely on the sentiment of humanity, and the common rights of men. It was Britain who arranged the Scheme of Reforms and urged it upon our Sultan, till he was irritated to the extent that he seems to have adopted the plan of ridding himself finally of this annoyance by exterminating our nation. With some of you humanity has been stronger than passion and prejudice, and for this we honour and thank you.

"To the Christians of the United States of America, we say Farewell! We have been strenuously opposed to your mission work among us, on the ground that it was divisive and subversive of our national Church traditions, but these bloody days have shown us that some of our Protestant brethren have been staunch defenders of our honour and our faith. You have laboured to promote among us Christian intelligence and purity; it is not your fault that one result of your teaching and example has been to excite our masters against us."

This remarkable letter contains more than one subject for thought. It shows the general belief entertained by intelligent Armenians that their extermination was, in reality, the policy of the Government; it reveals the horror of the situation during the weary months of waiting between Sassoun and its dreadful aftermath; it indicates one of the chief difficulties encountered by all missionaries in these Turkish countries - the popular knowledge that their faith is peculiarly obnoxious to the Porte. Meantime other massacres were steadily taking place. At Biredjik the British Vice-Consul - Mr. Fitzmaurice telegraphed that 150 Christians had been killed, and 1,500 persons compelled to embrace Islam in order to avoid its deadly sword. Other despatches indicate that terrible cruelties were practised here in order to force conversion. In one case the Turks found twenty people in a cave, and murdered the men and boys on their refusing to profess Mahometanism. They put live coals upon the body of one old man, and, as he lay writhing in torture, held a Bible before his face and taunted him.

Near Baibourt a body of 500 Mahometan soldiers of an irregular type attacked several small villages, set fire to the houses, schools, and sheds, and drove the people back into the flames of their blazing homes when they endeavoured to escape. Some young men and women are said by the *Times* correspondent to have been here burned alive at stakes. And the Governor of Baibourt refused to send protection when appealed to. At Diarbekr the number of victims was estimated to be at least 5,000, and a traveller

who arrived at Trebizond shortly afterwards reported that he had encountered 300 women near the city who fell on their knees before him, saying that their husbands were killed, and imploring his protection in the name of God. In the village of Akhissar the Armenians were attacked on October 9th, and twenty dead bodies were afterwards recovered from a well, and buried by the Bishop of Ismid.

Between the Persian borders and the city of Van more than fifty villages were destroyed by Hamidieh cavalry, large numbers of Christians killed with every kind of barbarity, and crowds of women carried off by these Kurdish "soldiers" to their mountains. Many Armenians, here as elsewhere, were compelled to embrace Islam - and it must be remembered that under the laws of the Koran, and the principles of the Turk, any one relapsing from such a profession of faith is doomed to death. The Rev. Mr. Chambers, in a letter to Principal Grant, of Kingston, tells how dreadfully these "converts" to Mahometanism felt their fate. They wrote asking him not to blame them, and described their situation in words like these: "We were, and are, ready to undergo torture and submit to death for the sake of our religion, but (God forgive us) we could not hand over our wives and children to the Turkish soldiers."

Around Bitlis, some 4.300 forced Moslem conversions were effected after the massacres had been completed. In one case, however, fifteen Armenian families of Tchabakeiour (Tchapaghjour – ed.) retracted their profession and returned to Christianity. They were promptly murdered by the Kurds. But the list of massacres need not be further extended. Fully 50,000 Armenian Christians during two months had been put to death, in ways of such awful cruelty as even the instances recorded in these pages can only indicate. To quote the Stamboul correspondent of the London *Speaker*: "The destruction of the Armenian communities has been completed amid scenes of fiendish barbarity which no pen can describe: Those left alive are left without anything." And if 50,000 were massacred during the special days devoted to that occupation by the Turks and Kurds, at least as many more died of starvation, of wounds, or, in the case of many women, from heart-broken misery at the loss of everything which made life worth living, or prevented it from becoming utterly unbearable.

Meantime, the craze for slaughter had been early aroused in Constantinople, if, indeed, it was not originally created there and in Armenia by orders from its government. During one of the first days in October, about 3,000 Armenians had assembled in the Karum Kapou Cathedral for religious purposes. At the conclusion of the service, some kind of petition was presented to the Patriarch, asking him to lead a Christian procession or deputation to the Sultan in favour of reforms in Armenia. He refused to do so, and urged his people not to attempt any demonstration at that particular time. But he was unfortunately unheeded, and the congregation seems to have streamed into the street with a vague intention of marching to the Palace.

Of course, the idea was never realized. Such things as peaceful popular movements are not understood in Stamboul, and the ever-convenient soldiers at once intervened. Just how the massacre started can only be guessed at, but pistol shots

were fired, and in the ensuing mêlée some Turks, as well as Armenians, were killed. The opportunity, however, was quite sufficient, and during the next two days the "rioting," as it was called, continued. It was presently ended by the interference of the Ambassadors, and the Armenians, who had meanwhile crowded into the churches for protection - as a rule, of course, they were without arms - gradually obtained confidence and liberty. But some hundreds had been slaughtered, and many of the bodies afterwards recovered were most terribly wounded. One corpse had twenty knife cuts, and others were fearfully battered with clubs. Numerous victims were thrown into the sea and the bodies never recovered. The *Times* correspondent says, that:

"At some points veritable man-hunts took place, and several Armenians who became the quarry of the ferocious bands were cruelly ill-treated and bludgeoned to death. Thus, shortly before noon on Tuesday, two Armenian porters passing down the street through which the tram way runs to Galata were set upon, and, in the presence of a number of spectators, cudgelled to death with indescribable ferocity... No police were present, and the assassins, after completing their work of butchery, withdrew unmolested."

So in other cases. And it must not be forgotten that these disturbances arose under the very shadow of the Sublime Porte - almost within sight of the absolute ruler of these people in both a religious and national sense. Yet the murderers did not fear his displeasure, and certainly went unpunished, while the jails became literally filled with innocent Armenians, who in many instances were bastinadoed, and in others, according to general belief, were tortured. If such things could occur in the capital of Turkey, while the gunboats of foreign Powers were patrolling neighbouring seas, and foreign ambassadors were daily going through the farce of demanding reforms and protection for the Christians of the empire, what might not - and did not - occur in distant Asiatic provinces ?

During the succeeding months, and well into 1896, murder and outrage continued, though not upon the wholesale plan. In Armenia it has indeed been going on even while British and American relief funds are being distributed; and, in Constantinople, the correspondent of the *Speaker*, already quoted from, declared late in December that every day numbers of Armenians disappear, and what becomes of them no one knows." This is really typical of all these horrible events. Open massacre when there was no fear of immediate external force; prolonged murder and outrage where there was no power of individual defence or concerted local resistance; secret assassination where there was a possibility of international interference. The Sassoun massacres had deserved Christian intervention at the point of the bayonet: the horrors of the succeeding year merited the annihilation of Turkish power and the overthrow of the Ottoman race. But destiny - and Russia - decreed that nothing should be done, and no present punishment be inflicted.

ARMENOLOGICAL HERITAGE

ARMENIAN COLONIES OF UKRAINE

Extracted from Arakel Gevorg Arakelyan "The History of Spiritual Culture of Armenian People", vol. 2, Yerevan, 1964 (pp.192-205).

A. Arakelyan was distinguished expert in Armenian and philology, author of fundamental studies which deal with Armenian philology and history - "The History of Spiritual Culture of Armenian People" in two volumes (Yerevan, 1959-1964), "Textbook of Classical Armenian" (Yerevan, 1944-1946). Among his studies is worth to mention those dedicated to the classical Greek and Roman literature - "History of Roman literature" (1956, Yerevan), "History of Greek literature" (Yerevan, 1968).

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As it was mentioned above, Armenian colonists had been settled in Europe still in ancient times. The colonization never stopped but continued also in succeeding period, but more intensely. Thus, in the XIII century when Tatars invaded Armenia, the Armenians left their motherland and settled down in several Russian cities – Kazan, Hashtarkhan (Astrakhan), Saray etc. In these cities they contributed in the development of trade and crafts. But it does not mean that they live comfortably in this new country. The Tatar invasions forced them to leave this new habitat and look for quiet place far in Europe. Thus, a significant portion of Armenians reached the central part of Europe – Romania, Bulgaria, and another group – Ukraine. Armenians were concentrated in the cities of Lvov, Kamenets-Podolsk, Stanislav, in Transylvania and other places. In their new habitat Armenians grew in number so that they founded an Armenian town. Here in the XVI-XVIII centuries the number of Armenian population reached 200.000, or even 400-500 thousand people according to some scholars.¹

The mass of the Armenian colonists consist of different social groups – peasants, craftsmen, traders, clergymen, aristocrats. They were centered in different European cities and settlements, contributing in the development of local trade, crafts and also in economic and cultural prosperity of indigenous population.

In the XVII century were especially prosperous several groups of Armenian colonists. In this regard Lvov and Stanislav occupied central place in the history of Armenian colonies.

The Armenian colony of Lvov

Lvov used to be one of the biggest cities of Poland. It bears also the name Lemberg (Chamchyan uses also the form Yilov). Simeon Lehatsi explains this name as originating from the Russian word /ev "lion", and in the Armenian manuscripts sometimes appears the forms Lernapat, Leopolis.

About Lvov and the Armenian colony of Poland in general inform us also the Armenian and Polish sources. Among Armenian authors wrote about Lvov Simeon

¹ A.Poghosyan, The History of Armenian people, vol.5, Yerevan, 1960, p.167.

Lehatsi ("Travel notes"), Hovhannes Avagerets, Grigor Voskerich, the XVII century authors. Minas Bzhshkyan, member of the Mechitarist Armenian congregation of Venice (XIX century) also speaks about Lvov. Armenian sources stress the prominent economic and cultural role of Lvov in Poland. For example, speaking about Lvov Simeon Lehatsi writes:

"This city is populous, filled with goods and is abundant in fruit ... There are many different artisans and craftsmen – jewelers, embroiderers in gold, sculptors, masons, marble carvers, etc. ... there are also painters, engravers and masters who print in Polish, in Russian and in Armenian There is also a high house made of stone which is called town hall, with big clock on top of it ... there are located Polish and Armenian courts ... All houses of the city are built of stone, expensive, wide and high, with three, four stories". Simeon Lehatsi describes also the wealth of Armenians: "they have land, gardens and orchards, fruit trees, parks, vertograds, flower gardens and rose gardens, and also high palaces, palaces and plentiful sources".²

In the manuscript ascribed to Gevorg Palatatsi is written about Lvov: "The capital city is Leopoli, famous and known for its rich market which is on the square of Saint Agnes ...".

The study by N.Krivosos and O.Grabovetsky is a valuable source for the Armenian colony of Lvov which is based upon archival materials of Lvov. We have used this article, as a newest interesting study, and sometimes we even cite it literally. (It is published in the "Teghegagir" of the Arm.SSR, N.12, 1958 and is entitled as "Armenian colony of Lvov in the XIV-XVIII centuries"). This valuable study indicates that as a result of Turkish-Seljukite invasions a portion of Armenian colonists consisting of ten thousand people, in the XIII century moved to the west and settled down in central Europe. Some of them resided in Lvov. Armenians are mentioned in the 1356 Decree of the Polish king Kazimir.

The XVII century Polish historian Zimorovich writes that in order to get free from Mongol yoke Armenians had migrated to Lvov and settled down there. Still before that date, during the Galicia-Volhynia principdom, in the oldest part of Lvov live Armenians, here was located an Armenian monastery, churches of Saint Hakob and Christ. Historical data testify that here was an Armenian bridge and a bath. In the XVII century Armenians were engaged in trade, crafts, partly in agriculture and used to have good relations with the Ukrainians. As a witness to good relations are two churches built in similar size and form, one Armenian, another Ukrainian. Both Armenians and Ukrainians were harassed by the Polish. In the XV century the number of colonists grew up; the immigration meets the interests of the Polish; the Polish government was eager to make use of the immigrants in the struggle against its opponents in the country.

For quite long period (XIV-XVIII centuries) Lvov was a big trading center; the Armenians of Lvov were involved in trading relations with distant eastern countries; the caravans of traders loaded with different goods pass through the city. The trading

² Travel notes of the scribe Simeon Lehatsi, Vienna, 1936 (edited by N.Akinyan), p.346.

relations of Armenians were especially close with Istanbul, the capital of Turkey. Trading activities between Lvov and Istanbul were carried out via several towns. The caravans resemble groups; they had experienced leaders, literate persons fluent in eastern languages. The leader of the caravan was called "carvanbashi". They had great authority during the journey. In the XVII century karvanbashi's of Lvov were local Armenians. Often the caravans were attacked by Turks and wandering armed gangs. In the XVII century the trade in Lvov was centered in the hands of Armenians and was their exceptional monopoly. The tradesmen must have been proficient in Eastern as well as Western European languages. Armenians were fluent in languages and were trading mediators between European and Asiatic countries. After the conquest of Lvov the Polish government gave Armenians a right to do business, mostly for their knowledge of Eastern languages. In Lvov was established the office of translators headed by the so-called translator. The office of the chief translator almost always was at the hands of Armenians. They had great authority. None of the traders could enter the city or leave it without the permission of the chief translator or mayor. He was responsible for the perfect performance of trading rules in the markets, he even possess with political functions. The chief translator, as a responsible official, had deputies. In Lvov their number in the XVI century varies between 4 and 6 or even more people, and this office used to be held exceptionally by Armenians.

Armenians know well languages of eastern peoples, were well informed about everyday life and habits, and for this reason many of them held responsible offices. Often the royal secretaries were Armenians. Polish kings made use of abilities of Armenians in diplomacy and sent them to Turkey with diplomatic missions. Thus, Piotr Grigorovich was a renowned diplomat, well known person in the courts of Vienna, Warsaw and Istanbul, the Polish king Sigismund III called him his advisor, and the Austrian emperor Rudolf II – his judicial executor. Piotr Grigorovich actively participated in the political relations of Poland with Eastern and Western states.³

The role of Armenians of Lvov was great also in the political life of the Danubian countries. They even aided the Moldavian kings to ascend to the throne, and after becoming king they often asked the Armenians of Lvov for financial assistance.

Among the Armenians of Lvov were very skilful craftsmen, particularly specialists in making the items of silver and gold. Their products delighted the people.

Armenians of Lvov possess with great wealth. From the list of 1656 it becomes evident that the moveable property and real estate of the city of Lvov reaches 5.247.479 in gold, of which the portion of Armenians equals 1.277.000.

Armenians, as well as Ukrainians were subject to religious persecution by the Polish. They were forced to pay heavy taxes.

Until the XV century the number of Armenians in Lvov was small; to that date they comprise minority and their role was limited compared with the Ukrainians; they even

³ N.Krivosos, V.Grabovetsky, Armenian Colony of Lvov in the XIV-XVIII centuries (Teghekgagir, Academy of Sciences of Arm.SSR, N.12, Yerevan, 1958), p.61.

had no right to be engaged in trading activity. In 1421 Armenians applied to the king for permission to do trading business; they were granted the right but only within the country.

Armenians and Ukrainians were not permitted to become members of workshops.

Armenians, Ukrainians, Jews, all non-Catholics were exempted from the rights that were given to major Polish and German tradesmen who represent patricians of the city – a privileged layer. They did not permit Armenians and Ukrainians who comprise half of the population, to participate in the works of the city administration. And this persecuted status forced them to join forces against the urban elites and leaders of the Catholic Church who oppress Armenian and Orthodox churches. As a result of the struggle of Armenians in the XVII century they were granted a limited right to have 73 houses in Lvov, but not on the market square, and those who live there obliged to sell their houses. In addition, besides these 20 Armenian traders of cloth, they were permitted to have two storehouses, two shops of wine, three shops of honey and four bear houses. Armenians were deprived of a right to make bear, this right was granted only to Catholics; Armenians could only buy the ready bear and sell it. Besides that, Armenians could have own two workshops of tailors, two shops of fur and one of fillers. But these privileges were insufficient and they continued their struggle along with the Ukrainians to get more rights.

The Armenian colony had its governing body council of elders consisting of 6 people which was reelected yearly. But the wealthiest Armenians by their will added 6 more people and organized a new council of 12 people. In 1563 the Polish king Sigismund Augustus made changes in the council; every elder remains in the office for life and perform his duties alternately. The elders deal with the court cases of Armenians, defend their political, religious, and economic interests in the administration of Lvov. Armenians had commission of juries which included Armenian elders headed by the scribe of the city. By the order of Kazimir in 1367 national minorities of Poland granted the right to have their own court under the governorship of the supreme body - *voyt* where the procedure should have performed in the national language. The court cases of the Armenians were given to Armenian court consisting of Armenian elders; the chief of the court was the *voyt* of the city; the scribe was also present who prepares the court protocol. The trial in the court follows according to the old Armenian canons which were called “The Book of Armenian Law”; in this law code were not neglected also local habits of Lvov and several judicial laws of Magdeburg.

Among the functions of Armenian court were many topics except four general spheres: 1. Real estate, 2. Actions against the city administration and court, 3. Assault with intent to kill or rob, and 4. Murder and physical injury.

Polish historian Lozinsky rightfully underestimates the “privileges” given to Armenians and assumes that this was most likely a state body which dealt with inheritance and family affairs, but not a real tribunal. Armenian court possessed with limited rights. All criminal, police and important civilian cases were under the jurisdiction

of Polish court which was trying to extend its authority upon Armenians and thus motivates them to oppose.

The Armenian colony of Lvov was located around the Armenian Church; it was regarded as a small section of Asia on Ukrainian soil.

Armenians of Lvov strongly preserve Armenian habits and law and did not forget about their “great Armenian country”. Armenian laws were severe and were used during the trials. They have preserved Armenian habits in courts and everyday life as well; “the love towards their native land, their habits, constant connections with the East and particularly with Byzantium always remind the Armenians of Lvov their motherland”, writes the author, “one could confidently state that among foreign colonies of Lvov none of the nations did caress its nation, its habits and culture as Armenians. They diligently kept their habits and worthy lived for centuries. For Armenians was not easy to keep their laws under the conditions of strict Magdeburg law and law code of Polish gentry”.⁴

Armenians of Lvov had preserved their religion. They live around the church, built churches still in the XIII-XIV centuries. Armenian masters had built their church on the Armenian street; it is remarkable that it was erected according to the architecture of the Cathedral of Ani. “This architectural-historical monument” notable for its beauty – wrote the authors – was the pride of Lvov and attracts the sight of every traveler”.⁵ The Romanian author, academician Kamilar Eusebik, who observed this church says that he had seen different architectural monuments of the feudal period but never met such a star. What kind of luxury. The people who built such wonderwork in foreign country is very talented”.⁶

In the church were four religious congregations consisting of males and females. Their profit reaches 236.034 golden coins. None of the other national congregation had such profit. By the order of the Armenian Catholicos in Echmiatsin in 1364 in Poland was established Armenian episcopate and was elected primate of the diocese. The authority of the Armenian primate extends not only on the territory of Poland but also on the Armenians of Valachia. The Armenian religious leader of Poland dwells six months in Lvov which was his seat and six months in Kamenets, the second important city of the diocese.⁷

In the XVII century a fierce struggle burst between the Apostolic and Catholic Armenians of Lvov. After the death of archbishop Mesrop two families opposed each other for the office of archbishop – Torosoviches and Goluboviches. Torosoviches were successful. In 1626 the Armenian Catholicos Melkisedek arrived in Lvov, received 300

⁴ N.Krivosos, V.Grabovetsky, Armenian Colony of Lvov in the XIV-XVIII centuries (Teghekagir, Academy of Sciences of Arm.SSR, N.12, Yerevan, 1958).

⁵ Idem.

⁶ N.Krivosos, V.Grabovetsky, p.58.

⁷ “The forced union of Polish Armenians against the Roman church”, p.9-11.

thalers from Nikol Torosovich,⁸ ordained him as episcope and appointed as the primate of Polish Armenians. Nikol Torosovich did dirty work in the Armenian colony of Lvov which led to turmoil; the Polish king protected him against the attacks of Armenians. His opponents – Apostolic Armenians did not allow him to enter the Armenian Church, but through the assistance of the city administration he captured the church. Thus, in this struggle which lasted until 1646, Nikol Torosovich came out as a winner by the assistance of the government.

Besides Lvov, in Poland were established numerous Armenian colonies in a number of cities – in Kamenets-Podolsk, Akkerman, Stanislav, Polish Rashkov, Transylvania, Elizavetopolis, Kerla, Chernovits of Bukovina, Moldavian Kishinev, Suchava etc. In the cities mostly live migrants – traders and craftsmen. Besides cities, a considerable number of Armenians live in the countryside; hence were established Armenian villages; here people were involved in agriculture, animal husbandry, kitchengardening, and in the cities they mostly deal with trade and crafts.

Armenian colony of Kamenets

It is believed that the Armenian colony of Kamenets was established in 1331 and was one of the biggest among Armenian colonies. Armenians of Kamenets are regarded as being the former population of Ani who during the Tatar invasions left Armenia and settled down in Russia, some of them in the Polish city of Kamenets. Local authorities demonstrated kind attitude and granted them “great privileges”. Here Armenians also multiplied, constructed big buildings, fortified the city with walls, established their national court whose authority extended upon all Armenians. By the order of the Polish king Albertos Hovhan (John I Albert – transl.) issued in 1496 Armenians “should not apply to foreign judges”.⁹ Until 1766 Polish kings recognize the judicial privileges given to Armenians.

Armenians had autonomous rights in Kamenets, like in Lvov. The supreme leader was called *voyt*; he had 8 assistants. Among them his deputy was dominant who was called *yeretspokhan*. Besides them, there was also a council of 40 whose members were elected and who were called “friends or brothers”. Court procedures were held in their presence and advice, and the secretary recorded their decisions. Yeretspokhan, the leader of 8 assistants was responsible for national, religious and school affairs.

In the XVI-XVII centuries Armenians were famous as major traders who built schools, public buildings, fortified the citadel, laid water pipes etc. Armenians had separate schools for girls and boys. Armenians were financially secured and the local population called them half-ironically *kapzan* which means rich, wealthy. The number of

⁸ The Catholicos Melkisedek arrived in Lvov in order to ask money from wealthy Armenians to quit the debt of Echmiatsin. “which troubled Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin” and the Catholicos personally. Nikol abundantly awarded Catholicos with money. This explains the weakness of Catholicos.

⁹ H.Q.V.Kushneryan, History of the Armenian colony of Crimea, Venice, 1895, p.190.

the Kamenets Armenians reaches 1200 houses. They spoke Armenian but by the time lost their language in favor of Polish and were assimilated.

The Colony of Stanislav

It is worth to mention the Armenian colony of Stanislav (western Ukraine) which appeared to be a “complete example of autonomy” of Armenians.¹⁰ It was one of the biggest among Armenian colonies. “Who even once visited the western Ukrainian city of Stanislav could not bypass the street which bears the name ‘Armenian’. On this street eye-catches the glorious Armenian church, most beautiful monument of Armenian culture of the XVIII century.”¹¹ Armenians had settled in the western Ukraine still in the XII-XIV centuries, during the period of Galicia-Volhynia principedom. Later this “state” was attacked by enemies, economically disintegrated, lost its political independence and fall under the Polish rule. The western Ukraine remained under the rule of Polish *pans* very long, from XIV until XVII centuries.

During this period Stanislav was one of the leading economic and cultural colonies of Armenians. Armenians preserved their rights, customs and habits. Here the Armenian colony had reached great achievements in the field of economy and culture and served as an example for other peoples who migrated into Poland.

In 1628 Armenians settled in Snyatin, and from 1662 the colony became bigger; then in 1669 Armenians moved further and settled in Lipets, Tismenitsa (1678), towards the end of the XVII century - in Gorodenko and Obertene etc. At the end of the XVII – early XVIII centuries in Galicia live numerous Armenians. When Stanislav came into existence, Armenians migrated from Moldavia and finally settled in Stanislav since the magnates of the city, in order to extend and improve it, promised the citizens to exempt them from taxes during 20 years. Here Armenians received from the Polish government estates, built houses, a church and participated in the building of the city. Besides Armenians, here live other migrant peoples, but the Polish historian stresses the devotion only of Armenian community towards socially useful activity.

He wrote that in 1858 “Armenian community introduced into that boiler an example of compact organization and social willingness”.¹²

Armenians migrated to Stanislav during the Polish-Turkish war, when the Turks conquered Kamenets-Podolsk. In 1672-1676 Armenians who experienced the hardships of Turkish rule in Kamenets-Podolsk moved to other cities, among them to Stanislav. The Polish government which was concerned with the prosperity and extension of the city reciprocated Armenians and kindly provided place in the city. The

¹⁰ V.Grabovetskiy, *Armianskaya koloniya v Stanislave in the XVII-XVIII centuries*, Teghekgir of the Academy of Sciences of ArmSSR, N.6, 1958, p.43.

¹¹ *Idem*, 43.

¹² *Idem*, p.49.

migrants were wealthy people; they bought houses, fulvarks,¹³ grow in number and were included among the urban “patricians”, that is those who have privileges.

The main business of Armenians was trade and crafts. Here Armenian craftsmen united and organized a guild. Every 12 craftsmen were united in a workshop which was ratified by the government. Every year they could elect the master of their workshop. Every workshop donated to the church, mostly candles. These unions were organized, besides the principle of comprising the same craft but also by religious-confessional one. “Armenian craftsmen were distinguished from other craftsmen by their exceptional industriousness. Their textiles are of highest quality and could not be equaled with that in the XVII-XVIII century markets of Stanislav, Kalum, Galich, Kutah, Stri, and Lvov, but also in Moldavia, Hungary and other European countries”.

Armenian craftsmen mostly were involved in tannery which was absent in the city and still unknown here. From goatskin and sheepskin they produce different items. In February 14, 1678, Armenian craftsmen were granted from the city administration the right to organize their workshops similar to Lvov.

Armenians of Stanislav were busy with selling bread, cattle, fish, and horses. They trade also with foreign countries; from Moldavia, Bessarabia they buy horses, oxen, feed them and bring to domestic markets and abroad. They did not fear local and European rivalry. They know well foreign languages and often work as translators in the markets and auctions. Being experienced merchants many of them were becoming rich; are well known Amiroviches, Sultans, Theodorovices, Vartanoviches and others who together with other workshop masters comprised the so-called “Armenian patricians” which had important role in the trade and crafts and urban autonomy as well.

Armenian merchants held the whole trade of Stanislav. They owned numerous shops which sell different goods. It could be boldly stated, writes V.Grabovetskiy, that due to the Armenians Stanislav remained as a developed city even when cities like Krakow and Lvov were degrading.

Armenians of Stanislav were granted autonomy and later, in January 14, 1677, Andrey Pototsky, the ruler of the city, gave them special privileges. Armenians received such wide privileges which Armenians of Lvov and other cities never had.¹⁴ Due to these privileges “Armenians established their autonomous community”. Polish historian Khovanets writes that for John Sobieski, the Polish king was of particular relevance the Armenian question. His aim was to make use also of Armenians in his project to destroy the Ottoman Empire since they were its enemies. Taking into account that political perspective the Polish Seim approved the granted privileges of Andrey Pototsky in 1677 which formed basis for the Armenian autonomy in Stanislav.¹⁵ Through these privileges Armenians of Stanislav were granted with autonomy.

¹³ Polish word which means estate with agricultural facilities.

¹⁴ V.Grabovetskiy, p.45.

¹⁵ Idem, p.46.

The administrative unity of Armenians initially was organized as workshops of craftsmen or church fraternity by means of which Armenians managed their internal affairs. But after receiving autonomy these organizations were replaced by the *rada* (council) consisting of 40 people which at the end of the XVII century was called "Fortybrothers". In this council were included representatives of most wealthy families. Later they occupied leading positions in the council then the "Fortybrothers" acted as Seim in the community. Members of the council occupy the best and responsible posts; the council organized its meetings once during six months. The sessions discussed financial, disciplinary and statistical problems.

Voyt and elders were the supreme body; that was the so-called magistrate and the court of the Armenian community which governs all affairs of the city community.¹⁶ The magistrate consists of 12 people who were called *raits* (elder). Elders were the wealthiest people of the city, poor citizens had no place in the council. They were elected every year but later this law was changed and they held their position for lifetime. Elections were organized as the next; "Fortybrothers" nominated candidates from among themselves, then voyt and the elders selected the needed number of people. Elders were headed by voyt; he also was elected by popular wealthy people. The election of voyt was held in January with special ceremony. After church service, under the ringing of bells the elders and "Fortybrothers" were gathered in the city council and make decision, and the attending people wait in the market. In the city council (*Ratusha*), in the court hall was performed the election of the voyt. The latter swears an oath, and the magistrate approves the election. Then by the order of the voyt took place the election of the chiefs of the *Rada*. They were called *marshaks*. One of them who was called "elder" governed affairs related to the Armenians, and another one whose office bears the name "junior" – the suburbs of the city. The "elder" and "junior" *marshaks* managed finances and were liable with their personal property.

The Armenian and Polish voyts jointly decided important affairs related to the city, along with city deputies. Minor criminal cases were studied and dealt by voyts of national minorities, mostly the Armenian one, but the most important cases were resolved by the Polish and Armenian voyts together.

At first sight, the structure of the Armenian autonomy (voyt, *rada* etc.) reminds that of the German colony which is known under the name of Magdeburg law code, but when gets into that autonomy it appears that the legal norms which were adopted by the Armenians of Stanislav, completely preserved Armenian spirit and had nothing to do with the German one, except some terms. Like in all other Armenian communities, here in Stanislav the old Armenian law code, that of Mkhitar Gosh and Smbat Gundstabl, was obligatory. Armenian communities of Poland in Lvov, Elizavetopolis, Kamenets-Podolsk etc. perform judicial cases according to Armenian habits and law code. We know that in 1519 the Polish king Sigismund requested from Armenians to submit their law code. Armenians compiled that law code making use of the canons of the Armenian

¹⁶ Idem, p.47.

church and the law code of Mkhitar Gosh and submitted it in Latin translation. The king approved it and authorized to follow that law code which was entitled as “The laws of the Armenian law code approved by the order of the Polish pious king Sigismund I (Sigismund the Old – transl.) and translated by the order of His Majesty from the native language into Latin and copied from the original”.

Armenians of Stanislav and Lvov (Lemberg) did not remain apart from the struggle against the infringement of the Catholic Church. Rome was trying to dominate the Armenian church; its agents act not only in Armenia but also in the Armenian colonies. In Stanislav Catholics were aided by the magnate Andrey Pototsky who was Catholic himself and he spared no efforts to spread Catholicism among local national minorities. For this purpose he invited from Lvov the Armenian clergyman Hovsep (Armenian Catholic from Stanislav) in order to convert Armenians into Catholicism. In March 18, 1669, he arrived in Stanislav, propagated in the Armenian Apostolic colony and was awarded by Pototsky for his efforts. But the agent of Catholics did not succeed; Armenians did not accept Catholicism, and they even applied to Rome against the forced union. Pototsky interfered in favor of Rome but Armenians never obeyed; for this reason Pototsky threatened to expel Armenians from the city if they fail to fulfill his desire. Realizing that this action could have negative effect on himself he made concessions to the Armenians and Hovsep went back to Lvov empty-handed. But later Pototsky succeeded to make Armenians of Stanislav Catholics through vile frauds.¹⁷

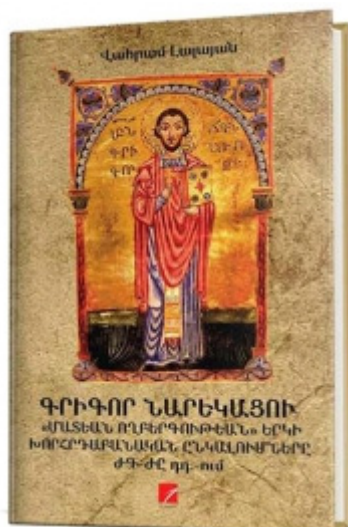
In the cities listed above Armenians of Poland who were engaged in trade and reached a prosperous life did not stay aside of cultural life of the time. Not only in Lvov but also in other cities of Poland – Kamenets-Podolsk, Rashkov, Elizavetopolis, Kerla, Suchava, Stanislav, Armenians had their own educational, cultural institutions; they established schools, printing houses, seminary, churches, monasteries, print books, copied manuscripts etc. The colonies of Poland kept close relations with their motherland, live with its life, even participated in the struggle for liberation. In the revolt of Davit-Bek participated volunteers from Lvov and other cities of Poland which had Armenian colonies. Armenian schoolchildren of Lvov established the first Armenian theatre in the XVII century. Here was put on a play entitled as “Hripsime”.

Poland could not be mother's womb and feeding land for Armenians. It became as such when Armenians lost their language, habits, mode of life and were assimilated with the Polish people.

Translated from the Armenian by Aram Kosyan

¹⁷ Grabovetskiy, p.45.

NEW BOOKS

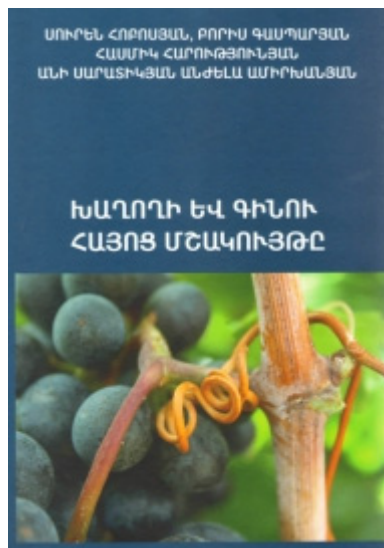


MYSTICAL PERCEPTION OF THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS BY GRIGOR NAREKATSI IN THE 13TH – 18TH CENTURIES

By Dr. Vahram Lalayan

The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) has posthumously sponsored the publication of Dr. Vahram Lalayan's book *Mystical Perception of the Book of Lamentations by Grigor Narekatsi in the 13th – 18th Centuries*. Dr. Lalayan was a scholar of Armenian medieval theology and the head of the Department of History at Grigor Narekatsi University in Artsakh. He was killed by Azeri forces in Meds Tagher village in Hadrut during the 2020 war.

Mystical Perception of the Book of Lamentations was published in Armenian by Antares Press in Yerevan and deals with Narekatsi's Book of Lamentations. *Mystical Perception*, edited by Lalayan's colleague Dr. Amalya Grigoryan of Narekatsi University, consists of an introduction, two chapters, a conclusion, and a list of primary literary sources. The first chapter deals with the "Medieval Commentaries of the Book of Lamentations" and discusses the research of Poghos Khachatryan's work on the first and fourth editions of the Book of Lamentations. The second chapter deals with the commentaries of the Book of Lamentations and analyzes the mystical interpretations.

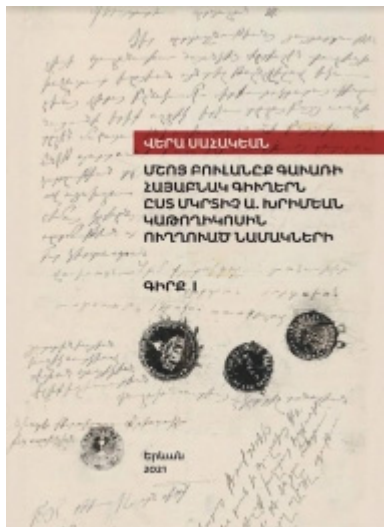


ARMENIAN CULTURE OF VINE AND WINE

by Suren Hobosyan, Boris Gasparyan, Hasmik Harutyunyan, Ani Saratikyan, Anzhela Amirkhanyan, 437 pages

Grapes and wine have played a unique role in the centuries-old history of the Armenian people, becoming one of the important attributes shaping up its identity. The present monograph reveals the content of the long way of viticulture and wine-making in the Armenian Highlands. The issues highlighted for the respective discussion, more precisely, viticulture zones, orchards and horticulture, irrigation, wine-making instruments and its storage, are meant to dwell on the practical-economic and spiritual-ritualistic significance of grapes and wine in Armenians' every-day life and culture, as well as to cover their reflection in folklore, folk medicine and diet. The varieties of Armenian grapes and the references of wine in folklore are discussed in further details. The monograph also comprises an extensive dictionary of respective terms. This

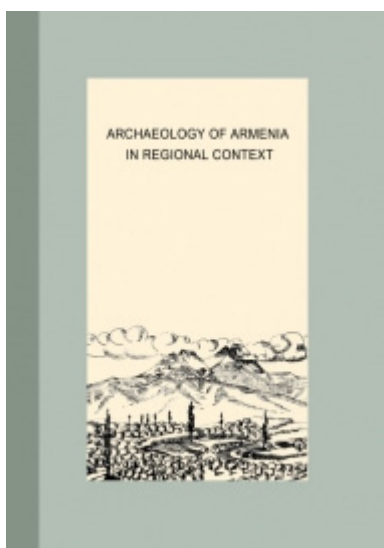
volume, spiced with a large amount of documentary material and images, is intended for both professionals and a wide range of readers interested in culture and art.



THE ARMENIAN-POPULATED VILLAGES OF MUSH'S BULANYK PROVINCE ACCORDING TO THE LETTERS ADDRESSED TO MKRTICH I KHRIMIAN CATHOLICOS

Volume 1 By Vera Sahakyan 396 p.

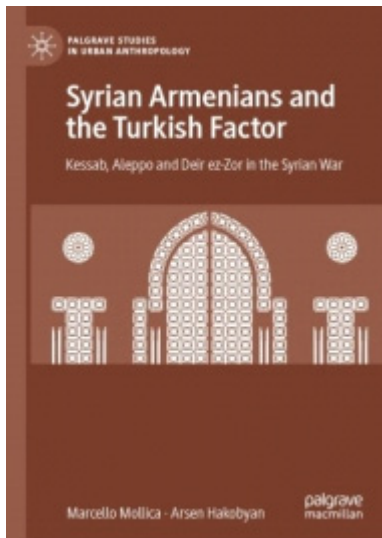
The research titled “The Armenian-populated villages of Mush’s Bulanyk province according to the letters addressed to Mkrtich I First Khrimian Catholicos (Volume I) Catholicos” focuses on the study of the formation of Bulany’k Province (k’aza) of Mush and the Armenian-populated villages. The study answers the research questions such as: When and under what historical circumstances was Bulanyk’ Province formed? What is the etymology of the name? Which parts of Mets Hayq comprise the Province? Which villages were Armenian-populated during the Catholicosate of Mkrtich’ I Khrimian. Based on the files of the archive preserved in Matenadaran that cover the periods from 1893 to 1895, presently we have identified letters from 28 villages. We have digitized, annotated, and additionally translated the letters. The villages are presented alphabetically – for each village, a one- to two-page study is presented in the research.



ARCHAEOLOGY OF ARMENIA IN REGIONAL CONTEXT

Edited by Pavel Avetisyan and Arsen Bobokhyan, 2021, 432 p.

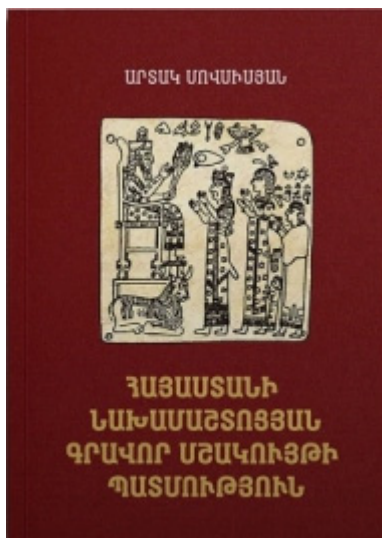
The present volume reflects recent achievements of Armenian archaeology realized by local and international specialists. It is the result of a conference dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, NAS RA held in Yerevan during 2019. The Institute is a multi-profile scientific organization, which conducts fundamental and applied investigations in the fields of archaeology, cultural anthropology, folklore studies, ethnosociology, epigraphy, archaeobiology, physical anthropology. As the national center of investigation of material and non-material cultural heritage, the Institute tries to provide scientific parity to the leading regional and international centers in the above-mentioned spheres.



SYRIAN ARMENIANS AND THE TURKISH FACTOR. Kessab, Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor in the Syrian War

By Marcello Mollica, Arsen Hakobyan 309 p.

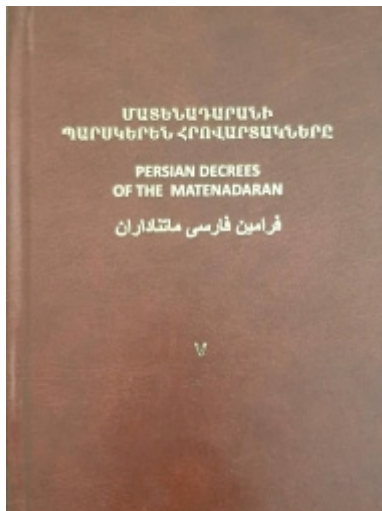
The Syrian War represents one of the most important challenges the world has faced in the last years. The trajectories of its spill-overs and migrations have destabilized neighbouring countries and political relations between Middle Eastern and European countries and World Powers. This book provides a different reading of contemporary events in Syria and their roots, by reading them through the eyes of the Syrian Armenian community. It was however the involvement of the Turkish Forces in the conflict that played a major role in Syrian Armenians' formation of war narratives. This interconnected identity, migration and war. The conflict allowed urban transformations in war actors' attitudes towards Syrian Armenians and their past, above all the Armenian Genocide. The book will shed light on the war-related social urban changes in Kessab, Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor.



THE HISTORY OF THE WRITING CULTURE OF THE PRE-MASHTOTS ARMENIA

by Artak Movsisyan, 448 p.

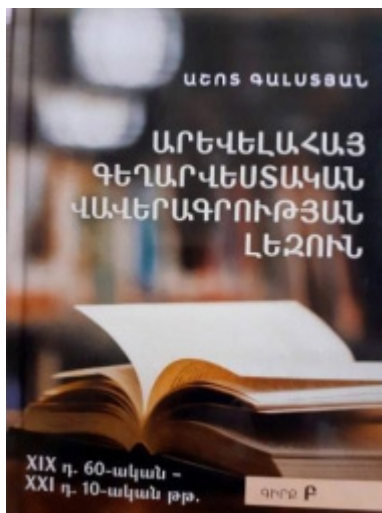
This monograph is devoted to the study of the early stages of the emerging and development of the script in the Armenian highlands, the script systems used in Armenia before Mesrop Mashtots and the written monuments created by using them. The author represented both, the scripts of Armenian origin and adoptions by our ancestors. Some sections of the book are dedicated to the inscriptions left by foreigners in Armenia and the written monuments of mysterious origin and unknown meaning. The author also summarized the information about the inscriptions of local and foreign origin found in Armenia.



PERSIAN MONUMENTS OF THE MATENADARAN

Volume 5, by Kristine Kostikyan, 576 p.

This volume represents copies, originals, Armenian and English translations of 96 manifestos issued by the Qajar authorities of Iran in 1798-1829, which are kept in the Matenadaran after Mesrop Mashtots in Yerevan. In the preface of the collection the author examines the historical value of the documents for the study of Armenology and Armenian-Persian relations.



EASTERN ARMENIAN NON-FICTION LITERARY LANGUAGE (between the 60s of the 19th century and the 10s of the 21st century)

by Ashot Galstyan

The book "Eastern Armenian Non-fiction Literary Language (between the 60s of the 19th century and the 10s of the 21st century)" authored by Ashot Galstyan, is dedicated to the linguistic and stylistic examination of the genre of the non-fiction, starting from the 60s of the 19th century. until the 10s of the 21st century. The work presents the grammatical-syntactic features of non-fiction works, as well as the system of depiction-expression of the originals

CLASSICS OF ARMENOLOGY

HRACHIA ADJARYAN

(1876-1953)



H.Adjaryan was a prominent Armenian linguist, etymologist, lexicographer, professor of linguistics at the Yerevan State University.

He was born in Constantinople, in March 8, 1876. After studying at several primary schools in Constantinople, H.Adjaryan went to Sorbonne and Strasbourg (France) where he studied modern languages. For the academic carrier of young H.Adjaryan had played a crucial role the outstanding French linguist A.Meillet under whose supervision H.Adjaryan entered into the field of Indo-European comparative linguistics.

After completing his academic education H.Adjaryan came to Armenia where he worked as teacher first at the Gevorgyan seminary in Echmiatsin and later in Shushi (Karabagh) and Teheran.

In 1923 H.Adjaryan was invited by the government of Armenian SSR to work at the Yerevan State University where he taught Armenian linguistics and comparative linguistics. He continued his work here until his death.

In 1937 H.Adjaryan was arrested accused as being an English spy and sentenced to two years imprisonment.

H.Adjaryan is the author of about 200 monographs and articles dealing with different aspects of Armenian linguistics.

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JOHN A.C.GREPPIN



Prof.Dr. J.A.C.Greppin was a distinguished linguist, expert in Indo-European linguistics and Armenian philology.

Dr.Greppin was born in April 2, 1937 in Rochester, New York. After graduating the University of Rochester he received his PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1972. He taught Classical Greek and Latin at the Woodstock Country School in South Woodstock, Vermont. Later he moved to the Cleveland State University as professor (1975-2010, from 2011 - Emeritus) where continued his academic studies mostly devoted to Armenian linguistics. In 1974-1975 Dr.Greppin came to Armenia and worked at the Institute of Linguistics, Armenian Academy of Sciences as a visiting scholar. From this period onwards his academic interests mostly deal with Armenology. He is the author of 16 monographs, hundreds of articles, and reviews devoted to Armenian linguistics and medieval Armenian medicine.

Dr.Greppin was a person possessing with extremely active organizational skills. In 1979 and in subsequent years he organized International conferences dedicated to Armenian linguistics (Proceedings of the First International Conference of Armenian Linguistics (editor), Delmar, NY: Caravan Books 1980; Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics. Cleveland, Ohio, September 14-18, 1991, Delmar, New York: Caravan Books. 1992). He was the founder of two valuable periodicals – Annual of Armenian Linguistics (founded in 1980) and the Journal of Armenian Poetry and Criticism (RAFT, 1986). Still in late 1990s J.Greppin had initiated a new etymological dictionary of Armenian language which unfortunately he could not finish.

Dr.Greppin died in May 4, 2016 in Cleveland, at the age of 79.

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