

# FUNDAMENTAL ARMENOLOGY

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# HISTORY

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## THE PREPARATORY STAGE OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE BASEL MISSIONARIES IN SHUSHI (1820-1824)

Hayk Edilyan\*

### Abstract

The study of the preparatory stage of the activity of the Basel missionaries in Shushi reflects the initial steps and strategic approaches of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (BEMS) in penetrating the region through its missionaries, which formed the future basis of their missionary work. Based on Armenian and foreign-language sources, we have studied the course, stages, and content of the preparatory period for the Basel missionaries' activity in Shushi, and analyzed and evaluated their significance and importance for the missionaries' subsequent mission. The preparatory stage of missionary activity in Shushi covers the years 1820–1824, from the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society's entry into the territory of the Russian Empire until the missionaries' establishment in Shushi.

**Keywords:** missionary, Shushi, Russian Empire, missionary society, biblical society, Basel Committee.

Although there are some studies on the activities of the Basel missionaries in Shushi<sup>1</sup>, which relate to their printing activities, a separate comprehensive study and analysis of their preparatory work for activity in Shushi is, nonetheless, a scientific novelty.

The role of preparing and carrying out missionary work in Shushi was assigned to the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society. Karl Friedrich Adolf Steinkopf<sup>2</sup>, who was the secretary of the German Christian Society of Basel (Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft)<sup>3</sup> from 1795–1800, played a major role in the creation of the BEMS. On September 25, 1815, he, along with Christian Friedrich Spittler<sup>4</sup>, founded the Basel Missionary Institute (Das Basler Missionsinstitut), whose first inspector was

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<sup>1</sup> Petoyan 2019. Petoyan 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Friedrich Adolf Steinkopf (1773-1859) had close contacts with various local religious organizations in Germany and Switzerland, contributed to the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804, founded the Württemberg Bible Society in 1812, and actively participated in the process of establishing the Russian Bible Society. See Detzler 2004. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Founded on August 30, 1780. See Herrmann 2003. 131.

<sup>4</sup> For information on the life and work of Christian Friedrich Spittler, see Kober 1887.

Christian Gottlieb Blumhardt. On Blumhardt's initiative, a school for the training of missionaries was opened in the same year.<sup>5</sup> Starting from this period, close ties and avenues of cooperation were established between German, Swiss, Russian, and British Bible and missionary societies. These ties were expressed in the following years in the translation, publication, and dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, as well as in the implementation of missionary work.

In 1820, through the efforts of C. Blumhardt, the organization founded in 1815 was renamed, which consequently changed its primary goals. With the "Draft of Some Basic Principles of the Constitution of the Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel" (Entwurf einiger Grundzüge der Verfassung der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel), developed by Blumhardt, the organization was renamed the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society.<sup>6</sup> This society subsequently aspired not only to train missionaries in its school but also to establish its own mission stations in other places, among which Shushi, located within the Russian Empire since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, would later play an important role.

In the statute adopted in 1820, the second point established the purpose of the Missionary Society: "The dissemination of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the saving knowledge thereof among non-Christian peoples." The fifth point specified the shores of the Black and Mediterranean Seas<sup>7</sup> as the most suitable location for their future missionary service. This area was intended to serve as a crucial center for developing activities in the territories of the Russian Empire, Persia, the Ottoman Empire, and countries in North Africa.

An important occasion for realizing this goal was the appeal made in 1819 by the Scottish Missionary Society<sup>8</sup> to the Basel Missionary Society to send missionaries to the Jews scattered along the shores of the Black Sea to bring them "the Word of God's Kingdom," which was realized in July 1820.<sup>9</sup> In this way, the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society established its presence in the territory of the Russian Empire. As a result, in addition to the area between the Black and Mediterranean Seas, another important region was designated for the future expansion of the Society's activities. This region encompassed the territories between the Black and Caspian Seas, which also created wide opportunities for active work among the Muslims of Russia, Persia, and Turkey. Furthermore, it was close to Georgia, where the Basel missionaries were also assigned an active role in the spiritual life of the German colonies<sup>10</sup> established there.

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<sup>5</sup> O'Flynn 2017. 477.

<sup>6</sup> O'Flynn 2017. 481.

<sup>7</sup> Magazin für die neueste Geschichte der evangelischen Missions- und Bibelgesellschaften 1821. 477-478. (hereafter: Evangelischen Missions-Magazin).

<sup>8</sup> The Edinburgh Missionary Society, founded in 1796, was renamed the Scottish Missionary Society in 1818. See O'Flynn 2017. 242.

<sup>9</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1820. 560.

<sup>10</sup> For the establishment and history of the German colonies, see Chernova-Dyoke 2008.

Following their entry into the territory of the Russian Empire, the next important intention of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society was to establish and consolidate themselves in the area between the Black and Caspian Seas, specifically in the Caucasus. Preparatory work for this began in 1821, which involved establishing ties with the Russian authorities and obtaining permission for missionary work in the aforementioned regions.

On June 21, 1821, two of the four students from the Basel missionary school, August Heinrich Dittrich<sup>11</sup> and Felician Martin von Zarembo<sup>12</sup>, as ordained missionaries, were sent to St. Petersburg by the decision of the Basel Committee to obtain permission from the Russian authorities. Following this, they were to settle in the regions of the Black and Caspian Seas to carry out missionary work, for which they had received specific instructions from C. Blumhardt.<sup>13</sup>

Specifically, the missionaries were tasked with spreading the Word of God in the local languages, collaborating with the British and Foreign Bible Society<sup>14</sup> and the Russian Bible Society<sup>15</sup> operating in Russia and its branches, and submitting reports on their activities and results within a set time frame. The missionaries were also instructed to meticulously study the languages prevalent in the region for the purpose of translating the Holy Scriptures. They were to establish schools and a printing house, where the translated Holy Scriptures and necessary educational materials would be printed for teaching in the schools.<sup>16</sup>

The subsequent issue of “The Missionary Register” in 1822, which contained information about the activities of various spiritual societies in different regions, referred to the journey of A. Dittrich and F. Zarembo to St. Petersburg and added that after obtaining permission, they were to travel to the adjacent Black Sea regions to carry out the planned mission among the Armenians.<sup>17</sup> However, this is not included in the instructions and assignments given to the missionaries, nor is it mentioned in the issues

<sup>11</sup> August Heinrich Dittrich (1797-1855), was born in Saxony, educated in Paris and Cambridge, studying Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. See O’Flynn 2017. 483. A. Dittrich also studied classical Armenian (Grabar) in Moscow with Michael Sallantyan, a lecturer at the Lazaryan Seminary. See Ghukasyants 1886. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Felician Martin von Zarembo (1794-1874), born in Grodno (now in Belarus), in the northwest of Poland, into a noble family. His father was an officer in the Russian army. Zarembo received a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Dorpat University and was an official in the Russian Empire’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See Wolff 1829. 229.

<sup>13</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1821. 494.

<sup>14</sup> The British and Foreign Bible Society, founded on March 7, 1804, in London. For details on the Society’s activities, see Owen 1817.

<sup>15</sup> The Russian Bible Society, founded on January 23, 1813, in Saint Petersburg. For the history and activities of the Society, see <https://biblia.ru/AboutUs/AboutUs-GoalsAndHistory/>.

<sup>16</sup> Acts Collected by the Caucasian Archaeographic Commission (ACAC), Vol. VI, Part 1, Doc. 632 1874. 469.

<sup>17</sup> The Missionary Register, London, vol. 10 1822. 39.

of the magazine published in Basel that covers the activities of the Protestant Missionary and Bible Societies, which contain detailed information about the missionaries' activities during those years.

In 1836, the Basel Committee, referring to the dispatch of missionaries to Russia in 1821 in the "Evangelischen Missions-Magazin," noted that the missionaries were instructed to conduct an exploratory-reconnaissance journey to the southern regions of the Empire, where they were to carry out missionary work among the Muslims living in those territories.<sup>18</sup>

By comparing these two pieces of information, we can conclude that although the Basel Missionary Society's goal was to preach Christianity to the Muslims of the region, they had nonetheless planned from the outset to also work among the Armenians to prepare them for missionary work, which primarily entailed instilling evangelical ideas among them.

The Basel Committee intended to establish a colony in the territory of the Russian Empire as the base for its future missionary activity, an example of which already existed in the Empire—the Scottish colony of Karass<sup>19</sup>, founded in 1802. This colony was to serve as their headquarters, from which they would coordinate and expand their activities. To this end, on October 12, 1821, missionaries A. Dittrich and F. Zaremba drafted a petition to the Russian government requesting to establish a Christian colony in the aforementioned regions, which they also referred to as a "colony of pious German families." In the petition, the missionaries stated that their purpose was to conduct evangelism among Muslims and pagans through the dissemination of the Bible and other holy scriptures.

The necessity of establishing a colony, as opposed to operating as individual missionaries in the Empire, lay in the fact that a church could be established within the colony, which would have the right to baptize and accept new converts who had not been Christian before. Otherwise, as mere foreign missionaries, they would face great difficulties regarding this issue, and its realization would lead to the violation of the ecclesiastical laws operating within the Empire.<sup>20</sup> The establishment of a colony within the Empire would guarantee that the missionaries' activities were protected and secured by law.

For the prospective colony, the missionaries requested the same rights and privileges granted to Karass<sup>21</sup>, permission to establish educational institutions where Tatar and Persian young people could receive education, and where they would also be taught about the "Kingdom of God." Newly converted Christians could become members of the colony through baptism. In their petition, the missionaries also

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<sup>18</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1836. 376.

<sup>19</sup> For the founding of Karass by Scottish missionaries, see O'Flynn 2007. 259-268.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, Dwight 1834. 195.

<sup>21</sup> For the privileges granted to Karass, see Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire (CCLRE), Vol. 29, N 22410, 960-962.

addressed the necessity of establishing a printing house for the purpose of printing and disseminating Bibles and necessary textbooks. The missionaries also aimed to obtain permission that their allocated territories, particularly concerning the organization and implementation of educational and spiritual activities there, would be subject not to the local authorities, but to the Minister of Spiritual Affairs and Public Education of the Russian Empire.<sup>22</sup> This was due to the fact that the post of Minister in this Ministry at that time was occupied by Alexander Nikolaevich Golitsyn<sup>23</sup>, who was also the President of the Russian Bible Society (founded in 1813) and had close ties with the Basel missionaries. The Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and Public Education was also responsible for the censorship of printed publications through its corresponding committees, with which the missionaries would later interact repeatedly, as printing and publishing occupied a significant place in their activities.

The response to the missionaries' petition to the Russian authorities was received on January 7, 1822 (№ 18), from the Minister of Internal Affairs, Viktor Pavlovich Kochubey.<sup>24</sup> The response specifically stated that the missionaries were permitted to establish a colony between the Black and Caspian Seas, where they were allowed to have a school and a printing house for the purpose of disseminating the Word of God. The printed books, however, had to comply with the censorship laws operating within the Empire. The newly established colony was to be granted the same privileges as the Scottish colony of Karass, with certain modifications, and was guaranteed all kinds of assistance from civil and military authorities. A. Dittrich and F. Zarembo were permitted to travel to the specified regions to select suitable land for their activities and to gather information about the local population.<sup>25</sup>

The government informed the Chief Governor of the Caucasus, General Alexey Petrovich Yermolov<sup>26</sup>, about its decision, to ensure the missionaries' safe journey, especially within the borders of Derbent, Baku, and Guba, "where perfect peace had not yet prevailed due to being newly conquered".<sup>27</sup>

Having received the approval and permission of the authorities, the missionaries traveled from St. Petersburg to Astrakhan to meet with the Scottish missionaries there. The latter already had extensive experience operating as missionaries representing a separate colony in the Empire's territory, from whom the Basel missionaries could learn everything necessary and useful for their future work. In April 1822, the Basel

<sup>22</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1822. 460-465.

<sup>23</sup> Golitsyn, Alexander Nikolayevich (1773-1844), Russian statesman, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod (1803-1816), Minister of Public Education (1816-1824), President of the Russian Bible Society (1817-1824).

<sup>24</sup> Kochubey, Viktor Pavlovich (1768-1834), Russian statesman, first Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire (1802-1807 and 1819-1823), Chairman of the State Council (1827-1834).

<sup>25</sup> ACAC, Vol. VI, Part 1, Doc. 632 1874. 468.

<sup>26</sup> Yermolov, Alexey Petrovich (1777-1861), Russian military and statesman, General, Commander of the Separate Caucasian Corps, Chief Governor of the Caucasus (1816-1827).

<sup>27</sup> Ghukasyants 1886: 3.



Committee sent three more missionaries to St. Petersburg to join A. Dittrich and F. Zaremba: Rudolf Friedrich Hohenacker, Heinrich Benz, and Gottlieb Kurfes, though Kurfes died in St. Petersburg on April 29. In May 1822, the remaining four missionaries traveled from the capital to Astrakhan, where in July of the same year, missionary Jakob Johann Lang joined them as a replacement for the deceased Kurfes.<sup>28</sup>

In Astrakhan, language study was given an important place in the missionaries' preparation, specifically Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Tatar, and Armenian, which generally lasted about 10 months.<sup>29</sup> While the first three languages were related to the goal of preaching among Muslims, the study of the Armenian language and the desire to learn it during their preparatory missionary stage again indicated that the missionaries certainly had a specific program related to the Christian Armenians, from the perspective of making them a part of their activities. This is also evidenced by the fact that during this preparatory period, the missionaries, being in close contact with the Russian Bible Society, had reached an agreement to receive Armenian Bibles, along with Russian, Tatar, Arabic, and Georgian Bibles, to distribute during their work.<sup>30</sup>

Christof Friedrich Eppler notes that besides carrying out missionary work among Muslims, the missionaries' actions were also aimed at "revitalizing the ancient Oriental Churches, primarily the Armenian Church, whose customs and ruined spiritual life caused shame among Muslims".<sup>31</sup> Eppler interprets the missionaries' steps towards the "revitalization" of the Armenian Church as a crucial means of achieving success in missionary work among Muslims.

On April 25, 1823, missionaries A. Dittrich, F. Zaremba, and H. Benz<sup>32</sup> left Astrakhan and arrived in Tiflis on May 18, with the goal of spending some time in the seven German colonies established around Tiflis (Marienfeld and Petersdorf, New Tiflis, Alexandersdorf, Elisabeththal, Katharinenfeld) and Gandzak/Ganja (Annenfeld, Helenendorf), caring for the spiritual needs of the local population. Following this, a visit to Muslim-populated areas was planned to get a more detailed on-the-ground understanding and plan their work. According to the missionaries' reports, Armenians had lived in Georgia since time immemorial, and the number of their families at that time reached 11,000.<sup>33</sup> In May 1823, F. Hohenacker and J. Lang, in turn, traveled to Karass to assist the Scottish missionaries in their spiritual work.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1836. 378.

<sup>29</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1823. 174.

<sup>30</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1822. 478.

<sup>31</sup> Eppler 1888. 7.

<sup>32</sup> On July 30, missionary H. Benz died in Georgia, and he was replaced there by missionary Johann Bernhard Saltet.

<sup>33</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1824. 466.

<sup>34</sup> The Missionary Register, vol. 12 1824. 34-35, Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1836. 379.

During their time in Tiflis, A. Dittrich and F. Zarembo met with Nerses Ashtaraketsi<sup>35</sup>, from whom they received letters addressed to high-ranking clergy in all the regions they were going to visit, with the purpose of assisting the missionaries' activities.<sup>36</sup>

On June 8, 1823, the missionaries received a written response (№ 1897) from A. Yermolov, who, after receiving and thoroughly studying the relevant documents for establishing a colony, informed them that the government did not have available land near the Persian border that could be provided to them for the creation of a colony. He added that, nevertheless, they could operate as missionaries in any city or village, have buildings intended for a school and a printing house, and a garden where they could grow vegetables. A. Yermolov promised to instruct local authorities to provide them with assistance, necessary protection, information about the local population, and assistance with other necessary issues.<sup>37</sup>

On the same day, A. Yermolov also sent another letter (№ 126) to the Ministry of Internal Affairs regarding the same issue, where he put forward a different justification for the impossibility of establishing a colony in those areas, stating that it could cause great dissatisfaction among the local Muslim population from the perspective of preaching Christianity, which could be perceived by them as pressure and directed activity by the government against their religious freedoms. He again added at the end that the missionaries would only be allowed to establish a school and a printing house in the specified areas.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, the previously obtained permission for the missionaries to establish a colony was not realized. Consequently, the missionaries were deprived of all the privileges intended for colonies, particularly the right to baptize new Christians and accept them into their own community, which would have contributed to the expansion of Protestant or evangelical communities in the territory of the Russian Empire.

After spending about five months in the German colonies and carrying out spiritual activities there, missionaries A. Dittrich and F. Zarembo continued their journey and reached Shushi on October 13, 1823.<sup>39</sup> In their first reports from Shushi, the missionaries noted that its geographical position was suitable for working among the surrounding Muslims and was safe for settlement. They also reported that the houses in Shushi were quite similar to European houses, that there were five Armenian churches operating there with services conducted by 12 priests, and one mosque.<sup>40</sup> This was the

<sup>35</sup> Nerses Ashtaraketsi served as the Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Georgia from 1814–1828, was appointed Primate of the Armenian Diocese of New Nakhichevan and Bessarabia in 1828, and was Catholicos of All Armenians from 1843–1857.

<sup>36</sup> *Evangelischen Missions-Magazin* 1824. 472.

<sup>37</sup> ACAC, Vol. VI, Part 1, Doc. 638 1874. 472.

<sup>38</sup> ACAC, Vol. VI, Part 1, Doc. 637 1874. 472.

<sup>39</sup> For details about Shushi, see Karapetyan 2000, Ulubabyan 1994: 183–200.

<sup>40</sup> *Evangelischen Missions-Magazin* 1824. 473–474.

missionaries' first visit to Shushi. After inspecting and studying its location and geographical position, it was intended to become their main and central hub of activity, where they planned to build a house, establish schools, and a printing house.

Until permission for the necessary buildings was obtained, the missionaries initially settled in Shushi in the house of an Armenian merchant named Arzuman<sup>41</sup>, who, according to the missionaries, was "a friendly old man who was well-acquainted with the Holy Scriptures".<sup>42</sup>

The missionaries also used their time in Shushi to visit neighboring regions. On October 23, they set out for Shamakhi and Baku, which were also considered important regions for missionary activity. During the tour, the missionaries met with both local Armenians and Muslims. In Shamakhi, where the missionaries stayed until November 6, meetings were held with Armenian priests Petros and Michael, who approved the idea of establishing a school for children from poor families in Shamakhi. The role of Shamakhi was considered important because it could provide a crucial link with the Lezgins and the mountain tribes of Dagestan.<sup>43</sup>

On November 6, the missionaries traveled from Shamakhi to Baku, where they stayed until November 18, again meeting with local Armenian priests, during which the idea of establishing Armenian schools was also discussed and approved.<sup>44</sup> Referring to the Armenians they met during these journeys and their educational and spiritual levels, the missionaries noted the scarcity or often the absence of Armenian schools in those regions, as a result of which many Armenians were deprived of the ability to read, and the Armenians were not distinct from Muslims in their knowledge of Christianity.<sup>45</sup> A. Dittrich and F. Zarembo also informed Catholicos Ephrem I<sup>46</sup> and Nerses Ashtaraketsi about this state of affairs through letters, also informing them of their desire to open schools, but these remained unanswered.<sup>47</sup> Subsequently, the main justifications and rationales for the missionaries' educational and spiritual activities among Armenians always stemmed from the aforementioned circumstances, which were often expressed in other writings by the missionaries as well.

After traveling through Shushi, then Shamakhi, and Baku in October–November 1823, the missionaries first chose Shushi as their main base, which was to be the principal center for organizing and carrying out missionary work. The creation of a secondary station was planned for Shamakhi, and later, if possible, Baku. Judging by the missionaries' meetings, we can state that establishing relations, particularly with the

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<sup>41</sup> Ghukasyants 1886: 8.

<sup>42</sup> *Evangelischen Missions-Magazin* 1824. 475.

<sup>43</sup> *Evangelischen Missions-Magazin* 1824. 478–479.

<sup>44</sup> *Evangelischen Missions-Magazin* 1824. 485.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, Dwight 1834. 197.

<sup>46</sup> Ephrem I Dzoragheghetsi, Catholicos of All Armenians (1809–1830). For the full content of the missionaries' letter to Catholicos Ephrem, see Wolff 1829. 209–212.

<sup>47</sup> O'Flynn 2017. 485.

Armenian clergy, was of primary importance to them. This suggests that the Armenian Church was given the primary place in their goals of involving Armenians in their activities, followed only then by the Armenian people in general.

Before the Basel Committee made a final decision on settling in Shushi, the missionaries returned temporarily to the German colonies of Gandzak on November 18. From there, on November 21, they informed General A. Yermolov of their final decision to settle in Shushi, where there was a large amount of available land for the construction of the necessary buildings. They also requested permission for some of their employees/missionaries to settle later in Shamakhi and Baku to organize missionary work there. In the letter, the missionaries also informed A. Yermolov that, based on the results of their tour, they intended to focus on the Armenians for a few years, disseminating the Word of God among them and opening schools for them. After some time, they would transition to realizing their main goal: the dissemination of the Word of God among Muslims.<sup>48</sup>

In parallel, summarizing the results of their tours, the Basel missionaries conveyed their conclusion in the report sent to their committee, according to which they could not expect successful activity among Muslims in the initial period, noting that the Muslims were not particularly favorably disposed towards the missionaries and the religion they preached, and establishing schools among them was not yet realistic. This was in contrast to the Armenians living in the border regions of the Russian Empire, among whom “we have seen a desire to overcome their low level of education<sup>49</sup>, a readiness to learn, and a desire to have educational institutions”.<sup>50</sup> This fact clearly demonstrates that in the initial phase of their activity, the missionaries intended to focus exclusively on the Armenians, explaining it in terms of the “desires” and “aspirations” expressed by the Armenians for education, which in turn was meant to contribute to effective missionary work among Muslims. According to the missionaries, this was also a vital necessity before starting work among Muslims. In this way, the missionaries’ long-term goals were also manifested: to prepare educated and faithful figures from among the Armenians who, being familiar with the daily life and character traits of the local Muslims, could provide effective service and achieve success.

Regarding the letter sent by the missionaries to A. Yermolov on November 21, 1823, in which they stated their intention to also carry out activities among the Armenians in the initial phase, Alexey Alexandrovich Velyaminov<sup>51</sup> informed the Basel missionaries in a letter dated December 19, 1823 (№ 4033) that he had received the letter due to A. Yermolov’s absence from Georgia, and that he would also report the

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<sup>48</sup> ACAC, Vol. VI, Part 1, Doc. 639 1874. 473. Ghukasyants 1886: 5-6.

<sup>49</sup> For the low level of education and widespread illiteracy among different strata of the Armenian people during the period of Persian rule, see History of Armenia 2010: 184. Yerkanian 1970: 31-45.

<sup>50</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1824. 488-490.

<sup>51</sup> Major General Velyaminov, Alexey Alexandrovich, served as the Chief of Staff of the Russian Armed Forces in the Caucasus from 1816–1829. See Voennaya entsiklopediya 1911. 291.

content of the letter to Alexander I (1801-1825). He then warned that, according to the laws of the Russian Empire, the conversion of subject Christian peoples, including Armenians, to the evangelical faith was prohibited, and according to the operative law, such a right was reserved for the Greek-Russian denomination.<sup>52</sup>

In response to A. Velyaminov's warning, the missionaries, in a letter dated December 22, 1823, reaffirmed their purpose, stating that their goal was to conduct missionary work among Muslims and heathens, that they were aware of the state law, and that they had no intention of re-baptizing any Christian, because "a person, regardless of their ecclesiastical affiliation, will be saved if they have dedicated their heart to God." The missionaries also added that their programs related to Armenians were limited only to establishing schools for their Christian brethren, especially the poor, where the Word of God would also be taught, wishing to develop among them the desire to possess and read the Bible, but they did not intend to re-baptize or convert any Armenian.<sup>53</sup>

Before the start of their activity in Shushi, the missionaries managed to establish a legal foundation for the idea that, even without the right to re-baptize, they should carry out missionary work primarily among the Armenians. For this, they would establish schools, translate and print Armenian Bibles to be distributed among the people, while simultaneously working among Muslims and heathens.

After their first visit to Shushi and their tour of Shamakhi and Baku, missionaries A. Dittrich and F. Zarembo returned to the German colonies near Gandzak on November 18, 1823, where they stayed until January of the following year (1824). In a report submitted to the Basel Committee on February 14, 1824, the missionaries reported on their final establishment in Shushi. According to the missionaries' information, they left Gandzak on January 20, 1824, and arrived in Shushi on January 23, accompanied by two brethren, lodging again at Arzuman's house. The missionaries also reported that during this time they had managed to acquire a comfortable plot of land for the construction of a house, and were taking measures for the construction of other necessary buildings. They were also actively engaged in improving their language skills and establishing contacts with the local people.<sup>54</sup>

In the information reported by the missionaries, we also find some issues related to the spiritual life of the local Armenians, who specifically noted that "in Karabakh there are a large number of families who were Christians but became Muslim as a result of the policies<sup>55</sup> pursued by the Persian Khans".<sup>56</sup> The missionaries' highlighting of these realities aimed to emphasize the necessity of preaching Christianity among the local

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<sup>52</sup> ACAC, Vol. VI, Part 1, Doc. 640 1874. 474.

<sup>53</sup> ACAC, Vol. VI, Part 1, Doc. 641 1874. 474, Ghukasyants 1886: 6-7, Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1824. 491.

<sup>54</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1824. 493-494.

<sup>55</sup> For the policy of religious discrimination against Armenians by Persia, see Leo 1926: 15, 32-33.

<sup>56</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1824. 495.

Armenians. The entire activity of the missionaries established in Shushi in January 1824 was directed towards the preparation of this work, which encompassed the selection and construction of their place of residence, the study of the Armenian language, the establishment of contacts with the local Armenian clergy and various segments of the population, the founding of schools and a printing house, and the acquisition of necessary educational and spiritual literature.

Shortly after settling in Shushi, on March 9, 1824, A. Dittrich left for Basel to present an oral report to the Basel Committee regarding the activities they had carried out until that moment. To assist Zarembo, who remained in Shushi, missionary F. Hohenacker traveled from Karass to Shushi on May 23, 1824.<sup>57</sup> According to a written report by A. Zarembo and F. Hohenacker published in 1825, after settling in Shushi, a need arose to build a small school next to the missionaries' house for the immediate organization of teaching among the Armenians. The missionaries explained this necessity by saying that "during our meetings with many Armenians in Shushi, they drew our attention to the sad condition of their children, as they had no schools, no teachers, and no other means for education. Therefore, after buying our house, we began to think about establishing a school where young people would learn to understand their old native language and the Bible".<sup>58</sup> Before the school's construction, F. Zarembo was mainly engaged in visiting Muslims and establishing certain relations with them, as a result of which the Muslims offered F. Zarembo to build a house for the missionaries in their neighborhood, where there was a spacious and convenient location near the market. F. Hohenacker, for his part, provided medical services to the local people. During this period, the missionaries were also engaged in the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures in various regions through some Armenians, by means of sales and donations.<sup>59</sup> Simultaneously, the missionaries undertook the construction of a school in Shushi. Missionary F. Zarembo writes in his diary that the foundation of their school building was laid on June 3, 1824, and its opening took place on January 29, 1825.<sup>60</sup>

In October 1824, A. Dittrich returned to Shushi from Basel, after which the necessity arose to establish a printing house on-site to accelerate the printing processes and print Armenian school textbooks<sup>61</sup>, which constituted an inseparable and fundamental part of their missionary activity in Shushi, and which were set to commence in earnest in 1825, immediately following the completion of the preparatory work.

Summarizing the above, and comparing and contrasting the obtained information regarding the preparatory stage of the missionaries' activity, we can conclude that the preparatory stage of the Basel missionaries' activity in Shushi is divided into four main phases:

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<sup>57</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1825. 385.

<sup>58</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1825. 505.

<sup>59</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1825. 404, 518.

<sup>60</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1825. 407, 525.

<sup>61</sup> Evangelischen Missions-Magazin 1825. 411.



1. July 1820–January 1822: This includes the establishment of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society in the territory of the Russian Empire, the dispatch of missionaries F. Zaremba and A. Dittrich to St. Petersburg, the submission of the petition to the Russian government to obtain permission to establish a colony in the Black and Caspian Sea regions, and the receipt of the response to the petition.
2. May 1822–May 1823: The preparatory period in Astrakhan, which included language study, the establishment of contacts with members of the Russian Bible Society, and the acquisition of relevant missionary experience among the Scottish missionaries and in the German colonies.
3. October 13–November 18, 1823: The missionaries' first visit to Shushi, which included familiarization with the locality and geographical position, visits to neighboring regions—specifically Shamakhi and Baku, meetings with local Armenians and Muslims, some Armenian clergy, and the selection of Shushi as the main and central hub of activity.
4. January 23–December 1824: The missionaries' final settlement in Shushi, followed by preparatory work directed towards selecting locations for and constructing the necessary buildings (the missionaries' residence, a school, a printing house), acquiring necessary educational and spiritual literature, and establishing acquaintances with various segments of the population.
5. The preparatory period spanning 1820–1824 was the important and vital foundation that would ensure the direction, development, and effectiveness of the Basel missionaries' subsequent activities in Shushi and beyond its borders.

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*Translated from Russian by Gevorg Harutyunyan*

## ARMEN GARO'S UNDERTAKING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CIVIL MISSION OF THE RA TO THE USA AT THE END OF 1919

Armenuhi Ghambaryan\*

### Abstract

The serious foreign policy challenges faced by the authorities of independent Armenia since the proclamation of the First Republic have led to the need to establish diplomatic relations with both European Powers and the United States. In the difficult political situation that developed in October 1919, first of all, in order to raise the issue of recognizing the newly created Republic, a member of the Armenian delegation in Paris, Deputy Chairman of the National delegation (of the Western Armenians) Garegin Pasdermadjian (Armen Garo), was sent to the United States as the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the USA. He arrived in New York as part of the official delegation of the First Republic of Armenia headed by Hovhannes Qajaznuni on October 9, 1919.

In the fall and early winter of 1919, together with members of the Qajaznuni Civil mission and representatives of the Military mission who had joined the latter since the end of November, G. Pasdermadjian was active not only in political, diplomatic and economic directions, but also in uniting the divided Armenian community in the United States. Thus, G. Pasdermadjian also contributed to the small, but nevertheless, successes achieved by representatives of the Republic of Armenia in the USA.

**Keywords:** G. Pasdermadjian, Republic of Armenia, USA, Ambassador Extraordinary, Plenipotentiary Representative, speeches, meetings, Armenian community, periodicals.

### Introduction

Since the proclamation of the First Republic in May 1918, independent Armenia has faced a number of serious challenges. The extremely difficult socio-economic, political and military situation that developed in the Republic at the beginning of 1919, forces the government of the young state to seek help from the Great Powers - the European allies and the United States.

According to a government Decree<sup>1</sup> adopted in late January 1919, the Parliament of the Republic formed a Civil mission<sup>2</sup> that would leave for Europe in mid-June. For the

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noted mission, headed by the first Prime Minister of Armenia, Hovhannes Qajaznuni, several months spent in Europe - Great Britain and France - turned out to be unsuccessful. Regarding the future, the mission's activities unfolding in Europe and aimed at both the economic, military and political spheres also did not inspire optimism. Therefore, it becomes imperative to enlist the support of the United States in all of the above areas.

In Paris, at a joint meeting of two Armenian delegations - the National, headed by Poghos Nubar, and the Armenian Republic, headed by A. Aharonyan, a decision was made to send an official delegation to Washington to appeal to the American government directly in the USA.<sup>3</sup>

### **Appointment of Garegin Pasdermadjian**

The discussions of the Armenian delegations in Paris led to the decision that the delegation headed by H. Qajaznuni, represented by his advisers, former Minister of Finance Artashes Enfiayyan and agronomist Artem Piralyan, as well as Qajaznuni's secretary Captain Suren Melikyan, should, as a Civil mission, appeal to the US government to provide only economic and humanitarian assistance.

A separate Military mission was to deal with military assistance issues in the United States, which included the representative of the Republic of Armenia, General Hakob Bagratuni, and General Andranik as the representative of the National Delegation of Boghos Nubar. It should also be noted that another representative of Boghos Nubar, the vice-president of the National Delegation, Abr. Ter-Hakobyan, was also on his way to the United States to cooperate with the Civil mission of Qajaznuni.

It is noteworthy that the Qajaznuni mission, in addition to the main goal of receiving economic assistance from the United States, was nevertheless also authorized to ensure the resolution of certain political issues. It was for this purpose that Garegin Pasdermadjian, who was in Paris, was supposed to join the delegation led by H. Qajaznuni heading from France to the United States. G. Pasdermadjian, a well-known figure in the Armenian liberation struggle of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and a prominent representative of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation party, did not happen to be in Paris by chance. This internationally renowned figure was simultaneously a member of two Armenian delegations in Paris. He was the Deputy Chairman of the Armenian National Delegation headed by Poghos Nubar and a member of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia.

During the discussions taking place in Paris regarding the Armenian missions, the aforementioned decision was made, which was later confirmed in Yerevan. On October 16, 1919, after Pasdermadjian's departure to the United States, A. Aharonian, the

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<sup>1</sup>National Archive of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as NAA), F. (fund) 199, c. (catalogue) 1, f. (file) 43, p. (page) 15-16; Minutes of the Meetings 2014: 106-107; Vracian 1998: 254.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about the formation of the working group, see Ghambaryan 2019: 254 -261.

<sup>3</sup> NAA, F. 200, c. 1, f. 290, pp. 55-60.

Chairman of the Armenian delegation in Paris, sent a separate telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting that A. Khatisian (both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and acting Prime Minister) be informed about the following: "Due to urgent circumstances, we were compelled to send Pasdermadjian to America as a temporary diplomatic representative without waiting for your approval. We kindly ask you to send a telegram directly to Washington to the State Department regarding the appointment of Pasdermadjian as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Minister".<sup>4</sup> This telegram was registered as "Done" on October 17. Thus, G. Pasdermadjian was authorized by the Government of the Republic of Armenia with a special mission - he was appointed the Diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia in the United States.<sup>5</sup> On October 28, Aharonian had already sent a telegram to Khatisyan stating that G. Pasdermadjian, as Ambassador Extraordinary, was carrying out the activities entrusted to him together with members of the Armenian Civil mission in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Directions of G. Pasdermadjian's Activities**

The visit of the official representatives of the Republic of Armenia to the United States has not lost its relevance since the beginning of the same 1919. On September 4, at a session of the Parliament of the Republic, Prime Minister A. Khatisyan, in his short political speech, touching upon the Armenian Question, stated the following: "Over the past three months, there has been no progress in resolving the Armenian question since the Allies associate this issue with America taking up the matter and resolving the problem of Western Armenia".<sup>7</sup> According to the Prime Minister, the government, being in a state of expectation, could not say anything about this. However, he added that "as the time for resolving our issue at the Peace Conference approaches, Turkey is extending its arms widely to our borders. Therefore, on the one hand, we must not lose hope for outside help, and on the other, organize our own forces".<sup>8</sup> This ambivalent position was also a guideline for Armenian officials who visited the United States. On the one hand, it was necessary to maintain the encouraging approach according to which the impartial US government, guided by democratic and humanitarian principles, would not only immediately provide comprehensive support, but also, finally, recognize the independence of the Republic of Armenia. The mandates of the Civil and Military missions concerned the economic, humanitarian and military spheres, respectively. As for the diplomatic representative of the Republic, G. Pasdermadjian, the latter was authorized to carry out all kinds of work within the framework of the Qajaznuni mission, naturally giving priority to the recognition of the newly created State over political issues.

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<sup>4</sup> NAA, F. 200, c. 1, f. 395, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> NAA, F. 200, c. 1, f. 395, pp. 1-2, 4, 7.

<sup>6</sup> NAA, F. 200, c. 1, f. 395, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> "Asparez", 1919, October 24, № 586.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

To achieve success in all of the above areas, it was necessary not only to work with official American structures in the direction of developing bilateral relations and ensuring sympathy and feedback in public circles, but also to coordinate the actions of all Armenian missions, both representatives of the Republic and the National Delegation. It was imperative to consolidate all efforts and ensure mutual understanding and unity both within and between the working groups, which was very important for establishing close ties with the Armenian community in America. During this period, the human resources and technical capabilities of the Armenian American community were of vital importance to the independent State of Armenia.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, among the tasks assigned to the delegates of the Republic, one of the most important points was the work to end the split in the Armenian community in the United States.<sup>10</sup> The unity factor was extremely important on the path to success in the United States. It didn't take much effort to solve this problem in the Armenian community at the initial stage. The mere presence of the newly created republic's mission in the United States was already enough to unite Armenian Americans. As for the propaganda work, in this regard, H. Qajaznuni informed the Acting Prime Minister of the Republic A. Khatisyan that the mission was carried out at a high level.<sup>11</sup>

The high wave of unity and cohesion in the Armenian community of America was also explained by the fact that, along with the delegates of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, authorized representatives of the National Delegation acted within the framework of both Civil and Military missions. The joy of the Armenian community of the USA over the visit of the official Armenian delegation was boundless. The community's enthusiasm was particularly expressed also for the Republic's Diplomatic representative, who was perceived as an international value. This rhetoric was twofold: on the one hand, it was due to the fact that Armenia, as an independent country, had finally taken its place among the world's nations, and on the other, it was connected to the fact that Armenia had established official relations with the United States.<sup>12</sup> A. Garo understood perfectly well that at that time, both ensuring the unity of the community itself and its close connection with the mother motherland by all possible physical, material and moral means also depended on the successful course of his diplomatic work.<sup>13</sup>

G. Pasdermadjian started his activity in the United States, focusing on three main areas. Namely: achieving political and legal recognition of the Republic of Armenia; informing American government and public circles about the need for Armenia's existence; ensuring material, humanitarian, military and political support from the United States. The main goal of A. Garo's diplomatic efforts was to achieve the United States'

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<sup>9</sup> Hovannisian 2014: 457.

<sup>10</sup> "Hayreniq", 1919, October 11, "Kochnak Hayastani", 1919, October 11, №41, pp. 1301-1302.

<sup>11</sup> NAA, F. 200, c. 1, f. 431, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> "Kochnak Hayastani", 1919, October 11, № 41, p. 1301.

<sup>13</sup> "Asparez", 1919, October 17.



acceptance of a mandate for Armenia Garo embarked on a series of initiatives in this direction during the autumn and early winter of 1919.<sup>14</sup> He promoted the idea of mandatory government in Armenia in official, political, and public circles. The Armenian diplomat made every effort to convince the US government to take custody of Armenia or at least provide it with financial and humanitarian assistance.

Based on the above, the very next day after arriving in the United States, G. Pasdermadjian, together with H. Qajaznuni, testified in Washington at Hearings organized by the Subcommittee of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.<sup>15</sup> The latter concerned the Resolution proposed by Senator J. Sh. Williams on the provision of troops and ammunition to the Republic of Armenia.

Sharing the concerns expressed by Qajaznuni and agreeing with the information provided by him, which mainly represented economic issues and reflected the national and cultural characteristics of the Armenian people, Pasdermadjian in his speech focused mainly on the political sphere. Underlining that the Armenians played no less a role in the World War than other Allied nations, he noted that after the armistice, despite the peace settlement organized by the Allies, the latter, with the exception of some food aid from America, did not provide any political or military assistance to the Armenians: no weapons or ammunition were provided to protect the Armenian people, surrounded by enemies.<sup>16</sup> Pasdermadjian noted that, along with the request of the Republic of Armenia for humanitarian aid, in the current situation, the supply of weapons and ammunition, as well as the presence of just a few thousand American soldiers in Armenia, were of great importance.<sup>17</sup>

Following their testimonies at the Hearings, on the same day and over the next few days, Garo, both as part of the Civil mission and personally, held a number of meetings and discussions with high-ranking American officials, including W. Wilson's Secretary J. P. Tamulty, Vice President T. R. Marshall, Secretary of State R. Lansing, and others.<sup>18</sup> Meetings were also held with representatives of various public organizations and a number of famous people. At the end of October 1919, A. Garo submitted to the US State Department a Memorandum on the independence of Armenia, entitled "The Republic of Armenia", prepared by the Civil mission headed by H. Qajaznuni.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see Ghambaryan 2024: 48-60.

<sup>15</sup> For Senate Subcommittee Hearings see: United States Congress 1919: 5067; US NA, RG (Record Group) 256, 867B.00/268; Maintenance of Peace in Armenia 1919: 3-125; "Armenian Review" 1980, № 4; 1981, № 1, 2, 4; Armenia in the Documents: 566; Hovannisian 2014: 447, Ghambaryan 2022: 24-314, Hovannisian 1982: 435; Makhmuryan 2018: 235-264; Ovannisyan 2007: 273-281.

<sup>16</sup> Maintenance of Peace in Armenia 1919: 112; Ghambaryan 2020: 89-94; Ghambaryan 2022: 24-314.

<sup>17</sup> Maintenance of Peace in Armenia 1919: 112; Ghambaryan 2020: 89-94; Ghambaryan 2022: 24-314.

<sup>18</sup> Hovannisian 1982: 435; Ovannisyan 2007: 279; Makhmuryan 2018: 235-264; Hovannisian 2014: 459.

<sup>19</sup> The Republic of Armenia 1919: 1-15; Ghambaryan 2023: 95-117.

### **G. Pasdermadjian's Undertakings in November and December 1919**

In November-December 1919, A. Garo was overwhelmed by diplomatic activity.<sup>20</sup> The importance of this activity was particularly significant, as it coincided with a period when the lack of action from US official circles on Armenian issues was becoming more apparent.

No steps have been taken to provide political or military assistance to the Republic of Armenia. After the Senate Subcommittee Hearings, virtually no further action was taken on the issues under discussion. The Subcommittee's report was not published or even presented to the US Senate in late 1919 or early 1920. This was due to the current circumstances in the United States. On the one hand, the prolonged isolation of pro-Armenian President W. Wilson from official affairs due to health problems, on the other hand, the negative position of opposition Republicans regarding his policies. The latter led to the fact that the US Senate, returning to the Monroe doctrine in its foreign policy orientations, rejected the Treaty of Versailles, and with it the Treaty on the League of Nations, and hence the system of mandates. This meant that the reality of mandates had virtually ceased to exist.

From the above, it became clear that the expectations of the Armenians would remain unfulfilled. In the current situation, it was necessary, at least with regard to Armenian issues, to closely monitor all the news related to US domestic and, consequently, foreign policy. It was very important to keep abreast of the development of new events and processes, so as not to miss important points related to the issues of concern to Armenians, and to ensure timely response. The main burden of this work fell on the shoulders of G. Pasdermadjian. Using his diplomatic abilities and powers, he expanded his activities in all the already mentioned directions assigned to him. Together with members of the Civil mission and individually Qajaznuni sent appeals to the White House, Congress, American Committee for Relief in the Near East, and individual entrepreneurs, negotiated and petitioned for food, clothing, grain, agricultural equipment, and rolling stock.<sup>21</sup> In order to resolve issues related to the military sphere, Garo works closely with the Armenian Joint Military mission and organizes meetings of its representatives with the US military officials represented by the Secretary of War Newton Baker<sup>22</sup>, as well as the Secretary of State Robert Lansing.<sup>23</sup> On political issues, as well as on issues of providing various types of support to Armenia, Garo established mutual contact with Secretary of State R. Lansing<sup>24</sup> and even with President W. Wilson.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ghambaryan 2024: 48-60.

<sup>21</sup> "New York Times", 1919, October 5, October 12; "Kochnak Hayastani", 1919, October 25, № 43, pp. 1386-1387, November 1, № 44, pp.1403-1404; "Hayreniq", 1919, October 19; Ovannisyan 2007: 299-300, 302.

<sup>22</sup> Ovannisyan 2007: 286.

<sup>23</sup> Ovannisyan 2007: 286.

<sup>24</sup> NAA, F. 200, c. 1, f. 431, pp. 50-58; Ghambaryan A. 2024: 48-60.

<sup>25</sup> Ovannisyan 2007: 302.

In both correspondence and personal contacts with high-ranking American officials and other government figures, Garo prioritized the issue of recognizing the newly formed Armenian State in his work on political matters. This commitment was reinforced by the Armenian government. In a letter dated November 18, sent to Garo from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, A. Khatisyan instructed the diplomatic representative as follows: "To take appropriate steps to recognize our independence, since after the departure of the British troops we are under the protection of the Americans, but this is rather platonic in nature, since the Americans do not have troops and weapons stationed in Armenia to prevent the invasion of the Turks into the Republic of Armenia".<sup>26</sup>

At the end of 1919, this recommendation became highly relevant due to the significant changes in the political direction of the United States, namely, the change of the mandate course towards independence.<sup>27</sup> Based on this, Garo frequently emphasized in his addresses and speeches the significant strategic role of independent Armenia in the Caucasus as a force ensuring political stability and a stronghold for the preservation of Christian values.<sup>28</sup>

Garo's political mission in the United States, which was clearly manifested not only in negotiations with American officials but also in his speeches, reports, addresses, interviews, and testimonies, aimed to present Armenia as a legitimate and stable country. In his appeals, he constantly emphasized the suffering of the Armenian people, especially during and after the genocide, and the moral obligation of the international community to assist the Armenian nation.

The recognition of the independence of the Republic of Armenia was an urgent task, which should have been followed by the recognition of its Government. Expectations were high. Consequently, the main purpose of the Civil mission and, in particular, the diplomatic representative was to carry out work on the recognition of the Republic. In one of the interviews, a hopeful Pasdermadjian tried to dispel the journalist's fears that "Statement by French Foreign Minister S. Pichon in the French Parliament on the non-recognition of the republics about the non-recognition of the republics of the Caucasus was made in relation to Georgia and Azerbaijan".<sup>29</sup>

The directions and content of G. Pasdermadjian's activities was reflected, in particular, on the pages of the American Armenian press. Notable in this regard were the speeches delivered at numerous public gatherings, which were published in both English-language and Armenian-language periodicals. A. Garo was undoubtedly among the representatives of the Armenian Civil and Military missions, as well as American officials and prominent public figures, who delivered speeches and addresses at rallies, meetings, dinners and other events organized by both the Armenian community and various American organizations in honor of the Armenian delegations in large and small

<sup>26</sup> NAA, F. 200, c. 1, f. 395, pp. 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> Makhmuryan 2018: 291.

<sup>28</sup> Makhmuryan 2018: 291.

<sup>29</sup> "Nor Kyanq", 1919, October 29.

cities across the United States. He attended almost all the events, despite the fact that sometimes, due to worsening health problems, he made great efforts to do so. After the event in Boston, the magazine "Renaissance" wrote "He delivered a speech in English in which he told about the great service that the Armenians rendered to the Allied cause on all fronts of the World War.<sup>30</sup> As the magazine noted, these important words of the Armenian Plenipotentiary Representative were pronounced clearly and with such an emphasis that they were understandable to everyone.

A. Garo never weakened his activities and continued his efforts, publishing articles, giving speeches and trying in every possible way to unite the divided forces of the Armenian community of America. Thus, on November 30, 1919, Pasdermajian, as a Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Armenia, sent the following letter to the press for publication. He wrote: "Dear compatriots! Attached you will find a letter from the head of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia in Paris, Mr. A. Aharonian, with an appeal addressed to the Armenian community of America. By sending it to you, I am confident that you and your newspapers will make every effort to meet the noted urgent needs of our Motherland".<sup>31</sup>

The Boston-based Armenian newspaper "Hayreniq", on December 23, 1919, published, in particular, a short speech by G. Pasdermajian delivered at the Plaza Hotel on the occasion of a dinner given in honor of the Armenian delegations, which was also attended by prominent Americans, including representatives of the Governor of Massachusetts and the Mayor of Boston. In his speech, Garo emphasized not only the fact that the United States' support for distant Armenia was not just a duty in the name of justice, but also that the fate of the Republic of Armenia at that moment was in the hands of the American government. He noted the following: "The Armenian Political and Military missions have arrived to present the current situation and their fair position to the American government and people."

You are all aware of the activities of our people in the Middle East over the years. From the third century to the present day, the Armenian people have been at the forefront of Christian civilization. As in the past, during this World War, Armenia resolutely sided with Western civilization and, at the cost of almost a million human casualties, saved the Eastern Front of the Allies, preventing the Turkish-German offensive in the direction of Central Asia. This reality is recognized by military leaders of both our allies and our enemies. But despite this obvious reality, today, for a full year, our Allies have provided no real assistance to our brave people.

Our hope, in particular, is based on the Great Freedom-loving Republic of America. We have come to ask you to support us in any way convenient for you in the matter of organizing our newborn state and in the matter of protecting our just rights with the goal of creating a united independent Armenian state. Our people deliberately shed their blood not so that instead of the Russian tsar or the Turkish sultan, someone

<sup>30</sup> "Veratsnutiun", 1919, November-December, p. 429.

<sup>31</sup> "Nor Kyanq", 1919, December 10.

else would rule and dominate their native land, but only in order to free themselves from foreign domination once and for all.

We are sure that You, the children of that great generation who so heroically achieved their freedom, will understand us and extend your brotherly hands to us. I can assure you, gentlemen, that you will not regret the sacrifices you will make to help our suffering people”.<sup>32</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Thus, in the last quarter of 1919, G. Pasdermadjian, as a diplomatic representative of the First Republic of Armenia, was active not only within the framework of the Civil, but also the Armenian Military mission. Despite the fact that his powers as an Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Representative mainly included consideration of political and diplomatic issues, A. Garo also actively worked in the economic field. Therefore, to summarize, we note that although there were almost no achievements in political matters at the end of 1919, the efforts of the RA Plenipotentiary Representative were not completely fruitless. He managed to inform American government and public circles about the necessity of Armenia's existence and to secure their sympathy. G. Pasdermadjian, also contributed to the successes achieved in the United States in late 1919 in terms of economic aid in favor of Armenia, and played a significant role in uniting the disunited Armenian community in the USA.

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## ENCYCLICALS, CIRCULARS, AND APPEALS OF PATRIARCH ZAVEN OF CONSTANTINOPLE (1913-1922)

**Silvart Malhasyan\***

### **Abstract**

Patriarch Zaven, who twice ascended the age-old Patriarchal throne of the Armenians of Constantinople<sup>1</sup>, is one of the first students consecrated by the Armash Theological Seminary. Both periods of his tenure coincided with the most difficult years for the Western Armenians. As he himself attested in his memoirs, there had been no occupant among the Patriarchs of Constantinople who, like him, “had such a changeable fate and had seen days of glory and downfall”.<sup>2</sup>

Patriarch Zaven, both during his days as a provincial primate and during his two patriarchal periods, was always conscientiously devoted to the people. His foremost goals were the defense of the nation’s interests and the healing of the wounds of the suffering people. To achieve these goals, the Patriarch rallied all the national forces around him, making efforts to convene meetings, encouraging the formation of benevolent institutions, and publishing encyclicals and circulars, and directing appeals that explained the necessary work for the resolution of these issues.

**Keywords:** Patriarch Zaven, Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, encyclical, circular, appeals, Armenians of Constantinople, Mudros Armistice, loan

### **Encyclicals, Circulars, and appeals of Patriarch Zaven during his first Tenure**

The first period of Patriarch Zaven’s service began after his long experience as Primate in Karin, Van, and Diyarbekir (Tigranakert)<sup>3</sup>, with his election by the National

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<sup>1</sup> Patriarch Zaven, whose baptismal name was Michael Yeghiaian, was born on September 8, 1868, in Mosul to the family of a native priest from Seghert. He was accepted as a student at the Armash Theological Seminary in 1890. In 1895, Zaven, having been re-called, was ordained a celibate priest by His Holiness Bishop Malachia Ormanian, and in 1896, he received the authority of the Archimandrite’s staff. Archbishop Zaven 1947: 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Zaven 1947: 5.

<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Zaven served in Karin (Erzurum) from February 1898 to May 1906 as Patriarchal Vicar and Primate. In 1908, he was appointed Patriarchal Vicar of Van. During this term, upon being elected Primate of Diyarbekir (Tigranakert), he continued that position from 1908 until his election as Patriarch in 1913. Archbishop Zaven, *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Representative Assembly on August 30, 1913<sup>4</sup>, and the Sultan's imperial decree of confirmation issued by the Ottoman government on September 24, 1913.<sup>5</sup>

In the Holy Mother of God Cathedral in Kumkapı on November 8, 1913, the Patriarch performed his solemn oath in the presence of the National General Assembly and the public, stating: "Before God and in the presence of this National Assembly, I publicly vow to remain faithful to the government and to my nation, and to truly oversee the flawless implementation of the National Constitution." During the oath, he delivered a speech in which he declared that the interests of the Ottoman State and the Armenian Nation were in harmony with each other, and therefore, by serving one, the Patriarch would also be serving the other.<sup>6</sup>

The Patriarch reflected the aforementioned idea in his first encyclical, which was read under the arches of all Constantinople churches during the first week of June 1914. The encyclical was an expression of the Armenian people's national life and the Patriarch's intended direction, aspirations, and demands. Patriarch Zaven first addressed the shortcomings and sorrows of his flock, stating that the people had, in places, strayed from the churches and abandoned the schools. His first exhortation was to remain faithful to the Gospel and the Armenian Church, reminding them of the inseparable nature of the Armenian Church and the Armenian nation.<sup>7</sup> He emphasized the necessity of national education, urging the people to work towards the proliferation and improvement of schools, and he encouraged this as a sacred duty. In particular, he stressed the necessity of absolutely sending boys to Armenian primary schools. The Patriarch also spoke about the importance of forming Armenian families and the inappropriateness of intermarriage.<sup>8</sup>

As this encyclical coincided with the eve of the First World War, the Patriarch also addressed the civil duty of the nation's children and the new conscription law, appealing to every Armenian to fulfill their patriotic obligation.<sup>9</sup> Following the Patriarch's circular, the Armenian nation fulfilled its civic duties in every way and demonstrated its loyalty to the Ottoman homeland.

Patriarch Zaven also placed emphasis on the nation's economic life, focusing on the importance of organizing economically around commercial enterprises. The times had changed; small sums and capitals had no chance of long-term survival because large capitals would swallow them. Therefore, it was necessary to unite. According to Patriarch Zaven, "those who understood this reality and acted accordingly were the

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<sup>4</sup> Archbishop Zaven 1947: 10.

<sup>5</sup> BOA. A.DVNS.GMC.d., nr.11, p. 47-48: (This is an archival reference, likely from the Ottoman Archives - Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi - referring to a decree of the Imperial Council or Grand Vizierate).

<sup>6</sup> The Solemn Oath of His Holiness the Patriarch, "Zhamanak", 9-22. XI. 1913, Issue No. 16305, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Zaven, Servant of Jesus Christ, "Zhamanak", 1-14.VII. 1914, Issue No. 1857, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> The Encyclical of His Holiness the Patriarch Father, "Zhamanak", 2-15.VII.1914, Issue No. 1858, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> The Encyclical of His Holiness the Patriarch Father, "Zhamanak", 3-16.VII.1914, Issue No. 1859, p. 1.

most virtuous and useful compatriots, who knew the secrets of enriching themselves and serving the homeland”.<sup>10</sup>

The Patriarch made the issue of mutual understanding between the Patriarchate and the people a special point of attention, because harmony between the National Authority and the people was the primary condition for resolving issues concerning the people’s religious, national, and civic life. Starting with the primates, he requested all clergy and those serving in the provincial administrative councils to fulfill their religious and administrative duties with vigilance and dedicated activity. He also called upon the intellectual class—the writers and especially the journalists—to uphold their worth.<sup>11</sup>

Patriarch Zaven ascended the throne during a considerably difficult period, on the eve of the First World War. The leaders of the Ottoman State were the Ittihadists (Unionists), who pursued an erratic policy. The evidence of this was the country being thrown into the war on August 2, 1914. The Patriarch, as a far-sighted and experienced cleric, sensed in the first weeks of the summer of 1914 that the Ottoman State would soon participate in the war, and therefore he wanted to know the number of Armenian students in the state military academies (Idadiler)<sup>12</sup> in the provinces. For this purpose, he requested a list of those students from the provincial primates via a circular.<sup>13</sup> Shortly after this circular, the Ottoman State was already participating in the war and, with general conscription, was mobilizing the army.

In the last week of October of the same year, the Patriarch addressed a new circular to the dioceses in the provinces and the districts of Constantinople.<sup>14</sup> He referred to the telegrams and letters received from all corners of the province after the general conscription, which indicated that Armenians had complied with the mobilization of those between the ages of 15 and 32 and those without support, and at the same time had willingly participated in the fundraising proposed for the needs of the army or various government requirements.

In this circular, Primates, Vicars, Delegates, and official personnel were called upon to pay attention to a number of points. The first of these points was: On every occasion, both in writing and verbally, to exhort the people to fulfill their patriotic duty, as they had done for centuries. Especially since the country was now at war and needed assistance. The second important point was to instruct the people to participate willingly in providing material and moral assistance. Besides participating in material aid, the people were called upon not to spare even their lives when the Ottoman homeland was

<sup>10</sup> The Encyclical of His Holiness the Patriarch Father, “Zhamanak”, 3-16.VII.1914, Issue No. 1859, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> The Encyclical of His Holiness the Patriarch Father, “Zhamanak”, 3-16.VII.1914, Issue No. 1859, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> A school providing military education equivalent to the Lyceum (high school) level.

<sup>13</sup> The Patriarchate issued a circular, “Zhamanak”, 14-27. V.1914, Issue No. 1809, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> The Patriarchal Circular, Armenians and the War, “Dajar”, 12 November 1914, Issue No. 18, pp. 385-387. The Patriarchate’s Circular to the Primates, Armenians and the War, “Zhamanak”, 26.X-3.XI.1914, Issue No. 1973, p. 1.

in need of it. The Patriarch urged the people to demonstrate practically that they were worthy children of their ancestors.

One of the circular's main demands was the issue of alleviating the miseries inseparable from war. It stated that this duty fell to the central cities and official bodies, thus it was necessary to form new poor-relief bodies or strengthen the existing ones. At the same time, the people were called upon to show benevolence and patriotism to care for the unsupported families of those conscripted and to alleviate the misery of the poor and orphans, without making distinctions between nationality or religion.

The circular made a point of caution and specifically asked the Primates to cultivate cordial relations with local government officials, assist their efforts, and present their observations regarding the conduct of lawbreakers to the relevant officials with a courteous and concerned tone. Similarly, the Primates were instructed to urge their flocks to approach their neighbors and compatriots with understanding, to help them, and to be more far-sighted and circumspect than ever before, so as not to cause misunderstandings.

This circular made a good impression on Turkish circles. The French-language newspaper "Jeune Turc" spoke highly of the circular, and especially of Patriarch Zaven, saying that his words proved the idea of true Ottomanism.<sup>15</sup> The publication of patriotic articles in the Armenian press, parallel to the circular, also led to expressions of respect from the Turkish press.<sup>16</sup>

In response to the aforementioned circular, prayers for the success of the Ottoman army were held in various cities of the provinces under the leadership of the Primates or their delegates. In response to all patriotic demonstrations, the Ottoman Information Bureau communicated a declaration to the newspapers, which, with laudatory lines, exalted the patriotic sentiments of the Armenians and their devotion to the Ottoman government.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, news of aid initiatives also arrived from the provinces. Official letters from Erzincan (Yerznka), Palu, and Çarsancak provided detailed information about all the patriotic initiatives undertaken to meet the needs of the Ottoman army.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Archbishop Zaven 1947: 77.

<sup>16</sup> "Tasvir-i Efkar", referring to these articles, published a piece titled "Patriotic Activity Among Our Armenian Compatriots" ("Ermeni Vatandaşlarımızda Faaliyet-i Vatanperverane"), Tasvir-i Efkar, 11 Teşrinisani 1914, p. 3. Patriotic Activity Among Our Armenian Compatriots, "Azatamart", 30.X-12.XI.1914, Issue No. 1664, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> "Dajar", 31 December 1914, Issue No. 19, p. 424.

<sup>18</sup> Especially the Primate of Karin, Bishop Smbat Saatetian, the Vicar of Sebastia, Bishop Gnel Kalemkerian, and the Primate of Kharberd, Vartabed Psak Ter-Khorenian, encouraged the people of their districts to make efforts in this direction. In Erzincan, merchants donated their goods to the Ottoman army, farmers their entire labor, and artisans whatever they could. To establish a hospital, they placed 300 blankets and 310 pillows at the disposal of the army. Similar things were done by the people of Palu and Çarsancak. Armenian News, "Zhamanak", 18-31.I.1915, Issue No. 2053, p. 2.

According to a telegram received from Jerusalem, the former Patriarch Archbishop Malachia preached before a large crowd in the Holy Sepulchre (Surp Harutyun) and sent Patriarch Zaven's circular to all the dioceses connected to the Jerusalem Patriarchate.<sup>19</sup> In various districts of Constantinople, Armenian women began sewing undergarments for the soldiers with collected donations.<sup>20</sup> Ismail Hakkı, the Governor of Adana, who had known the Patriarch since his days as Primate of Diyarbakir, praised the sacrifices made by the Armenians for the Ottoman army, particularly the food aid from the people of Sis, in a personal letter addressed to the Patriarch.<sup>21</sup>

It is appropriate to mention here that the people of Constantinople and the provinces were making all these sacrifices while in a considerably tight financial situation, as the Armenian nation already had major problems helping the unsupported and the needy, and it was undertaking additional sacrifices to overcome them. To manage this difficult task, Patriarch Zaven, in the first months of 1915, issued a new circular instructing the district councils of the Constantinople churches to report the number of those in need so that the aid work could be placed on a firm foundation. He also instructed the collection plate to be circulated in the churches.<sup>22</sup> In connection with all these heavy financial issues, the Patriarch advised the people to also regularly pay their Homeland Tax<sup>23</sup> and lighten the financial burden of the Patriarchal See.<sup>24</sup>

While the Armenian nation was working diligently to fully fulfill its patriotic duties on one hand, on the other hand, all these sacrifices had no positive effect on the severe situation of the Armenians in the provinces. Letters of protest arrived one after another; the people and the Primates were anxious about the rumors of deportation. Finally, the order for forced relocation was announced.

Following the deportations and massacres, the Ittihadist (Unionist) government, by a decision dated July 17, 1916, abolished the Armenian National Constitution of 1863 and enforced the Statute of the Catholicos-Patriarch. The justification was that the Mother See (Etchmiadzin) was under the dominion of the Russian Empire, and thus exerted a negative influence on the life of Western Armenians. With the abolition of the Constitution, the ties between Constantinople, the religious-cultural and political center of Western Armenians, and Etchmiadzin were severed. The new arrangement also severed the Patriarchate's connection with the Armenians in the provinces, who were suffering in exile and agonizing pain. With the establishment of the Catholicos-Patriarch Statute, Patriarch Zaven was exiled to Baghdad. He departed the Ottoman capital with

<sup>19</sup> According to news received from Jerusalem, "Byuzandion", 28.X.-10.XI.1914, Issue No. 5491, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> For the Soldiers, "Byuzandion", 20.XI.-3.XII.1914, Issue No. 5499, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Letter to the Patriarch, "Byuzandion", 6-9.XII.1914, Issue No. 5499, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> National Life, "Dajar" 14.II.1915, Issue No. 21, p. 455. Palm Sunday Holiday, "Zhamanak", 16-29.III.1915, Issue No. 2110, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Malhasyan 2024a.

<sup>24</sup> Circular from the Patriarchate, "Zhamanak", 6-19.II.1915, Issue No. 2072, p. 2.

his brother and his daughter. After a terrifying journey, he reached Baghdad, and after staying there for five months, he was transferred to Mosul.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the encyclicals and circulars addressed to the people, the clergy, and national officials, Patriarch Zaven also issued special encyclicals to individuals during his first period of service. One of the most important issues for him was the education of the nation's children, and therefore, to remind people of the importance of education, and sometimes to thank and encourage the institutions or individuals who supported it, he published circulars or issued encyclicals. In this category was the Encyclical of Blessing given to Karapet Ef. Papazian in appreciation for his donation towards the construction of the national kindergarten in the Getikpasha district.<sup>26</sup> A similar encyclical was also given on the occasion of a donation made to the Armash Theological Seminary. The brother and sister of the late Abik Efendi Unjian, one of the Seminary's supporters—Matus Efendi and his sister—considering the difficult financial state of the monastery, donated a significant sum to the institution, for which the Patriarch sent an Encyclical of Blessing to the benevolent donors.<sup>27</sup>

### **Encyclicals, Circulars, and appeals of Patriarch Zaven's second tenure**

Patriarch Zaven's second period of rule began after the Mudros Armistice was signed on October 30, 1918, between the defeated Ottoman State and the victorious Allied Powers, changing the lives of Western Armenians. Following the signing of the Armistice, the administration of the city of Constantinople was handed over to the three Entente powers: England, Italy, and France. The Statute of the Armenian Catholicos-Patriarch ceased to be in force. The Armenian National Constitution of 1863 was re-established, and the Armenian Constitutional order began to be implemented.<sup>28</sup> With the help of the British, the Armenians of Constantinople succeeded in returning the exiled Patriarch to the city. Archbishop Zaven entered the Ottoman capital on February 19, 1919.<sup>29</sup>

The first encyclical-circular of the Patriarch's second tenure was read on Sunday, March 16, 1919, in all Armenian churches in Constantinople. The Patriarch first addressed the sufferings endured by the Armenian nation during the years of catastrophe and the powerful faith and will shown for survival. He announced that days of light had arrived with the end of the war. The nation had to prepare for a new rebirth, to achieve which great efforts and great sacrifices were again necessary.

<sup>25</sup> Archbishop Zaven 1947: 219, 225.

<sup>26</sup> The Donation of Karapet Efendi Papazian, "Zhamanak", 14-27.V.1914, Issue No. 1809, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> National Life, "Dajar", 14 February 1915, Issue No. 21, pp. 455-456.

<sup>28</sup> "Ardaramart", 21 November 1918, Issue No. 2-1816, p. 1. "Byuzandion", 8-21.XI.1918, Issue No. 7741. The Armenian Patriarchate Regulation dated 29 Ramazan 1279, Takvim-i Vekayi 20 Teşrinisani 1334, number 3399. The Armenian Patriarchate Regulation, Sabah, 7 November 1918, number 10421.

<sup>29</sup> A Happy Return After a Suffering Exile, "Nor Kyank", 21.II. 1919, Issue No. 124, p. 2.

Upon his return, the Patriarch found Constantinople full of large groups of Armenian widows, orphans, and deportees, whose numbers were noticeably increasing day by day. To place the work of material and moral assistance for them on a more regular basis, the National Benevolent Organization (Azgayin Khnamatarutyun) was formed.<sup>30</sup>

To succeed in this sacred work, the Patriarch advised the people to abstain from disputes, self-centered and vainglorious ambitions, division, and separation, and requested pan-national cooperation and solidarity.<sup>31</sup>

With the aim of obtaining accurate information on these issues, a circular dated March 18, 1919, was sent to the provincial Primates.<sup>32</sup> This official declaration was a printed questionnaire that, through the Primates, was to reach the national residents of villages and cities, and the answers provided would clarify the true picture of the nation's current state.

Besides the nationals residing in the provinces, the deportees who had gathered in Constantinople after the deportations, or the Armenians of Constantinople who had suffered losses due to the war, received this questionnaire from the Information Bureau of the Holy Trinity Church in the Pera district. The questionnaire focused on the following issues: liberation of orphans, verification of the status of orphanages, issues of deportees returning to their birthplace reclaiming their private properties, demanding Church properties back from the government, and identifying those who organized deadly movements and persecutions or committed acts of violence against the deported people during their journey.<sup>33</sup>

While Patriarch Zaven was still in exile, the entire Armenian nation experienced great joy with the Proclamation of the First Republic of Armenia on May 28, 1918, which took place almost a few months before the signing of the Mudros Armistice. The newly established republic certainly faced great difficulties. Therefore, upon arriving in Constantinople, the Patriarch took the first step toward material assistance for the Republic of Armenia by publishing an encyclical. The encyclical was a heartfelt appeal to the entire Armenian nation to send aid to the people of Armenia who were enduring suffering. With paternal exhortations, the Patriarch highlighted the debt of conscience every single Armenian owed to their nation. The encyclical was given to Hovhannes Kajaznuni, the Prime Minister of the First Republic of Armenia, to take with him to Europe and America, and was also sent to all districts and churches in Constantinople and the provinces to be read.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Official Declaration of the Political Assembly, "Zhamanak", 29.I.1919-7.II.1919, 3442, p. 1. National Benevolent Organization 1920: 73-75.

<sup>31</sup> Circular, Encyclical of Patriarch Zaven, "Zhamanak", 18.III.1919, Issue No. 108 (1929), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Official Declaration of the National Patriarchate, "Zhamanak", 4-17.V.1919, Issue No. 3523, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Matenadaran, Arshak Alpoyajian Fund, file 55, document 58 (18).

<sup>34</sup> Aid to Armenia, "Zhamanak", 5-18.VI.1919, Issue No. 3549.

During the summer of the same year, Patriarch Zaven published new circulars, through which he offered advice, especially to the youth. Thus, the first of two circulars dated July 24, 1919, announced that Armenian young men, driven by need or other reasons, were appealing to a foreign power and enrolling as volunteer soldiers to be sent to distant colonies. It was instructed that these young men should not embark on such an undertaking without first obtaining the approval of the Patriarchate. The second circular concerned a security issue and was a translation of a warning document sent to the Patriarchate by the British High Commission. According to this warning, when arrests were made by the Turkish police or when a detainee was being escorted to a police station, Christians sometimes interfered, thereby obstructing the work of the police. The Patriarchate was asked to warn the Armenian people to refrain from such interference. These two circulars were read from the church pulpits and explained to the people.<sup>35</sup>

One of Patriarch Zaven's concerns was also the undeniable demand to raise new generations, as the nation had lost immense youthful strength due to deportation and war, and many of those who narrowly escaped death had lost their families and immediate kin. The responsibility for the upbringing of those saved from the catastrophe rested on the shoulders of the nation and the national schools. One of the circulars during the Patriarch's second tenure was about this very issue. Due to the war, the national schools had fallen into a state of disarray. The Patriarchate's Educational Council decided to regularize these schools by utilizing the financial capabilities of the districts where they were located. Therefore, this decision was communicated via a circular to the church district councils, asking them to provide all kinds of facilities to the work of the Educational Council.<sup>36</sup>

Patriarch Zaven was not the only one returning from exile. Armenians scattered across Mesopotamia and Syria also began to return from their places of exile after the Armistice. The Cilicians also returned to their homeland, encouraged by the French, who controlled the region at the time. A portion of Armenians exiled from other Armenian-populated areas also came and settled there.<sup>37</sup> The Cilicians, of course, were never able to regain their former life, being subjected to difficulties. With the responsibility of aiding the distressed Cilicians, a circular was published by the Patriarchate at the end of March 1920, bearing the signatures of the Chairman of the Religious Council, Archbishop Eghishe Tourian, and the Patriarchal Vicar, Bishop Mesrob Naroyan. The National Central Administration, while carrying out its duty to provide material assistance to the Cilicians, found it insufficient. Therefore, the circular called on the people to seek means to support their compatriots. The Religious Council of the Central Administration considered such a duty more important than participating in church ceremonies, which were valued as equivalent to alms. Especially since

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<sup>35</sup> Grigor Avak Priest Tamatian 2016: 260.

<sup>36</sup> Nor Kyank, 15.VIII.1919, Issue No. 270.

<sup>37</sup> Patriarch Zaven 1947: 279-280.



spiritual joys and festivities would not be understood when, on the other hand, their co-religionist brothers in Cilicia lacked aid. A decision was made to temporarily suspend church ceremonies, and an appeal was directed to the people to hasten to the aid of the victims of Cilicia and quickly complete the assistance for the unfortunate children and brothers of the Armenian nation.<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned above, the Patriarch was still in exile during the proclamation of the Republic of Armenia, and the community in Constantinople did not have the opportunity to express its satisfaction regarding the proclamation. On the second anniversary of independence, the community found this opportunity through the Patriarch's circular dated May 27, 1920, which ordered the opening of the churches, which had been closed for a long time due to the Cilician catastrophe, and to offer prayers for the proclamation of independence.<sup>39</sup>

One of the circulars published by the Patriarch in 1920, who was always caring for Armenia, concerned the loan related to the homeland's economy. The Armenians of Constantinople were already striving to send aid to the homeland through fundraising organized by their associations and institutions, or by other means on various occasions. Participation in the Republic's first loan was one of the most important initiatives in this direction. The Patriarch's circular invited the district councils of Constantinople to support this initiative. The circular was effective in speeding up the loan process.<sup>40</sup>

Patriarch Zaven approached every issue concerning the community with sensitivity and care. The subject and reason for one of his appeals was Armenians emigrating to America. A letter sent to the Patriarchate by the spiritual pastor of Paris, Vramshapuh T. Vartabed, recounted that provincial Armenians who had emigrated from Cilicia with hopes of going to America, and even those who had settled in the Ottoman capital of Constantinople for years with the same dreams, were gathering in the city of Marseilles. These Armenians were living a nomadic life in lodgings worse than stables. Many of them, having had their money extorted by fraudsters, had barely managed to reach Paris. There, too, they filled the courtyard of the Armenian church. Harrowing scenes were witnessed—having passports but lacking the money to buy tickets. To show the terrifying danger awaiting many nationals who had the urge to emigrate to America, the Patriarch Father published Vramshapuh T. Vartabed's heartbreaking letter verbatim in the newspaper "Zhoghovourdi Dzayn" and warned in an appeal that the consequence of such short-sighted steps was nothing but disillusionment and misery.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> "Circular," "Zhamanak", 29.III-11.IV.1920, Issue No. 3799, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> "Zhoghovourdi Dzayn", 14-27.V.1920, Issue No. 493. Churches are opened for festivities, "Verjin Lur", 20.V.1920, Issue No. 1885, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Circular of the Political Assembly for the loan, "Chakatamart", 7.IX.1920, Issue No. 547 (2368). "Decision of the Political Assembly regarding the Armenian loan, "Zhoghovourdi Dzayn", 23. VIII-5.IX.1920, Issue No. 572.

<sup>41</sup> Patriarch Zaven 1920.

For Patriarch Zaven and the Armenians of Constantinople, the issue of caring for orphans and deportees had always been a difficult problem to solve. In a circular during the last days of 1920, the Patriarch announced that, with the approval of the Political Assembly of the National Central Authority, the Economic Commission had established a Central Body for the Salvation of Orphans. This body was collecting aid for orphans and deportees by means it found suitable in all districts of Constantinople on the occasion of the Holy Nativity (Christmas) holiday of 1921.

In the circular mentioned, the Patriarch addressed the dire state of the National Economic Fund and stated that a sacred duty lay upon every Armenian, and everyone had to contribute their share of aid to remedy this situation. For this purpose, he also appealed in a circular to the district councils to offer their moral and material support to the Central Body for the Salvation of Orphans and to its branches to be opened in the districts, so that the humanitarian mission could be realized efficiently.<sup>42</sup> In response to this appeal, the District Councils began collecting assistance under the name “Orphans’ Salvation Week” on the occasion of the New Year and Holy Nativity.<sup>43</sup> According to the program’s provisions, the title “Father of Orphans” was to be given to the person who donated the highest sum. A memorial plaque with this title was also prepared, bearing the signatures of the three spiritual heads of the Armenian denominations and the photo of the donor.<sup>44</sup>

The Armenians of Constantinople were not only working to find remedies for their own sorrows but also extending a helping hand to all who sought assistance. When the administration of the Russian White Cross appealed to the Patriarchate, requesting material assistance for the Russian sick and needy who had taken refuge in Constantinople, Patriarch Zaven directed a circular to the church district councils, instructing them to circulate a special collection plate for the Russian refugees during the Octave of the Holy Nativity (the eight days following Christmas). The organization of the effort was entrusted to the administration of the Armenian Red Cross in Constantinople, and the translation of the circular was published in Russian and Armenian newspapers.<sup>45</sup>

Patriarch Zaven, who was always concerned about Armenia, continued the same behavior and published encyclicals and circulars for aid even after the establishment of the Soviet regime in November 1920. Among these was the circular published in May 1921, when the Mother See (Etchmiadzin) was in an extremely difficult financial state.

<sup>42</sup> Circular, “Zhmanak”, 18.XII. 1920-2.I.1921, Issue No. 3975, p. 4; Circular, “Chakatamart”, 29.XII.1920, Issue No. 644 (2465).

<sup>43</sup> The postponement of Orphans’ Week, “Chakatamart”, 1.II.1921, Issue No. 671 (2492).

<sup>44</sup> Father of Orphans, “Chakatamart”, 12.I.1921, Issue No. 656 (2477); 14.I.1921, Issue No. 658 (2479).

<sup>45</sup> Aid to Russian Refugees, “Zhoghovourdi Dzayn”, 18.XII.-2.I.1921, Issue No. 679; “Chakatamart”, 2.I.1921, Issue No. 648 (2469); 6.I.1921, Issue No. 651 (2472); 18.I.1921, Issue No. 660 (2481); 22.I.1919, Issue No. 6634 (2484). His Holiness the Patriarch, “Zhoghovourdi Dzayn”, 8-21.I.1921, Issue No. 693. Aid to Russian Refugees, “Zhoghovourdi Dzayn”, 13-26.I.1921, Issue No. 697.

As true children of the Armenian Church, it was a sacred duty for the Armenians of Constantinople to help the Mother See. On this occasion, the Patriarch instructed the district councils and the clergy of the Constantinople churches to kindly re-establish the placement of the offering box in the church for the Holy Etchmiadzin treasury, in accordance with ancient custom, and simultaneously circulate a special plate every Sunday and holiday, sending the proceeds to the Patriarchate.<sup>46</sup> The Patriarch focused on the famine in Armenia and the resulting deaths, deciding to hold a vigil service in all the city's churches on June 1, 1921.<sup>47</sup>

As noted above, the Patriarch kept every community issue within his circle of attention. Thus, in the last months of 1921, he published an appeal regarding the problem of young girls wishing to leave the country due to the political and economic situation. The issue was the increasing obstacles caused by young girls going abroad as brides. The Patriarch, in a written declaration, sought to preempt certain deceptions that were affecting girls traveling from Constantinople to America as brides on marriage proposals from America, which had painful consequences. The circular set a mandatory condition for nationals seeking marriage, either in person or through a representative, requiring them to possess a certificate from the Armenian Prelacy of America bearing the photograph of the groom. The certificate also had to confirm the individual's identity, age, birthplace, residential address, marital status (single or widowed), occupation, financial status, and health condition confirmed by a medical report. The circular announced that applicants for marriage without this certificate would not be permitted by the Patriarchate.<sup>48</sup>

Unfortunately, Patriarch Zaven's second tenure, like the first, did not last long. The governance of the country had passed to the authority of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The administration's officials did not look favorably upon the Patriarch's policies after the Mudros Armistice and exerted pressure for him to resign. Under these pressures, Patriarch Zaven issued his final circular a few months before leaving the city, on October 3, 1922. In it, he advised the community to vigilantly follow the precautionary measures being implemented by the city authorities to maintain peace. He instructed them to maintain composure and trust in the current volatile conditions, not giving way to discord and panic, and to be careful of expressions that might be offensive to the feelings of others. He requested every national not to be satisfied merely with the implementation of the instructions, but also to be diligent in their own circle; if someone unconsciously disregarded the instructions, they should be zealous in correcting his behavior. He advised reporting any incident likely to disrupt order to the police, and in the case of fire incidents, to strictly follow the given instructions. The Patriarch particularly instructed the clergy and the district councils to be more than ever at the

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<sup>46</sup> Circular, "Zhoghovourdi Dzayn", 9-22.V. 1921, Issue No. 794 (4090), p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> For the aid of the Armenians of Constantinople to Armenia, see article: Malhasyan 2024b: 21-35.

<sup>48</sup> Circular, "Zhoghovourdi Dzayn", 22.XII.1920-4.I.1921, Issue No. 680 (3976), p. 2.

head of their duty and to explain the instructions to the people and ensure their flawless implementation.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, the Patriarch, without submitting a resignation, departed the Ottoman capital of Constantinople on December 10, 1922. On December 12, he sailed on the British ship *Brakka* to the city of Varna in Bulgaria. The Patriarch submitted his resignation in March 1923, thus closing his second patriarchal period as well.

### **Conclusion**

Patriarch Zaven, being a clergyman possessed of the Armashian spirit who sacrificed himself for the nation, had a single objective during both his periods as Primate and Patriarch, as well as during his life in exile: to care for the needs of his people, to be a remedy for their sorrows, to liberate the orphans and women, to find solutions for the problems of the deportees, and to ensure the education of the nation's children. To solve all these weighty problems, the Patriarch united the forces of every class of the nation and led them to work.

He demonstrated a caring attitude not only toward the Western Armenians but also toward the First Republic of Armenia and Soviet Armenia, publishing numerous encyclicals, circulars, and appeals in which he explained the necessary efforts for the resolution of these issues, rallied the members of the nation around the same goal, and successfully crowned the resolution of some of the problems that required attention.

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<sup>49</sup> Circular, “Zhoghovourdi Dzayn”, 4.X.1922, Issue No. 1216 (4501).

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***Translated from Armenian by Gevorg Harutyunyan***

## NORTHERN PERSIA (AZERBAIJAN) ON THE EVE AND DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

**Ruben Sahakyan\***

### **Abstract**

In recent decades, researchers have also started to address the military operations that took place in Northern Persia, in Atropatene (Azerbaijan), during the First World War. If the Caucasian Front<sup>1</sup> was considered a secondary front in the history of the world war, then the Persian direction was a tertiary one and was completely outside the attention of the Russian Supreme Command.

The memoirs<sup>2</sup> of Colonel, and later General, Vladimir Nikolay Poltavtsev, who served in various positions including Chief of Staff of the Azerbaijani Detachment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Rifle Brigade, and commander of the 66<sup>th</sup> Rifle Division, pertain to the events of 1913–1915 and 1917–1918.

In the previous issue, we presented the colonel's biography and his memoirs about the Armenian volunteer movement, particularly the 1<sup>st</sup> Druzhina.<sup>3</sup> The current memoirs cover two phases: from October 1913 until June 10, 1915, when military operations were taking place in Northern Persia, after which the brigade was transferred to the Russian-Turkish front in Western Armenia. Poltavtsev returned to Atropatene after receiving a new appointment, where he served from June 3, 1917, until April 17, 1918.<sup>4</sup>

In the preface, he warns the future reader that he wrote solely from memory, and therefore, some errors are possible.<sup>5</sup>

The “disorders” that began in Tabriz in 1909, which were actually the Persian Revolution<sup>6</sup>, served as an opportunity for the Russians to intervene, and Russian troops were sent into Persia.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The operational-strategic concept of the Caucasian Front came into circulation only in March 1917.

<sup>2</sup> The memoirs are titled: «Оккупация русскими войсками Азербайджана (Северной Персии) пред Великой войной и во время этой войны» (“The Occupation of Northern Persia (Azerbaijan) by Russian Troops on the Eve and During the Great War”). The memoirs were written on May 4, 1928, in Belgrade. Stamped: Русский Заграничный Исторический Архив. ПРАГА. PRAGUE. No. 7355. Ruský. Zahraniční historický Archiv”. The memoirs are preserved in the State Archives of the Russian Federation (SARF), fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5.

<sup>3</sup> Sahakyan 2025: 22-36.

<sup>4</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 1, sheet 17 back.

<sup>5</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 1 back.

The Russians appointed their loyal officials to key positions, including the General-Governor of Azerbaijan, Shuja-ud-Daulah, whose residence was in Tabriz. He was accompanied by a representative of the Persian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the *karguzar*, and the mayor.<sup>8</sup> Shuja-ud-Daulah presented himself as a loyal friend of the Russian Empire and even at the end of 1914, he appealed to the commander of the Azerbaijani Detachment, asking him to intercede with the Tsar so that Northern Azerbaijan would accept Russian citizenship. The Russian side rejected the request, considering it untimely.<sup>9</sup> Using Russian patronage, the General-Governor did not submit to the central authority and resorted to various machinations and embezzlements<sup>10</sup>. Poltavtsev admits that the General-Governor carried out the will and instructions of the Russians without any objection but did not believe in his loyalty to Russia.<sup>11</sup>

**Keywords:** First World War, Caucasian front, Northern Persia, (Azerbaijan) V. N. Poltavtsev, Genocide, Armenians, Assyrians, Tatars, Russian Revolutions, Disintegration of the Army, Bolsheviks.



Armenian Monastery of Saint Thaddeus. 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Modern photo)

<sup>6</sup> A revolution took place in Persia from 1905–1911, during which a *majlis* (parliament) was created and a constitution was adopted. In December 1911, the Shah's power was restored. For the participation of Armenians, see: Seyyed Said Jalali. 2008. Simonyan 2017.

<sup>7</sup> According to the Anglo-Russian agreement signed on August 18, 1907, the north of Persia came under Russian influence, the south came under British influence, and the center became a neutral zone. Strelyanov 2007: 9–46.

<sup>8</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 5 back.

<sup>9</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 10.

<sup>10</sup> International relations in the era of imperialism. 1931: 100.

<sup>11</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 2.



**Archbishop Nerses Melik-Tangyan:**  
Spiritual leader of the Armenians of  
Atropatene

In order to organize Poltavtsev's memoirs, we have divided them into sub-sections.

***The geographical location, natural and climatic conditions, economy, national and social composition, religion, occupations, and so on of Northern Persia***

Poltavtsev briefly presents the geographical location of Northern Persia, noting that the population is primarily situated in river valleys. They use an irrigation system to engage in horticulture and agriculture. The main source of irrigation is the Kotur River, a right tributary of the Aras.<sup>12</sup> The peasants rent the land from the beys. The rent could be changed arbitrarily by the owner.



**Local Iranian officials, 1912-1914.**

The Germans were active in Northern Persia. To this end, the "German Oriental Bank" was founded in Berlin in 1906. In 1909, the German supernumerary consular agent in Tabriz, W. Schoenemann, who was likely an intelligence officer, established commercial firms. The Germans and Austrians also founded a carpet factory here that machine-produced Persian-style carpets that were considerably cheaper than handmade ones.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 2 back.

<sup>13</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 5.



**I. Y. Korostovets (Korostovtsev)****Shah Zeli Sultan's son in Austrian military uniform**

Before the First World War, Russian businessmen began to exploit natural resources and land in the Gorgan<sup>14</sup> region, where Turkmen tribes lived. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed to the Russian envoy in Tehran, Korostovets<sup>15</sup>, to assist these businessmen. It was noted that “from a political point of view, the penetration of the Russian element, especially into this region, which will have great significance for us, is important”.<sup>16</sup> By 1914, the number of Russian settlers had reached around 20,000.<sup>17</sup>



**Persian Cossack Brigade in Mahabad, postcard from a photograph by Alexander Iyas, labeled “Sauj-Bulak (Mahabad), March 31, 1913.”**

<sup>14</sup> Gorgan is a city in the Central District of Gorgan County, Golestan province, Iran, serving as the capital of the province, the county, and the district.

<sup>15</sup> Korostovets (Korostovtsev) Ivan Yakovlevich (1862-1933), Russian diplomat and orientalist. Russian envoy to Persia (1913-1915).

<sup>16</sup> International relations in the era of imperialism 1934: 321-323.

<sup>17</sup> Red Archive. Historical journal. 1934. Volumes four-five: 87.



**Mahabad (Modern photo)**

In contrast to the valleys, where there is almost no snow, the mountains are snowy. For transportation, they use various pack animals, especially camels. The Urmia Lake is located almost in the center of the province, where two small steamboats belonging to the “Budaghyants Trading House” operate.<sup>18</sup>

The main administrative center is Tabriz, which is the residence of the general-governor. He had a Persian Cossack regiment, and from 1916, a division<sup>19</sup>, as well as *sarbaz* (Persian soldiers) who mainly performed police functions. The Germans, with the help of Swedish instructors, organized the Persian police.<sup>20</sup>



**Dervish**

The governor, who was appointed by the Shah, had almost unlimited power. However, this power did not extend over the Maku Khanate, whose Khan, Murtaza Kuli-Khan, was sympathetic to the Turks and had even secretly visited Germany to receive weapons and ammunition.<sup>21</sup> Considering the Khan’s pro-Turkish views, the Russians arrested him in late July 1914.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Kornilovskiy 2016: 72.

<sup>19</sup> See more details: Gokov 2014: 48-60; Gokov 2020: 83-93; Ter-Oganov 2012.; Gokov 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Yemelyanov 1923: 5.

<sup>21</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 5 back.

<sup>22</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 10 back.



**Mamed Amin Agha Piran (seated left), head of the Kurdish Piran tribe, August 11, 1913.**

The population of Northern Persia primarily consisted of Tatars, Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Shahsevans, a few smaller tribes, and a small number of Persians.<sup>23</sup> The Russians were mainly officials and military personnel. There was also a small number of Europeans.



**Armenian girls and women**

The Tatar population was Shiite, and they were dependent on the beys, who were protected by the local authorities. The Tatars were not friendly towards either the Russians or any non-Muslims.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 5.

<sup>24</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 3 back.

This attitude was understandable. They and other peoples considered the Russians to be occupiers, which was natural, since the Russians were the de facto rulers of the province. However, a “small detail” should be noted: unlike other nationalities, Poltavtsev presents the Tatars only in a positive light, on the one hand noting their extreme poverty, and on the other hand, their exceptional industriousness, which allows them to survive.<sup>25</sup>

According to Poltavtsev, the Tatars of the province were not particularly friendly towards the Turks due to religious differences. They showed sympathy towards the Russians, which Poltavtsev believed was not entirely sincere.



**Alexander Iyas and his escort of Cossacks, Turbete-Heyderi, 1901**

Poltavtsev estimates that the Kurds are the second largest population group in Atropatene. They are freedom-loving people who do not accept the oppression of authority and dislike work. Although they are subjects of Persia, they have a unique relationship with the authorities. They live in the mountains and are mainly engaged in animal husbandry and banditry. “They rob caravans, and sometimes, in large bandit groups, they attack villages and even cities, demanding ransom”.<sup>26</sup>

The Kurds live in tribes, submit to their beys, and often fight among themselves. The authorities’ efforts to subdue the Kurds were in vain; they even appealed to the Russians but achieved no results.<sup>27</sup>

It was widely believed that only the Russian vice-consul in Souj-Bulagh<sup>28</sup> had managed to communicate with the Kurds. Unfortunately, his trust was repaid with death, as he was killed by the Kurds<sup>29</sup>, which prompted a Russian punitive action.<sup>30</sup> Poltavtsev notes that the Kurds were Sunni Muslims but did not have mosques in their villages.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 3 back.

<sup>26</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 3 back.

<sup>27</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ijas Alexander Ivanovich (1869-1914/1915), military orientalist, colonel (06.12.1912).

<sup>29</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 5.

<sup>30</sup> Strelyanov 2007: 74.

<sup>31</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 4.

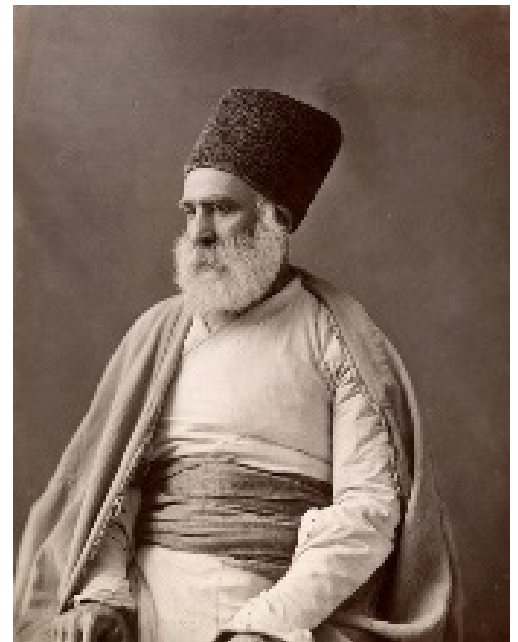




**Alexander Iyas with two Iranian officials, November 1902.**

Poltavtsev, to put it mildly, was not very friendly towards Armenians, as evidenced in the first part of his memoirs, which we referenced in our previous article. He showed a similar attitude towards the Assyrians. In general, the colonel was sympathetic to the Tatars. One can conclude that there were certain motives for this, which General F. G. Chernozubov, the commander of the Azerbaijani Detachment, had already revealed to General T. Nazarbekyan on April 24, 1915.<sup>32</sup>

Just like the Kurds, the semi-savage, bandit-like, and warlike Shahsevan Turkish tribe lives in a similar way in the northeastern part of Northern Persia. The latter frequently launched attacks on Russian border regions as well.<sup>33</sup> In 1912, General A. P. Fidarov<sup>34</sup> resolved the issue with them by “explaining” that Russian settlements should not be attacked. The Shahsevan swore that they would never raise arms against Russia and kept their oath, even during the First World War, despite the provocations and promises of Turkish emissaries.<sup>35</sup>



**Persian mullah. The 1870s**

<sup>32</sup> Sahakyan 2025: 16-17.

<sup>33</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 4.

<sup>34</sup> Fidarov Afko Patsievich (1859-1930), Lieutenant General (22.07.1916). Ossetian by nationality. He carried out diplomatic missions in Persia and Afghanistan. Head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Cossack Division (from 23.07.1910).

<sup>35</sup> Maslovsky 1934: 65-66.

**A. P. Fidarov****Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (1831-1896)**

According to Poltavtsev's account, Armenians primarily lived in cities and the villages near them. Their main occupations were trade and agriculture. They had strained relations with the Tatars and therefore sought support from Russians and foreigners.<sup>36</sup>

**Azadi Tower, Teheran (Modern photo)**

The colonel mentions the Assyrians, who were primarily Nestorian Christians<sup>37</sup>, and whose spiritual leader was Mar Shimun, who resided in Julamerk.<sup>38</sup> He notes that

<sup>36</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 4.

<sup>37</sup> The founder is Nestor, Archbishop of Constantinople (428-431).

<sup>38</sup> Mar Shimun XIX Benjamin (1885/1887-1918), Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, and a civil and military leader of the Nestorians.

the title of spiritual leader was hereditary. Both Russian and foreign missionaries were particularly interested in the Assyrians, seeking to convert them to their religious denomination by offering them financial resources and their patronage.<sup>39</sup>

### **The De Facto Authority**

In Northern Persia, all de facto power was in the hands of the Russians—consuls, military officials, and missionaries. The most important of these were the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the Consul General in Tabriz, the consul in Urmia, and the vice-consuls in Khoy, Souj-Bulagh, and Maku.<sup>40</sup>

In Poltavtsev's observation, the diplomats, unlike representatives of other powers, behaved arrogantly towards the local population, surrounded themselves with luxury, and were pedantic. They considered themselves to be in control of the situation. As an example, he cites the visit of the military deputy of the Caucasian Viceroy, Lieutenant General A. Z. Mishlayevsky, to Khoy. He did not visit the local vice-consul, G. V. Chirkov<sup>41</sup>, on the same day, which the diplomat was quick to report to the ministry, which then demanded an explanation from the viceroy. A similar incident had occurred with the commander of the Azerbaijani Detachment, General N. N. Voropanov.<sup>42</sup> Shuja-ud-Daulah submitted only to the Russian General Consulate, following its instructions and wishes while ignoring the central government.<sup>43</sup>

Poltavtsev notes that the consuls often interfered in the internal conflicts of the Kurdish tribes. They would provide money to one tribe or another, and sometimes even use the Russian military to protect them. Occasionally, a tribe patronized by the consuls would make peace with its enemy and become its ally<sup>44</sup>. In Poltavtsev's opinion, it was difficult to deal with the Kurds. "It is necessary to take into account that they are all bandits by nature, insidious and flattering when it is necessary for them, and then, when they get what they want, they cut off ties. They only respect force, and probably the Turkish authorities deal with them correctly".<sup>45</sup> The Kurdish tribes were united when it was necessary to take revenge on Christians.<sup>46</sup>

The military authority was represented by the commander of the Azerbaijani Detachment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Rifle Brigade, General Voropanov.<sup>47</sup> Poltavtsev

<sup>39</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 4 back.

<sup>40</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 5 back.

<sup>41</sup> Chirkov Georgy Vasilievich (1881-after 1929), diplomat. Consul General of Tabriz. Victim of Stalinist violence.

<sup>42</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 6.

<sup>43</sup> International relations in the era of imperialism 1931. Volume 4: 207.

<sup>44</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 8 and 8 back.

<sup>45</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 8 back.

<sup>46</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 8 back.

<sup>47</sup> Voropanov Nikolay Nikolayevich (1854-1918), Lieutenant General (08.05.1915). Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Rifle Brigade (19.07.1911-25.03.1915). Commander of the Azerbaijani detachment (1911-1913). Commander of the 66<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (25.03-08.05.1915).

describes his commander with contempt, stating that he was not at all interested in military affairs, surrounded himself with luxury, was overly strict, and was preoccupied with military drills (mushtra), but knew people very well. He accuses the general of dispersing the troops throughout various parts of the governorship and overburdening them with assignments, which made it impossible to conduct training exercises with the servicemen.<sup>48</sup> The headquarters of the occupation forces was located in Khoy.<sup>49</sup>



**Khoy city (modern photo)**

Poltavtsev does not mention the passive attitude of the military towards the locals. He describes two minor incidents, one of which ended with the death of a Persian police officer, but he prefers to remain silent about larger clashes.

For example, on January 25, 1914, the vice-consul of Ardabil, V. M. Pisarev, reported that a conflict had occurred with locals, after which the commander of the Russian detachment threatened to shell the neighborhood from which the attack came. On January 27, Foreign Minister S. D. Sazonov<sup>50</sup> telegraphed the Viceroy of the Caucasus, I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov<sup>51</sup>, suggesting that in such cases, fines should be used instead of bombardment.<sup>52</sup> In a telegram on January 31, the viceroy reported that the commander of the Ardabil detachment had been instructed to use artillery only in extreme cases and with his permission.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 6 back and 7.

<sup>49</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 7 back.

<sup>50</sup> Sazonov Sergey Dmitriyevich (1860-1927), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia (1910-1916).

<sup>51</sup> Vorontsov-Dashkov Ilarion Ivanovich (1837-1916), Russian statesman and military figure, general-adjutant (1916). Viceroy of the Caucasus and commander-in-chief of the troops of the Caucasian Military District, ataman of the Caucasian Cossack troops.

<sup>52</sup> International relations in the era of imperialism 1931: 249-250.

<sup>53</sup> International relations in the era of imperialism 1931: 320.





**Haft Cheshmeh Bridge (Ardabil) (modern photo)**

The third group of Russian representatives in Northern Persia were the clergy, who engaged in missionary activities. The mission was headed by Archimandrite Sergey<sup>54</sup>, who, in Poltavtsev's opinion, caused many problems. He was constantly in conflict with the Armenian clergy. Sergey also complained about the activities of French missionaries who were spreading Catholicism among the Assyrians.<sup>55</sup>



**Kurdish nomads, Mahabad, April 1913.**

### **Military-Political Situation on the Eve of the War**

After a brief presentation of the general administrative, political, and national situation in the province, Colonel Poltavtsev addresses the Russian-Turkish clash that occurred southwest of Urmia in August 1913. He tries to justify the Turks, noting that the

<sup>54</sup> Lavrov Alexei Petrovich (Sergey, 1878-1937). Graduated from the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. Ordained as a monk (1902). Head of the Urmia Mission (12.06.1904-01.07.1916). Victim of Stalinist repressions.

<sup>55</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 7.

Persian-Turkish border had not been clearly defined.<sup>56</sup> It is true that the demarcation process was underway, with representatives from Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, and Persia participating. The Russian representative was Minorsky.<sup>57</sup>



**A. P. Lavrov**



**V. F. Minorsky**

As Poltavtsev notes, the region was calm from October 1913 onwards. He points out that the operational and intelligence work was weak. The intelligence gathered by the consuls' agents was mainly related to the moods among the population.

For military intelligence, the headquarters of the Caucasian Military District had sent General Staff Colonel D. I. Andrievsky.<sup>58</sup> He was frequently on assignment, but the Azerbaijani detachment was unaware of the intelligence he collected. For similar purposes, Captains M. A. Kotovich and M. M. Zinkevich<sup>59</sup> were sent to Northern Persia. Poltavtsev's opinion is that the military intelligence officers did not succeed in gathering the necessary information.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 7 back.

<sup>57</sup> Minorsky Vladimir Fyodorovich (1877-1966), Russian orientalist and diplomat. First Secretary of the Russian Diplomatic Mission in Persia (1915). Professor at the University of London, then Cambridge (1939-1944).

<sup>58</sup> Andrievsky Mikhail Mikhailovich (1875-1951), Major General (16.01.1916). Commander of the 14<sup>th</sup> Turkestan Rifle Regiment (from 14.06.1915). Served in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia (1919-1920).

<sup>59</sup> Zinkevich Mikhail Mikhailovich (1883-1945), Major General (1920). Acting Chief of Staff of the Siberian Cossack Brigade (from 06.12.1915). Commander of the 12th Caucasian Border Infantry Regiment. Acting Chief of Staff of the Armenian Combined Arms Detachment (from 05.1918).

<sup>60</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 8.

**E. V. Sablin**

In reality, the diplomats were carrying out quite extensive operational and intelligence work, and it is likely that rivalry with the military prevented them from exchanging intelligence, which, in our opinion, was a mistake.

**M. M. Zinkevich**

For example, in a telegram dated January 11, 1914, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the First Secretary of the Russian diplomatic mission in Tehran, E. V. Sablin<sup>61</sup>, considered it necessary to support the Persian authorities of Azerbaijan because a serious Turkish-German intervention was planned in the near future. He deemed it necessary to strengthen the Russian contingent stationed in Northern Persia.<sup>62</sup>

After the start of the World War, it was observed that the Ottoman Empire, which had declared neutrality, was preparing frantically. The Kurds noticeably became more active, and some did not hide their hostility towards the Russians. The only “ally” was the Kurdish chieftain Simko<sup>63</sup> and a few smaller tribes.<sup>64</sup> It follows from Poltavtsev’s memoirs that one could not rely on Simko, who had become a chieftain illegally, since the principle of seniority had been violated in his assumption of power. On this basis, there was a serious conflict between Simko and his older brother Ahmed.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Sablin Evgeny Vasilyevich (1875-1949), Russian diplomat and politician.

<sup>62</sup> International relations in the era of imperialism 1934: 104.

<sup>63</sup> Simko (Սիմկո) Shikak (1887-1930), a leader of the Kurdish Shikak tribe. The Russian commander tried to use him in the fight against the Turks, but he failed. The tribal leader joined the Turks several times, but the Russians continued to pin their hopes on him. On March 3, 1918, Simko plotted to kill Mar-Shimun Benjamin, the spiritual leader of the Nestorian Assyrians who were fighting against the Turks, his brother David, the accompanying Russian officers, and 60 bodyguards. On March 28, he attacked, robbed, and killed about 150 residents of Vaspurakan retreating to Persia. According to the official version, he was killed on June 18, 1930, during a battle against the Persian army. According to other information, he was killed by his own people.

<sup>64</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 10 back.

<sup>65</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 9.

In August 1914, a clash occurred between Russians and Turks in the Bayazet region. In September, a clash with the Kurds took place near Dilman. The Russians surrounded a Kurdish bey fortified in a fortress in one of the Kurdish villages. The task of besieging the fortress was assigned to Simko, but during the night, the bey broke through the siege and escaped unharmed. It is assumed that Simko's Kurds, having reached an agreement, allowed the bey to leave.<sup>66</sup>



**E. V. Sablin**



**Fusil-Mitrailleur Chauchat Mle 1915 CSRG  
("Machine Rifle Model 1915 CSRG")**



**S. I. Zemtsov Sergei Ivanovich.  
During service in the Red Army**

It turned out that a large Turkish agent network was operating in Northern Persia. In the autumn, it spread a rumor that the Turks would soon arrive in Azerbaijan and drive out the beys along with the Russians who supported them. Believing this, the peasants refused to give their share of the harvest to their landlords, who then appealed to the consuls for help. The diplomats demanded that the commander of the Azerbaijani Detachment intervene, but the headquarters of the Caucasus Military District strictly forbade General Voropanov from having any part in solving the issue, ordering him to prepare for war and be guided by military considerations.<sup>67</sup>

The headquarters of the Caucasian Military District, which had lost its border agent network on the eve of the war, did not have clear information about Turkish plans<sup>68</sup>, and

<sup>66</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 11.

<sup>67</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 11 back.

<sup>68</sup> Maslovsky 1934: 47-48.

even suggested that the Azerbaijani detachment submit its considerations for a campaign to Van.<sup>69</sup>

The Kurds, however, were acting more decisively. They began to plunder villages and in October even attacked the city of Urmia. The commander of the regiment stationed there, Zemtsov<sup>70</sup>, who had 12 Cossack sotnyas at his disposal, immediately requested assistance. The 5<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Rifle Regiment was urgently sent from Khoy. After being forced to travel 185 versts<sup>71</sup>, it managed to repel the Kurds. Among the killed Kurds were Turkish soldiers and officers.<sup>72</sup> It is worth noting here that Zemtsov played a negative role during the July 1915 retreat from Van.

### **Atropatene During the War (1914-1915)**

After the Ottoman Empire entered the World War on October 16, 1914, General F. G. Chernozubov<sup>73</sup>, a military intelligence officer, was appointed commander of the Azerbaijani detachment, with Colonel Andrievsky<sup>74</sup> as his chief of staff. Major General T. Nazarbekyan<sup>75</sup> was appointed commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Rifle Brigade, with Colonel Poltavtsev as his chief of staff. Some changes were made to the detachment's composition, and the combat structure of the regiments was brought up to wartime standards.<sup>76</sup>

Since the Supreme Command considered the Caucasian front a secondary one, it began to transfer military units from the Caucasian Military District to the Western Front. The Azerbaijani detachment was primarily reinforced with mobilized reservists and militia units, which had a relatively low level of combat readiness.

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<sup>69</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 12.

<sup>70</sup> Zemtsov Sergei Ivanovich (1872-1928), colonel (06.12.1912). Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunzhensko-Vladikavkazsky Regiment (11.02.1914-25.01.1917). According to General T. Nazarbekyan: "Colonel Zemtsov was a very indecisive person." Sahakyan 2019: 281.

<sup>71</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 12.

<sup>72</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 12 back.

<sup>73</sup> Chernozubov Fyodor Grigoryevich (1863-1919), Lieutenant General (18.06.1915), military intelligence officer. Commander of the Azerbaijani detachment.

<sup>74</sup> Andrievsky Dmitry Ivanovich (1875-1951), Major General (03.07.1916). Chief of Staff of the Azerbaijani Detachment, Regimental Commander of the 14<sup>th</sup> Turkestan Rifle Regiment (14.06.1915-03.07.1916). Representative of the Armed Forces of South Russia, member of the staff of General N. N. Baratov in Transcaucasia (1918-1919), after whose defeat he settled in Armenia. Arrested and exiled to the Ryazan concentration camp with officers of the Armenian army. Later exiled abroad.

<sup>75</sup> Tovmas Nazarbekyan (Nazarbekov Foma, 1855-1931), Major General of the Russian Army (1906), Lieutenant General of the Armenian Army (1919). Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Rifle Brigade, then of the division. Commander of the Armenian troops during the battles of Sardarapat, Bash Aparan, and Gharakilisa (05.1918).

<sup>76</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 10.



Poltavtsev mentions the arrival in Khoy of a volunteer *druzhina* (militia unit)<sup>77</sup> under the command of Andranik. The *druzhina* was mainly made up of Western Armenians, refugees, and volunteers. Of Andranik, he writes: “Andranik is a well-known *chetnik*<sup>78</sup> in Turkey who caused great trouble for the Turks with his attacks and uprisings and successfully evaded them.”<sup>79</sup>

The Russian command decided to use the Kurdish bey Abdurrezak<sup>80</sup> for its own purposes. He was particularly patronized by the commander of the Azerbaijani detachment, General F. G. Chernozubov, who dreamed of becoming the governor of “Kurdistan,” with Abdurrezak as the leader of this new entity. Abdurrezak received 300 rubles per month from the Russians.<sup>81</sup>



**Maku (modern photo)**

<sup>77</sup> Armenian militia units are known as groups, regiments, and armies, and in official reports as *druzhina*.

<sup>78</sup> Chetnik (Serbian: četa, “company”, and Turkish: çete, “gang, detachment”), the name of the Balkan liberation movement, rebels, and militias.

<sup>79</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 12 back.

<sup>80</sup> Abdurrezak Badrkhan (1864-1918), a politician of Kurdish origin. During World War I, he tried to organize a Kurdish uprising, but in vain.

<sup>81</sup> NAA, fund 45, inventory 1, file 1, sheet 17 back.



**Shamshadinov Ali-Ashraf-aga**

It is worth noting that during the war, the Russians also tried to use the chieftain Mustafa Bey, who was given an estate in the Maku region. However, in December 1914, the bey defected to the Turkish side and fought against the Russians.<sup>82</sup>

Another Kurdish bey, Major General Ashraf Shamshadinov<sup>83</sup>, who was in Russian service, was given 50,000 rubles to conduct anti-Turkish propaganda and win over the Kurds. The money was wasted without any result<sup>84</sup>. This shows that the Russian General Staff had done inadequate intelligence work in the Ottoman Empire and had a condescending attitude towards its long-time adversary.

Viceroy of the Caucasus N. N. Romanov (the younger)<sup>85</sup> tried again with a special order to win over the Kurds at the expense of the Armenians, but it was in vain. This indicates that the specialists and military intelligence were unable to understand that it was impossible to make the Kurds an ally of Russia.

Military operations in Atropatene began at the Khanasor Pass, after which the Russians advanced to Bashkale and Saray. As Poltavtsev notes, the enemy had small forces, mainly gendarme and border patrol units. He mentions the surrender of four Kurdish beys, whom the Russians promised personal and property security if they handed over their weapons and ammunition. The beys “kept their promise,” but mainly handed over old or useless weapons.<sup>86</sup>

The detachments of Simko and his brother Ahmed operated alongside the Azerbaijani detachment. Their participation was motivated by a desire to loot. The Kurds were mainly interested in livestock, and after plundering them, they would disappear.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>82</sup> NAA, fund 818, inventory 1, file 553, sheet 15.

<sup>83</sup> Shamshadinov Ali-Ashraf-aga (1851-?), major general (06.12.1914), Kurd by nationality.

<sup>84</sup> Sahakyan 2010: 28.

<sup>85</sup> Romanov Nikolai Nikolaevich (the younger, 1856-1929), Grand Duke, General of Cavalry (01.01.1901). Viceroy of the Caucasus (23.08.1915-02.04.1917).

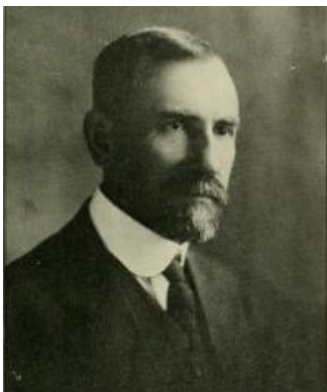
<sup>86</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 14.

<sup>87</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 13 and 13 back.



**Assyrian Church of Mart-Maryam (Urmia) (modern photo)**

In the occupied territories, only the Armenians, Assyrians, and Jews remained among the civilian population. The Muslim population had left with the Turkish army.<sup>88</sup> The successful operations of the Azerbaijani detachment were unexpectedly suspended due to the heavy fighting that had begun in the Sarighamish region.<sup>89</sup> According to the hasty order of General A. Z. Mishlayevsky, the Viceroy's military assistant, which was not confirmed by any operational intelligence, the Azerbaijani detachment began to retreat, despite having successfully captured more than 200 versts of territory.<sup>90</sup> Following the troops were the Christian population, the consuls, and the Persian officials. In Urmia, only the American missionary Shedd<sup>91</sup> remained.



**W. A. Shedd William**

The Azerbaijani detachment's retreat was hasty. The situation of the Christians—Armenians and Assyrians—who had left their homes was particularly dire. Poltavtsev testifies: "Our columns were accompanied by a mob of half-naked, hungry Christians, which made the advance very difficult and affected our operational calculations. Many of the refugees died along the way".<sup>92</sup> As we can see, what troubled the colonel was that the refugees were hindering the army's retreat, and there is no compassion or pity shown.

The Russian vice-consul in Urmia, Vvedensky<sup>93</sup>, forbade

<sup>88</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 14.

<sup>89</sup> The Ottoman Minister of War, Enver Pasha, initiated an operation around the city of Sarighamish, which ultimately aimed to capture the Transcaucasus (09.12.1914-05.01.1915). As a result, the Ottoman 3<sup>rd</sup> Army was almost completely destroyed.

<sup>90</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 14 back.

<sup>91</sup> Shedd William Ambrose (1865-1918), an American Presbyterian missionary (Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission). U.S. Consul in Urmia (1918).

<sup>92</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 14. Khosroyeva 2004: 77.

<sup>93</sup> Vvedensky Pavel Petrovich (1880-1938). Vice-consul of Urmia and Khoy (1914-1915).



the Assyrians from evacuating to ensure the smooth retreat of the Russian troops. As a result, a large number of civilians died.<sup>94</sup> In effect, the diplomat sacrificed his natural ally, the Assyrians, for state interests. As a result, 1,000 people were massacred in Urmia, 2,000 died from hunger and disease, and about 15,000 sought refuge in the American missionary mission.<sup>95</sup>

After crushing the enemy at Sarighamish, the Azerbaijani detachment began to retake the lost territories. Poltavtsev reports that in the Dilman region, the Turks gathered about 1,000 Armenians and Assyrians for fortification work, and when the Russian Cossack units began to approach the city, they were all brutally massacred.<sup>96</sup>

Citing Turkish eyewitnesses, the colonel reports how the Christians were dealt with. First, they were beheaded, and their bodies were thrown into a well. However, finding this method of killing “ineffective,” they “stood everyone in a line facing the wall with their hands tied and smashed their heads with pickaxes. When the Cossacks approached, fearing they couldn’t kill everyone, they gathered them all into a pile and struck them with pickaxes wherever they could. Nevertheless, a few survived”.<sup>97</sup>

The retreat of the Azerbaijani detachment was stopped by an order from the Viceroy, who had been alerted by Hakob Zavryan (Yakov Zavriev), a doctor with the 1<sup>st</sup> Armenian Druzhina and one of the initiators of the volunteer movement.<sup>98</sup> Nazarbekyan received an order to return to Khoy and defend the city. During the retreat, Simko went over to the Turks. From the front line, it was reported that Simko had been seen on the Turkish side, with the Order of St. Stanislaus on his chest.<sup>99</sup>

After a series of successful battles, the Russian army recaptured Tabriz and “dealt with the Turkish sympathizers”.<sup>100</sup> After these victories, Simko, seeing that the scales had tipped in favor of the Russians, presented himself to General Chernozubov, who sent him to Tiflis.<sup>101</sup> Vvedensky came to Simko’s defense, ordering that he be treated with respect, regardless of the fact that Simko’s men had participated in the massacre of Christians in the Salmast province.<sup>102</sup> It should be noted that Vvedensky was suspected of bribery.<sup>103</sup> There were also doubts about Abdurrezak, who was later sent to Yekaterinodar (now Krasnodar).

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<sup>94</sup> Genis 2003: 38.

<sup>95</sup> Genis 2003: 39.

<sup>96</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 15 back.

<sup>97</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 16.

<sup>98</sup> See his biography: Sahakyan 2025: 23.

<sup>99</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 15.

<sup>100</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 15 back.

<sup>101</sup> In fact, Simko was saved from the revenge of the Armenians, as well as the Assyrians. The Kurdish chieftain had been “imprisoned” in a hotel in Tbilisi; Faris 2022: 102-103.

<sup>102</sup> Genis 2003: 43.

<sup>103</sup> Genis 2003: 52-54.

After recovering the lost territories, the Azerbaijani detachment did not undertake any operations until April 10. On the same day, General Chernozubov ordered an enhanced reconnaissance mission to be conducted south of Dilman and west of Khoy. On April 10, 1915, by his order, the forces in the Dilman region were reinforced with the 6<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Rifle Regiment and a battalion from the 8<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Rifle Regiment.<sup>104</sup>

The reconnaissance conducted to the west of the Russians ran into a small Turkish force. To the south, however, superior Turkish forces forced the reconnaissance detachment to retreat.<sup>105</sup> It turned out that the “unexpected” opponent was the Gallipoli composite division under the command of Halil Bey.<sup>106</sup> The division’s month-long march from Constantinople had escaped the notice of Russian intelligence. In Poltavtsev’s estimation, it was one of the best Turkish divisions.<sup>107</sup>



**Halil Kut**

As we noted in the previous article, Colonel Poltavtsev worked to underestimate not only the military talent of his direct superior, Major General T. Nazarbekyan, but also the bravery of the Russian soldiers and Armenian volunteers, which was demonstrated during the Battle of Dilman. The colonel does not even mention who commanded the battle from April 16-18, 1915, nor the role of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armenian Volunteer Druzhina. He makes no hint that, thanks to the victory, Transcaucasia was saved from a Turkish invasion. It is likely that in emigration, he considered it superfluous to mention Nazarbekyan’s role. This likely validates the suspicions that he was a Turkish agent<sup>108</sup>.

Poltavtsev contents himself with only noting that the enemy suffered heavy losses but praises the Turks for their ability to skillfully evade pursuit.<sup>109</sup>

The victory caused panic among the German community in Tehran. The gendarmerie, the Persian Cossack Brigade, and Armenian self-defense detachments were stationed in the capital. On April 18, the panic was so great that some of the Germans preferred to spend the night at the American diplomatic mission in Tehran. The German ambassador and envoy even asked the Shah for protection.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 15.

<sup>105</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 16.

<sup>106</sup> Halil Kut (Halil Pasha, 1882-1957), Ottoman Turkish military commander and politician. One of the organizers of the Armenian Genocide. He also crossed into neighboring Persia and massacred Armenians, Assyrians, and Persians.

<sup>107</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 16 back.

<sup>108</sup> Sahakyan 2016: 210-215.

<sup>109</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 16.

<sup>110</sup> International relations in the era of imperialism. Series III. 1935: 319.



**Sultan Ahmad Shah (1898 - 1930)**  
- the last Shah of Iran from the  
Qajar dynasty (1909-1925).

After defeating Halil, T. Nazarbekyan was ordered to pursue the enemy. The brigade crossed from Atropatene into the Ottoman Empire, into the province of Vaspurakan, and encamped near the city of Van.<sup>111</sup>

### ***Atropatene in 1917-1918***

From June 10, 1915, Colonel Poltavtsev participated in military operations in Western Armenia. On June 3, 1917, he was transferred to the 7<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Army Corps stationed in Atropatene as its senior quartermaster<sup>112113</sup>. The corps was commanded by Lieutenant General Vadbolsky<sup>114</sup>, who had previously headed the Persian Cossack Brigade. Its chief of staff was Major General H. Hakhverdyan<sup>115</sup>. The corps was composed of several units, including the Caucasian Combined Infantry Division commanded by Major General Karpov<sup>116</sup>, the 4<sup>th</sup>

Caucasian Cossack Division, the 4<sup>th</sup> Kuban Cossack Division, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Trans-Baikal Cossack Brigades, the 1<sup>st</sup> Border Cavalry Regiment, a separate light artillery division, the Urmia Flotilla, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kars Infantry Regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Border Infantry Regiment, the Georgian Infantry Regiment, the Armenian Brigade (3 battalions), and the 1<sup>st</sup> Assyrian Battalion.<sup>117</sup>

Poltavtsev reports that the formation of an Assyrian militia battalion had begun, commanded by Agha Petros.<sup>118</sup> The colonel claims that Agha Petros was a criminal who had fled the United States.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>111</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 16 back.

<sup>112</sup> A high-ranking officer who chooses the route of the army, the escorts, and the placement of the army in the camp.

<sup>113</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 16 back.

<sup>114</sup> Vadbolsky Nikolai Petrovich (1869-1944), Lieutenant General (06.12.1915). Chief of the Persian Cossack Brigade (1909-1914). Commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Army Corps (from 25.04.1917).

<sup>115</sup> Hakhverdyan Hovhannes (Hakhverdov Ivan, 1873-1931), Major General of the Russian Army (21.06.1916), Lieutenant General of the Armenian Army (1919). Chief of Staff of the 7<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Army Corps (renamed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Army Corps, 20.02.-24.06.1917). Minister of War of the Republic of Armenia (15.07.1918-04.1919). Assistant to the Minister of War (Deputy, 05.1920-11.1920).

<sup>116</sup> Karpov Vladimir Kirillovich (1864-after 1931), Lieutenant General (02.04.1917). Commander of the Caucasian Combined Infantry Division (02.04.-12.08.1917). Acting Commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Separate Corps (12.01-19.04.1918).

<sup>117</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 17 back.

<sup>118</sup> Agha Petros (Petros Elia Bazits, 1880-1932): Commander of the Assyrian militia units. Freelance translator at the Russian Consulate in Urmia.

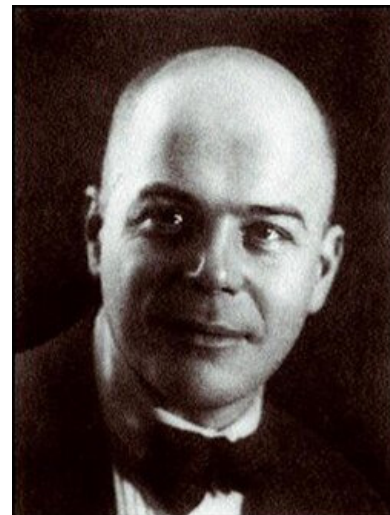
<sup>119</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 17.

According to Poltavtsev's assessment, nothing out of the ordinary had occurred in Atropatene during his two-year absence.<sup>120</sup> Military operations were mainly confined to the southern part of the province. Most of the warlike Kurds had left, and those who remained had submitted to the Russians. From January 31, 1916, navigation was organized on Lake Urmia and Lake Van. The Urmia Flotilla consisted of 22 military and cargo ships and boats of various capacities. As of January 3, 1917, the flotilla's commander was Captain II Rank Dmitry Ivanov, with three officers and 110 sailors and senior enlisted personnel under his command.<sup>121</sup>

The colonel notes that there was a large number of Armenian and Assyrian refugees from the Ottoman Empire in Atropatene, most of whom were in an extremely poor state. Poltavtsev complains that the refugees, taking advantage of the protection of Christian representatives, were harassing the Tatars.<sup>122</sup> In reality, the former refugees simply wanted to reclaim their plundered property.



**A. F. Kerensky**



**V. B. Shklovsky**

The situation changed drastically after the February Revolution of 1917.<sup>123</sup> The laws adopted by the Petrograd Soviet and later the Provisional Government undermined military discipline. Military councils—committees—were organized in the troops, which effectively controlled the commanders' actions and orders. According to Poltavtsev's testimony: "The corps committee had the right to interfere with economic operations and orders, demanded the removal of certain superiors, and made sure that superiors did not use cars for personal purposes...".<sup>124</sup> The collapse of discipline led to a situation in June 1917 where military masses looted shops, and it was impossible to stop them. The only positive aspect was that the banditry was not accompanied by human casualties.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>120</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 16 back.

<sup>121</sup> Chernikov 1999: 97.

<sup>122</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 17.

<sup>123</sup> Order of the Petrograd Soviet 1917: No. 1. 1917; Declaration of the Rights of a Soldier. 1917.

<sup>124</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 18.

<sup>125</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 18.

In his previous memoirs, Poltavtsev had spoken with praise about the military committees established in Armenian units, which, unlike the Russian ones, did not interfere with command orders.<sup>126</sup>

On June 18, an attack along the entire front began by order of the corps commander. This coincided with the Russian offensive on the Eastern Front, known as the “Kerensky Offensive”<sup>127</sup> or the “Summer Offensive”.<sup>128</sup> As on the European front, the offensive on the Asian front ended unsuccessfully.

Initially, the attack in Atropatene was quite successful. The Assyrian battalion pushed back the Turks, but the 1<sup>st</sup> Border Infantry Regiment, which was supposed to perform the same action, did not support the Assyrians, believing the combat mission was resolved. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Trans-Baikal Cossack Brigade advanced without combat security, was fired upon by the Kurds, and suffered losses. Enraged, the soldiers destroyed several villages.<sup>129</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Kars Infantry Regiment refused to attack, and the Georgian Infantry Regiment retreated after some actions, explaining that they were exhausted.<sup>130</sup>

The Armenian battalions operated more effectively, capturing four enemy cannons. However, unknown forces spread false rumors that Turks had appeared in the rear, causing the Armenians to retreat in a hurry.<sup>131</sup>

On July 1, General H. Hakhverdyan received a new appointment<sup>132</sup>, and Poltavtsev replaced him as chief of staff.

After the failure of the June offensive, the unprecedented collapse of discipline continued. As one of many examples, Poltavtsev notes that the field service telegraph office employees switched to a two-hour workday.<sup>133</sup> Most of the soldiers were engaged in speculation. According to Viktor Shklovsky’s<sup>134</sup> observation, who was sent to Northern Persia by the Provisional Government, “the army was slowly rotting”.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 1, sheet 12.

<sup>127</sup> Kerensky Alexander Fyodorovich (1881-1970), Russian politician and Minister-Chairman of the Provisional Government (July-November 1917).

<sup>128</sup> The offensive on the Eastern Front took place from June 18 to July 19, 1917.

<sup>129</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 18 and 18 back.

<sup>130</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 18 back.

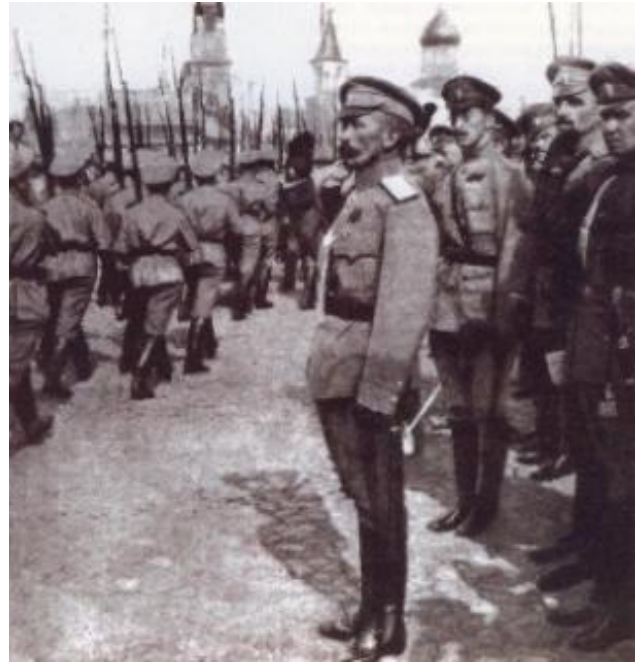
<sup>131</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 18 back.

<sup>132</sup> He was appointed commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Finnish (24.06-10.10.1917) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Finnish Rifle Division (after 10.10.1917).

<sup>133</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 19 back.

<sup>134</sup> Shklovsky Viktor Borisovich (1893-1984), Russian and Soviet writer, literary scholar, critic, and film scholar. Assistant to the Commissar of the Provisional Government.

<sup>135</sup> Shklovsky 1923: 125.

**N. N. Nazarov****L. G. Kornilov**

On August 20, Major General Nazarov<sup>136</sup> took over as chief of staff, while Poltavtsev became the quartermaster general.<sup>137</sup> This new appointment was likely an insult to the colonel, as he portrays the new chief of staff in his memoirs as an intriguer who disrupted the normal functioning of the staff.<sup>138</sup>

Poltavtsev placed some hope in General Kornilov<sup>139</sup>, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, who took drastic steps to restore discipline in the army. In the colonel's opinion, Kornilov succeeded to some extent in restoring discipline, but this was thwarted by Kerensky.<sup>140</sup>

At the end of August, without any apparent reason, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kars Infantry Regiment panicked and abandoned its positions overnight, leaving behind about 80 wounded, as well as its weapons, uniforms, and other equipment.<sup>141</sup> It took three days to reassemble the entire regiment. The Turks did not immediately occupy the positions, suspecting a Russian trick. When they were convinced that the enemy had left for some reason, they occupied the positions on the second day.<sup>142</sup> The troops were forced to occupy new

<sup>136</sup> Nazarov Nikolay Mikhailovich (1876-1918), Major General (21.10.1915). Commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Army Corps.

<sup>137</sup> Quartermaster General (German: Generalquartiermeister – chief supply officer), the highest position in the Russian and other armies.

<sup>138</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 19 back.

<sup>139</sup> Kornilov Lavr Georgiyevich (1870-1918), Russian military leader, cavalry general (27.06.1917), military intelligence officer. Commander of the troops of the Petrograd Military District (02.03-29.04.1917). Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army (19.07-08.1917).

<sup>140</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 19 back.

<sup>141</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 20.

<sup>142</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 20.



positions 20 versts away.<sup>143</sup> Poltavtsev was assigned to investigate the reasons for the abandonment of the positions. He found that the temporary division commander, Major General Khilchenko<sup>144</sup>, was not at fault, and the real culprit or culprits remained unknown.<sup>145</sup>



**I. V. Savitsky**



**G. G. Khilchenko**

In September 1917, the Caucasian Combined Infantry Division was transferred to the North Caucasus and was replaced by the 66<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division under the command of Lieutenant General I. Savitsky.<sup>146</sup> Other units, including the Armenian brigade, were also transferred from Persia.<sup>147</sup> Soldiers who had completed their service were demobilized. As a result, there was a shortage of combat personnel, and the number of soldiers in a company fell to 40-50.<sup>148</sup>

The so-called “revolutionary” battalion, which was under Bolshevik influence, caused a further decline in discipline. Poltavtsev notes that while it was possible to talk and reason with the soldiers who had been transferred or demobilized—those who were battle-hardened and understood the meaning of military discipline—it was impossible to reach any agreement with the soldiers of the new battalion. The colonel’s description: “They were real hooligans... They immediately introduced a Bolshevik mood”.<sup>149</sup> The soldiers would use threats to force doctors to send them to the rear as “sick.” A large number of them were sent on official business by the military committee, supposedly to bring literature to the division, and most never returned.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>143</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 20.

<sup>144</sup> Khilchenko Grigory Grigorievich (1867-?), Major General (December 31, 1914). Brigade commander of the Combined Caucasian Infantry Division (since March 31, 1917).

<sup>145</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 20 and 20 back.

<sup>146</sup> Savitsky Ippolit Viktorovich (1863-1941), Lieutenant General (19.02.1917). Commander of the 66<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (26.10.1915-12.10.1917).

<sup>147</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 20 back.

<sup>148</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 20 back.

<sup>149</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 20 back.

<sup>150</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 21.

It was likely at the instigation of these “revolutionary” soldiers that local stalls in Urmia were looted again in September 1917. As before, the investigation produced no results.

The final blow to the combat readiness of the troops in Atropatene came at the end of October when the Cossack regiments, which were relatively disciplined units, were sent to the Caucasus for rest. Only the infantry and artillery remained on the front.<sup>151</sup>

In late October 1917, Poltavtsev was appointed commander of the 66<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division<sup>152</sup>, with Colonel Ern<sup>153</sup> as his chief of staff.

According to Poltavtsev’s testimony, the soldiers refused to engage in military exercises or even build their winter quarters. From this, one can infer that the soldiers intended to leave Persia before winter. The colonel complains that there were only 2-3 officers per company, stating, “All the best officers, who were strict and demanding, had been dismissed by the committees, or had left without waiting to be dismissed. The non-commissioned officers did the same”.<sup>154</sup> As a result, an extremely difficult moral and psychological situation had developed even between the officers and soldiers. There were constant scandals, arguments, and provocations. Poltavtsev observed that the instigators of these scandals were non-commissioned officers—former gendarmes and police officers<sup>155</sup>—who, in this way, sought to ensure their physical survival, gain the favor of the soldiers, and avoid persecution.<sup>156</sup>

At that time, the influence of the Bolsheviks was gradually growing in the army. However, the army corps committee and the commissar declared themselves to be Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs) and worked to control the situation and prevent Bolshevik extremes.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, the Bolshevik influence grew day by day. By November, the Petrograd Bolshevik press was widespread in the trenches. The military committees did not put up any fight against the Bolshevik propaganda.<sup>158</sup>

General Savitsky, whose relationship with the corps committee was deteriorating daily, was forced by the decline in discipline to send all the artillery deep into the rear to

<sup>151</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 21.

<sup>152</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 21.

<sup>153</sup> Ern Nikolai Franzcevice (1879-1972), colonel (15.06.1915). Commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Seversky Dragoon Regiment (20.12.1916-?). Lieutenant General of the Paraguayan Army, Professor of the General Staff Academy. Participant in the war with Bolivia (1932-1935).

<sup>154</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 21 back.

<sup>155</sup> On July 7, 1917, a joint meeting of the Transcaucasian workers, peasants, and military centers was convened under the chairmanship of D. Donskoy, the military and naval commissar of the Transcaucasian Special Committee, where it was decided to dismiss all gendarmerie and police officers from service, strip them of their ranks, and send them to the active army as privates. See: Sahakyan, Sargsyan 2019: 91.

<sup>156</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 21 back.

<sup>157</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 21 back.

<sup>158</sup> Faris 2022: 130.



Dilman and Khoy. In Poltavtsev's opinion, this was an unnecessary decision, as the artillery was not in any danger.<sup>159</sup> However, subsequent events showed that the commander's decision was appropriate.

In late December, delegates from the 261<sup>st</sup> Akhulginsky Infantry Regiment came to Poltavtsev and demanded to be pulled from their positions, arguing that their continued presence there was meaningless. Even the military committee couldn't influence their decision. Under Bolshevik influence, the 269<sup>th</sup> Groznensky Infantry Regiment chose new commanders, disregarding rank and military title. This action was called "democratization"<sup>160</sup>. Poltavtsev's assessment: "The Bolshevik agents did their work".<sup>161</sup>

The chief of staff of the 66<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Colonel Ern, and the corps commissar went to Mosul to conclude an armistice with the Turks.<sup>162</sup> The delegates negotiated with the chief of staff of the Turkish army corps, a German major, who informed them about the peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk<sup>163</sup> between Soviet Russia and the countries of the Quadruple Alliance, which the troops and command stationed in Northern Persia were completely unaware of.<sup>164</sup>

On December 25, the order to retreat was received. At the same time, General Lebedinsky<sup>165</sup> took command of the Caucasian Front. In Urmia, Poltavtsev took charge of forming a military detachment from Armenians and Assyrians. From the beginning, he questioned the combat qualities of these national units, calling them "gangs" that would be difficult to fight with. In these conditions, the Kurds and Tatars became more active. The latter attacked Armenian settlements, damaging telegraph lines and the railroad. At the same time, delegates, probably Bolsheviks, arrived and tried to take the 66<sup>th</sup> Division to Tiflis, supposedly to protect the "conquests" of the revolution.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 22 back.

<sup>160</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 22 back.

<sup>161</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 22 back.

<sup>162</sup> The memo is misleading or was unaware that the Russian-Turkish armistice on the Caucasian front had already been signed (05.12.1917).

<sup>163</sup> The negotiations on the Brest-Litovsk Peace were held between Soviet Russia and the countries of the Quadruple Alliance, which resulted in the signing of a peace treaty (03.03.1918). The Soviet government undertook to strengthen the army and navy, and Western Armenia, along with Ardahan, Batum, and Kars, was given to the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>164</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 23.

<sup>165</sup> Lebedinsky Evgeny Vasilevich (1879-after 1922), Major General (11.03.1916). Chief of Staff of the 7<sup>th</sup> Caucasian Army Corps (13.08.1917-?). Acting Chief of Staff of the Caucasian Front (from 05.10.1917). Commander of the Caucasian Front (28.12.1917-14.05.1918).

<sup>166</sup> SARF, fund R-6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 25 back.



**Bandar Abbas (modern photo)**

On December 25, 1917, Poltavtsev received an order to evacuate the division with all its depots to Urmia. He wrote in his memoirs, “I gave the appropriate order, although I knew it would not be carried out”.<sup>167</sup> On December 26, the Akhulginsky Regiment, under Bolshevik influence, moved on its own initiative to Bender-Abbas on the shore of Lake Urmia to reach the main railway station at Sharafkhaneh by boat.<sup>168</sup>

The situation forced the Armenians, Georgians, and Assyrians to form their own military units. In Urmia, three Assyrian battalions were formed, which, together with the existing one, were united into an Assyrian brigade. One company of 80 Armenians was also formed<sup>169</sup>, as was one officer battalion of Russians. The situation had become extremely tense, and the Kurds were becoming more active in northern Urmia.<sup>170</sup>

The brigade’s chief of staff was Colonel Sinelnikov.<sup>171</sup> According to Poltavtsev’s information, Sinelnikov was accused of embezzling the brigade’s funds, though this was never proven<sup>172</sup>. In Poltavtsev’s opinion, Sinelnikov and Agha Petros were demanding money and weapons from him without presenting any accountability. He was convinced that these were not for the new battalions but for “gangs.” The colonel believed that Agha Petros and Sinelnikov were working together. As noted before, Poltavtsev had a passive attitude toward the Armenians and now the Assyrians. As an example, he cites an attack on a military warehouse organized by Assyrians in February 1918.<sup>173</sup> One can

<sup>167</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 23 back.

<sup>168</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 24.

<sup>169</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 24 back.

<sup>170</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 25.

<sup>171</sup> Sinelnikov Evgeny Victorovich (1875-?), Colonel (06.12.1916). Acting Chief of Staff of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Plastun Brigade (20.09.1917).

<sup>172</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 26.

<sup>173</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 26 back.

assume that Agha Petros had initiated the attack because Poltavtsev had constantly delayed providing weapons and supplies to the Assyrian brigade.

Poltavtsev ordered a rifle platoon to confiscate the telegraph equipment, but they did not carry out the assignment, claiming that about 50 riflemen and about 100 armed Assyrians had prevented them. According to Poltavtsev's information, in reality, there were about 15 officials and 30 Assyrians in the platoon.<sup>174</sup>

According to other information, the reason for the clashes in Urmia from February 9-11 was the local Tatars, who attacked a transport carrying ammunition.<sup>175</sup> This was preceded by the Tatars' attack on Russian soldiers returning home at the Shamkhor station from January 9-12.<sup>176</sup>

It is clear that all of this was led and directed by Ottoman agents. However, according to Poltavtsev's memoirs, the attack was carried out by Assyrians led by Agha Petros.<sup>177</sup>

In an effort to end the fighting, a consultation was held at the home of the Russian Vice-Consul in Urmia, Nikitin.<sup>178</sup> The meeting was attended by Lieutenant General Karpov, Colonel Poltavtsev, Mar-Shimun, Agha Petros, American missionary Shedd, and the head of the French hospital. This meeting and another the next day had no significant results.<sup>179</sup> Agha Petros demanded the disarmament of the Persian Cossack Brigade. The Persian Cossack squadron and Russian instructors in Urmia were surrounded by Assyrians. The participants of the consultation decided to meet the next day.<sup>180</sup>

The next meeting took place at Agha Petros's residence. Colonel Poltavtsev describes the behavior of the Tatar delegates with admiration. They were restrained and dignified, and even showed contempt, "realizing that the force was not on their side and that they had nothing left but to submit to fate".<sup>181</sup> In reality, the Tatars were impatiently awaiting the Turkish army, so they did not react in any way and did not want to escalate the situation further.

The next meeting took place at the home of the American Consul, Shedd. The colonel presented Agha Petros's position with indignation and, by his own admission, tried to soften his demands. Eventually, an ultimatum was drafted, but the parties, citing various reasons, refused to sign it.

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<sup>174</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 25 back.

<sup>175</sup> Faris 2019: 26.

<sup>176</sup> Mukhanov 2017: 28.

<sup>177</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 26.

<sup>178</sup> Nikitin Vasily Petrovich (1885-1960), Russian orientalist and historian. Vice-consul of Urmia (since 1917).

<sup>179</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 27 and 27 back.

<sup>180</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 27.

<sup>181</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 27.

After this and other events, Poltavtsev handed over his duties<sup>182</sup> to Colonel Kuzmin.<sup>183</sup> He organized the Azerbaijani Special Detachment from Armenians, Assyrians, and Russian officers<sup>184</sup>, whose chief of staff was Colonel Goretsky.<sup>185</sup>

After handing over command, on February 16, 1918, Poltavtsev rushed to leave Urmia with the corps staff. Arriving at Gyulman-khane and then Terser-khane, they learned about the looting carried out by the soldiers of the 66<sup>th</sup> division. Each of them had “taken” up to 16 blankets, 2 to 3 boxes of canned meat, and so on, so that one wagon or open railway car was needed for every 8 soldiers.<sup>186</sup>

The Russian depots, which contained a large quantity of various items and goods, were guarded by Turkish prisoners of war, who, according to Poltavtsev, behaved politely. The colonel was surprised that they vigilantly guarded the depots and did not allow them to be looted. Poltavtsev, no longer hiding his friendly attitude toward the Turks, concludes that the prisoners of war did this not because they were waiting for their own people, but because they were conscientious people.<sup>187</sup> Regarding the polite behavior of the prisoners of war, it was a cunning move typical of the Turks, as otherwise they would have faced a similar reaction from the Russians. Poltavtsev was not even surprised that the prisoners of war were tasked with guarding the depots.

After some difficulties, Poltavtsev and the others arrived in Julfa on February 28. There, they learned that Simko had treacherously killed Mar-Shimun and his allies.<sup>188</sup> In his later memoirs, Poltavtsev avoids describing the combat operations of the Azerbaijani Special Detachment organized by Colonel Kuzmin. He only reports that he met him in Rostov in 1919.<sup>189</sup> Kuzmin managed to reach Mesopotamia, where the British were located.<sup>190</sup> The detachment was composed of Assyrians, Armenians, and Russian officers, as well as Armenian fighters who had retreated from Van.<sup>191</sup> The colonel does not mention General Andranik’s capture of Khoy, which made it possible for the Armenian and Assyrian refugees in a difficult situation in Northern Persia to be saved and reach Baquba in Iraq. Poltavtsev reports that the Azerbaijani Special Detachment

<sup>182</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 28.

<sup>183</sup> Kuzmin Konstantin Nikandorovich (1869-before 1919), Colonel (21.01.1916). Commander of the Azerbaijani Special Detachment.

<sup>184</sup> For the composition of the detachment, see Sargizov 1979: 83-84; Sahakyan 2011: 351-352.

<sup>185</sup> Goretsky Franz Ivanovich (1873-?), Colonel (06.12.1915). Quartermaster of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Rifle Brigade (06.12.1911-06.12.1915). Quartermaster of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caucasian Rifle Corps (02.08.1917).

<sup>186</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 28 and back.

<sup>187</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 28 back and 29.

<sup>188</sup> The murder of Mar-Shimun XIX Benjamin and 75 of his followers took place on March 3, 1918, in the village of Korne-Shar, where they had been invited by Simko for negotiations.

<sup>189</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 29 back.

<sup>190</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 29.

<sup>191</sup> See Sahakyan 2011: 348.

fought against the Turks until the spring of 1918, but in reality, the fighting was mainly carried out by detachments composed of Armenians, who fought until July.<sup>192</sup>

At the end of his memoirs, Poltavtsev, faithful to his adopted style, could not help but mention the Armenians and once again portray them as bandits. Citing Colonel Kuzmin, he reports that Yessaul—in reality, senior army officer (lieutenant colonel) Nikolai Stolder, an instructor officer of the Persian Cossack Brigade and head of the Urmia detachment—was killed and looted by Armenians, along with his wife, son, and an accompanying officer.<sup>193</sup>

### Summary

Colonel V. N. Poltavtsev's memoirs are a rare source that, although brief, provides information not only about the military operations in Northern Persia—in Atropatene — but also about the population, social structure, relations with the authorities, and more. The author's information on the decay of the Russian army is especially important. V. N. Poltavtsev speaks with sorrow about these events, particularly the consequences of the army's "democratization," noting that the main culprits were Bolshevik agitators. He says not a word of regret, however, for the Christian population of Atropatene —the Assyrians and Armenians—who, after the departure of the Russian troops, were forced to fight against the Turkish regular army and Tatar and Kurdish bandit groups under the command of a handful of Russian officers.

In his memoirs, V. N. Poltavtsev continually points to the indiscipline of the Assyrian battalions in particular, yet he considers the Russian army's withdrawal—or rather, flight—from Northern Persia justified, leaving the Christian population alone and defenseless before the Turkish regular army and Tatar and Kurdish bandit groups. His sympathy for the Tatar population is clear from his memoirs, which seems to confirm General F. G. Chernozubov's suspicion that V. N. Poltavtsev was a Turkish agent. The colonel does not hide his antipathy toward the Armenians, even at the end of his memoirs, using another person's account to accuse them of banditry.

Nevertheless, we believe that despite his subjective biases and assessments, Colonel V. N. Poltavtsev's memoirs are an important source regarding the various events and incidents that took place in Northern Persia.

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<sup>192</sup> Sahakyan 2011: 358.

<sup>193</sup> SARF, fund R - 6120, inventory 1, file 5, sheet 29 back. Strelyanov P. N., an officer who participated in the fighting in Persia, only mentions that the Stolders, father and son, were killed, and nothing more. Strelyanov 2007: 232.

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# THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PICTURE AND POLITICAL SITUATION OF THE EASTERN PROVINCES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE 1830s AND 1840s (ACCORDING TO THE ENGLISH DIPLOMAT JAMES BRANT)

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## Abstract

The study aims to uncover the real objectives behind the creation of the British consular network in the Ottoman Empire by analyzing the travel publications of James Brant, the British Consul in Erzurum. These records allow for the clarification of his position, particularly regarding the Armenians and the Kurds, as well as the stereotypes about the “East” prevalent in Europe at the time that influenced his observations.

The demographic shifts recorded by Brant, to the detriment of Armenians and the benefit of Kurds and other ethnic groups, reflect the structural changes that took place in the region after the Russo-Turkish wars. His meetings with Kurdish tribal leaders and local chiefs reveal the power dynamics in the region: Turko-Kurdish and Armeno-Kurdish relations, as well as the position of the Armenians towards these realities. Brant’s observations also contain keen insights into the economic and social life of the region.

Thus, J. Brant’s travelogues reflect the activation of the British presence in the region starting from the 1830s as a factor that played an important role in the subsequent developments of the region.

**Keywords:** James Brant, Eastern Provinces of the Ottoman Empire, Armeno-Kurdish Relations, British Consular Activity.

In the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British consular network in the Ottoman Empire began to expand, intended to become an instrument for spreading British influence in the region. This was a unique information network through which London constantly received detailed information about any changes occurring within the Empire.

The expansion of the consular network, and European presence in general, was conditioned by the centralization policy taking place in the Ottoman Empire, which aimed to create a unified administrative system and strengthen control over the provinces and various segments of society.<sup>1</sup> European influence was utilized in favor of the Tanzimat reforms, provided they did not harm the interests of European states. As a result, consuls not only traveled and operated freely, but ambassadors and consuls also

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<sup>1</sup> Barkey 2008: 266-277.



began to play a greater role in the political life of the Empire. Consequently, the role of British consuls transformed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, gradually acquiring the nature of an unintentional mediator in local politics. Their authority and accessibility to the population led to consuls often being perceived as intermediaries between the populace and the authorities.<sup>2</sup> Each of them essentially acted as an ambassador, dealing with the problems of his area. The consuls' correspondence covered economic and political issues. In the political sphere, they addressed in detail the functioning of the provincial administration, the activities of foreign agents, and Turkish oppressions, as well as cases where the Sultan's orders regarding reforming the Empire were not carried out.<sup>3</sup>

The Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane in 1839, which marks the official start of the Tanzimat reform movement in the Ottoman Empire, also reshaped the relations between Christians and Muslims in the Eastern provinces over time.<sup>4</sup> Although these reforms did not yield long-term results and did not change the social situation of Christian Armenians, they attested to a certain understanding of the new European liberal ideas by the central authorities.<sup>5</sup>

It is in the context of these processes that the British Consul James Brant undertook his journey, at a time when the Ottoman government was attempting to eliminate the autonomy of the semi-independent Kurdish principalities that had existed for centuries in the peripheries of the Empire and integrate them into the imperial administrative system. Brant studied the economic potential of the region and presented proposals to the governors regarding the development of economic resources. His excellent knowledge of Turkish allowed him to communicate effectively with both representatives of the Ottoman administration and the local population. Brant closely followed the events taking place in the Eastern provinces and Russian policy in the region. He meticulously studied the Ottoman social, economic, and military reforms being implemented during this period and used this information in his consular reports.<sup>6</sup>

James Brant was appointed Vice-Consul of Trebizond on March 2, 1830. He attached particular importance to Erzurum, emphasizing its strategic and economic significance, and also taking into consideration the growing Russian influence in the region. At his suggestion, Great Britain opened a consulate in Erzurum in 1836, and Brant was appointed to the post. His zone of influence included Sebastia, Trebizond, and Erzurum. Brant was responsible for collecting relevant information on trade, navigation, agriculture, and other fields.<sup>7</sup> The importance of the Ottoman Empire in

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<sup>2</sup> Hourani 1968: 67.

<sup>3</sup> Yurdusev 2009: 523.

<sup>4</sup> Jongerden and Verheij 2012: 35.

<sup>5</sup> Nalbandian 1963: 43.

<sup>6</sup> Gencer 2024: 281-282.

<sup>7</sup> Gencer 2024: 282.

British politics was primarily due to the need to develop commercial relations with the Empire.<sup>8</sup>

Brant's travel records are important as reliable information received from the site of events. He focused on Armeno-Kurdish and Turko-Kurdish relations, attempting to understand the nature of the interaction between local forces. Armenians and Kurds were viewed as the elements of the Empire through which it was possible to influence regional politics and guide certain developments. During his journey, Brant conversed with various Kurdish tribal leaders, presenting their viewpoints on the ongoing events. He considered the information received to be trustworthy because, in his estimation, the Kurdish chiefs, as respected and honorable individuals, were worthy of confidence. His reports provide insight into the internal structure, ethnic placement, daily life, and relations with the authorities of the Kurdish community in the 1830s.

Brant notes that he started his journey in an official capacity as a British Consul, possessing a Sultan's firman.<sup>9</sup> He was accompanied by one dragoman<sup>10</sup> (interpreter), and during the journey, he was also assigned one Tatar<sup>11</sup> (fast courier) and two servants, and 12 horses were provided as required by the route. The costs of the journey, according to Brant, amounted to around 30 lire for every 100 postal hours or about 300 miles, not including unforeseen additional expenses. This amount did not include gifts and other expenses. According to Brant's calculations, the allocated amount was sufficient for a traveler moving at a moderate speed, with a small amount of baggage and not many companions.<sup>12</sup>

Brant's attitude toward Armenians, Kurds, as well as the individuals with whom he interacted, is of particular interest. His evaluations of the locals must be viewed in the context of the fact that he was acting as a representative of British foreign policy, and his observations and reported information could directly influence British positions and

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<sup>8</sup> Bailey 1942: 40.

<sup>9</sup> The route of movement toward Armenia, as presented in Brant's report, commenced on 19 May 1835. Trebizond, Yomurah, Surmenah, Of, Rizah, Lazistan, Batum, Choruk Su, Pashalik of Kars, the valley of Khino, Zerehbozel, Didewaghi, Kolowah Dagh, valley of Ako, Kulah or Ajerah valley, (Kulah was the hereditary possession of Ahmed Pasha of Kars), Danesvorolah, Poshkov, Digwir (village), Ardahan, Kars, Pasin, Hasan Kaleh, Erzurum, Terjan, Dujik (Gujik) mountains, Erzingan, Kemakh, Herhemeh, Hasan Ovah, Egin, Arabgir, Zeitun, Keban Maden, Kharput, Arghana, Diyarbekr, Malatayah, Aspuzi, Hasan Batrik, Hakim Khan, Ghurun, Manjelic, Ulash, Sivas, Kaisariyyeh, Yuzgat, Boaslian, Boaghaz Keuj, Tokat, Niksar, Karahisar, Gumish-khaneh.

<sup>10</sup> A dragoman was a multilingual intermediary in the Ottoman Empire, serving as translator, interpreter, and diplomatic agent between European envoys and Ottoman authorities, facilitating communication, negotiation, and cultural exchange.

<sup>11</sup> Tatar: In 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman travel accounts, a term often used by British travelers for mobile Turkic-speaking pastoralists; they frequently acted as helpers for travelers, carrying news, letters, and other information.

<sup>12</sup> Brant 1836:195.

regional priorities. For a 19<sup>th</sup>-century British traveler, the Ottoman Empire was viewed more as a zone of imperial influence and interests than as an object of Orientalist interest.<sup>13</sup> In his role as Consul, Brant often reflected the perceptions characteristic of the European mindset of the time. His memoirs also reflect the ideas that Britain's "imperial mission" was to protect the interests of weak states, assuming they aligned with Britain's interests.<sup>14</sup> The ideas formed in the European travel literature of that time also greatly influenced Brant's observations. In his descriptions, the Kurds are sometimes presented as a difficult-to-control element, which, according to him, endangered the stability of the region.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that despite the presence of cultural stereotypes and expressions of superiority in some texts, Brant's records have documentary significance, presenting inter-ethnic relations in the region. His testimonies serve both as a source of information and as an expression of Western perceptions.

In this regard, it is no coincidence that his expressed opinions about the locals are highly contradictory. On the one hand, he speaks highly of the locals' hospitality, benevolence, and readiness to help a foreigner; on the other hand, he presents the natives as a "savage race," regardless of religious affiliation—characterizing both Christians and Muslims as "ignorant, rude, and fanatical." "The inhabitants, whether Christian or Musulman, are inclined to be inhospitable towards Europeans, and present an ignorant, rude, and superstitious (fanatical) race".<sup>15</sup>

Towards the Armenians, however, Brant expresses a certain sympathy, particularly emphasizing the heavy tax burden and various obligations imposed on them. He calls Armenians the native people of the given area, who were, however, often forced to leave their territory due to difficult conditions. He writes: "In the whole Plain of Mush there is not a single Muslim peasant intermingled with the Armenian population. This fact clearly shows that the country ought to be considered Armenian rather than Kurdish. The tent-Kurds are evidently invaders, and the stationary Kurds, no doubt, originally belonged to the wandering tribes".<sup>16</sup> Brant emphasizes that the Armenians, as natives of these lands, are mainly engaged in trade in the cities or agriculture in the villages. They are legally deprived of the right to bear arms, and they are not conscripted as soldiers or appointed to state positions. By Brant's estimate, the number of Armenians constitutes approximately one-third of the Turks and one-seventh of the total population.<sup>17</sup>

Brant often stopped and resided in the homes of wealthy Armenian merchants for accommodation.<sup>18</sup> However, he does not provide deeper descriptions but merely notes

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<sup>13</sup> Said 1978: 169.

<sup>14</sup> Nash 2005: 5.

<sup>15</sup> Brant 1836: 190.

<sup>16</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 347.

<sup>17</sup> Brant 1836: 221.

<sup>18</sup> Brant 1836: 195.

that he visited the Khojabash<sup>19</sup>—the leader of the Armenian community—to observe the Armenian way of life. He stresses that the Khojabash's new house was spacious but very modest, both in its style and furniture, and that he “lived as well as any other Armenian of the higher class”.<sup>20</sup>

J. Brant's 1835 journey began with surveys along the Russian borders, which was not accidental. It attested to his interest in gathering military and political information. After studying the coasts of Lazistan, Brant continued his journey, passing through Trebizond, Kars (via the Ardahan road leading from Digwar), the basen Plain to Erzurum, Terjan, Erzingan, Kemakh, Arabkir, Keban Maden, Kharput, Arghana, from there to Diyarbekir, Malatya, Sebastia, Caesarea, Yozgat, from Tokat, via Niksar, Karahisar, Gümüşhane, back to Trebizond.<sup>21</sup>

Brant's first travelogues concerned the situation created after the Russo-Turkish War. In his observation, a mass movement was particularly noticeable among the Christian population as a result of the war; formerly densely populated areas had turned into desolate places. Brant linked this phenomenon also to the possibility of settling in the territories of the Russian Empire, which created an expectation of a better environment for some Christians.

For example, according to Brant's data, many Armenian families from Pasin migrated with the Russian army, as a result of which “most of the villages are only half peopled, and a great many rich lands are left uncultivated”.<sup>22</sup> Kars is a similar example: “Kars was formerly a large town, of 6,000 or 8,000 houses, but now it resembles more a heap of ruins, with a population not exceeding 1500 to 2000 families. The great majority of the Turkish population left the town during the Russian occupation, and all the Armenians retired with the Russian army, leaving many deserted villages and a great quantity of unused land. Only one of the villages outside Kars was Armenian; all the rest were under Turkish rule”.<sup>23</sup>

Brant notes that Upper Basen is inhabited mainly by Muslims. Most of the Armenian peasantry had moved to Georgia after the Russian army left the territory of the Ottoman Empire following the Treaty of Adrianople. As a result of the emigration, the population of the villages had significantly decreased, and a large number of land

<sup>19</sup> Khoja-bash (Turkish: *hoca-baş*): An Ottoman Turkish term, from Persian *khāja* (“master, teacher, or respected person”) + Turkish *baş* (“head, chief”). It referred to the chief or head of a community or religious group, responsible for leadership, administration, and protection of the local group.

<sup>20</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 391.

<sup>21</sup> It should be noted that the place names found in J. Brant's records do not always correspond to their authentic form; the traveler transmitted them as he heard them from the locals. Some names were later changed or preserved in another form, and in some cases, it is not possible to accurately determine their geographic location.

<sup>22</sup> Brant 1836: 200.

<sup>23</sup> Brant 1836: 199.

areas remained uncultivated due to the lack of labor.<sup>24</sup> He adds that during the advance of the Russian army, it reached as far as Mush, and when it withdrew from there, the Armenians wanted to join the Russian army, but this was not allowed. The Russians were advancing at the time, and the presence of the migrants with their families was an obstacle to their progress.<sup>25</sup>

Brant records a similar phenomenon in Bayazet: "When the Russians occupied Erivan and established a quarantine on the border, all kind of interaction between Erivan and Bayazet ceased. From that moment, the decline of Bayazet can be considered to have begun, which became complete when the great majority of the Armenian population also migrated with the Russian army".<sup>26</sup>

Thus, after the Russo-Turkish wars, the demographic balance in the Eastern Vilayets was disrupted, due to the mass movement of the Christian population and the growing influence of the predominantly Kurdish element, as well as the resettlement of other elements. Brant confirms that, for example, 30 years ago, in the Alashkert Plain, from Diadin to Molla Suleyman, many Armenian villages were widespread, each having 300-400 houses, while in the 1830s many villages were already abandoned or significantly thinned out; only in two villages had 20-40 houses been preserved. According to Brant, Armenians formed a small part of the population of that region, and almost all of the majority had migrated to Georgia. In recent years, five villages had been resettled by families moved from the areas near Erivan, who were considered nomadic groups of Persian origin and were called "Terakemeh" (i.e., Turkomans, who led a gypsy lifestyle but were not considered gypsies). Brant characterized them as "people of a restless disposition and doubtful honesty".<sup>27</sup> Brant also mentions such groups concerning the population of the Euphrates Valley and adjacent plains, in the area stretching from Ziro to the village of Yunjahli.<sup>28</sup>

The consequences of the Armenian population's emigration were also noticeable in other settlements. For example, in the village of Deli Baba (on the road from Bayazet to Erzurum), the local Kaya [village elder] deeply regretted not following the other Armenians, because, according to reports from those who left, their relatives who had moved to Georgia were satisfied with the policy of the Russian authorities.<sup>29</sup>

A similar picture was recorded in the village of Kôi-lî (on the road from Erzurum to Mush), where about 200 formerly residing Armenian families had migrated to Georgia, and 15 Muslim (mostly Kurdish) families lived in the extensive ruins.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 341.

<sup>25</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 348.

<sup>26</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 421-422.

<sup>27</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 424.

<sup>28</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 426.

<sup>29</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 429.

<sup>30</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 344.

According to Brant's data, the population of the areas he visited compared to the past was as follows:

Location	Former Status / 1830s Status	Breakdown (1830s Estimate)
Trebizond	25,000–30,000 inhabitants	Greeks: 3,500–4,000; Armenians: 1,500–2,000; Muslims: 20,000–24,000
Ardahan	Formerly 300 houses	Now 70 families (after the Russian siege and destruction)
Kars	Formerly 6,000–8,000 families	Now not more than 1,500–2,000 families
Erzurum	130,000 inhabitants in 1827	Now not more than 15,000
Erzingan	3,000 houses or families	800 Armenian, the rest Turkish
Kemakh		400 Turkish, 30 Armenian houses
Eğir (Akn)	2,700 houses	2,000 Muslim, 700 Armenian
Arabkir	6,000 houses	4,800 Muslim, 1,200 Armenian
Kharput	1,720 families	1,400 Turkish, 300 Armenian, and 20 Catholic
Arghana	600 families	Half Muslim, half Armenian
Diyarbakir	Formerly 40,000 families or houses	Now 8,000 (1,500 Armenian, 85 Catholic, 70 Greek, 50 Jewish, and 6,300 Turkish)
Malatya	3,923 families	2,800 Turkish, 1,123 Armenian
Hakim Khan		250 Turkish, 35 Armenian
Gürün		850 Turkish, 860 Armenian, 63 Catholic families
Manjelic	Formerly 100 families	Now 15 Armenian families
Sebastia		5,000 Turkish and 12,000 Armenian families
Caesarea		8,000 Turkish, 2,500 Armenian, and 500 Greek houses
Tokat	6,730 families	5,000 Turkish, 1,500 Armenian, 30 Roman Catholic, 50 Jewish, 150 Greek

Thus, Brant's information is important for gaining at least an approximate idea of the post-Russo-Turkish War demographic changes. According to his observations, many villages that were previously inhabited by Armenians are now either sparsely populated or emptied, and a large number of families had migrated to Georgia. At the same time, some areas were resettled by Turkoman tribes, and the Kurdish element became more influential.

Brant's observations allow for the reconstruction of the region's socio-economic character. According to him, the socio-economic conditions of the Armenian population

in the Eastern provinces of the Empire were particularly severe compared to other provinces of the Empire. This was contributed to by manifold tax obligations, the still underdeveloped nature of economic relations, and the fact that a significant part of the region was under Kurdish control.

Brant mentions the Saliyaneh<sup>31</sup> as a type of tax collected to cover the state administrative expenses of the pashalik. In his description, the Saliyaneh was collected in the following way: first, the Pasha set the total amount to be collected; then, the heads of each religious community gathered at the administrative center and distributed this sum among the districts of the pashalik. Then, the heads of the communities in the districts divided the sum allocated to their district among the villages, and in the villages, the village elders redistributed it among the inhabitants. The Saliyaneh was arbitrary in a certain sense and varied in amount depending on Pasha's desire. Pasha did not present an account regarding the justification of this amount, and no one could dispute the appropriateness of the collection. However, the amount of the tax could not be significantly increased without an obvious reason, so as not to cause discontent and resistance of the people. For this reason, the Saliyaneh for the current year usually did not significantly exceed the amount of the previous year.<sup>32</sup> For example, the village of Kiravi in Mush, which belonged to the Beg of Khnus, according to Brant, paid three saliyanes annually, each amounting to about 5–6 lire<sup>33</sup>; the saliyaneh of the city of Mush amounted to 2,000 lire annually.<sup>34</sup>

Brant notes that in some regions, the saliyaneh was replaced by other obligations. For instance, in Khnus, instead of the saliyaneh, the villagers were obligated to host guests—especially since it was a postal station, and the flow of visitors was high, making this tax not light. Besides the saliyaneh, the peasant had to pay the tithe on the harvest: the “ordinary and legal income of the Beg of Khinis (Khnuş) is derived from the tithe of the produce of the land, which annually secures him about 150 lire”.<sup>35</sup> Another example was Hasan Kaleh, where the residents were exempt from the annual payment. However, in its place, they paid about 50 lire for the maintenance expenses of the postal system, and besides that, they were obliged to host foreigners. Brant concludes: “This obligation itself is not a light tax, as natives seldom pay anything for lodging and food provided them.”

Thus, the absence of a tax obligation did not entirely mean a reduction of the actual burden but rather its transformation into another form, with another material obligation on the community. Hosting foreigners, despite being formally a “non-tax,” was

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<sup>31</sup> Saliyaneh (or Salyaneh): A Persian- and Arabic-derived term used in Ottoman and Persian administrative language, meaning a yearly tax or annual payment.

<sup>32</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 342-343.

<sup>33</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 348.

<sup>34</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 351.

<sup>35</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 345.

a material burden for the villagers.<sup>36</sup> Sometimes partial or general forgiveness of taxes was made to appease the population. For example, the population of the village of Eypler, presenting their poverty, received a concession of half of the saliyaneh, “although the total sum was only 12 lire”<sup>37</sup>, writes Brant.

According to Brant’s observation, the Pasha of Mush did not exploit the rayah population, but it was said that he did not spare the leaders of the Kurdish tribes when opportunities arose to collect taxes. We should note, however, that this information was taken from Pasha’s own words.<sup>38</sup>

In contrast, in the village of Arnis, in Bargir Kale (Van region), Kurds were encouraged by being exempt from taxes, and in return, they were obligated to ensure the safety of the road and the reception of travelers.<sup>39</sup> Generally, nomadic tribes in the Ottoman Empire were exempt from many taxes and fees that were applied to the majority of peasant economies. Even with special taxes levied on them, the tax burden on nomadic tribes was lighter than the obligations of sedentary farmers.<sup>40</sup>

Brant observed that the system of tax collection was aimed not so much at the real needs of the state but at “feeding greedy Pashas or their attendants.” Thus, he recounts how the Sarraf<sup>41</sup> of Diyarbekir had given a loan to the Musellim<sup>42</sup> for the purpose of presenting gifts to obtain his position, and had come here almost immediately to reclaim his money, as preparations were underway to impose the Saliyaneh tax on the population for this purpose.<sup>43</sup>

Brant reports on a tax called Kishlak<sup>44</sup>, an obligation to provide winter quarters, according to which Armenians had to provide shelter to Kurds during the winter months.<sup>45</sup> The Kurds paid the Armenians for the accommodation. In the village of Kızıl Ağaç, Brant speaks with Sherif Agha, one of the leaders of a Kurdish tribe. During the conversation, Brant asks why the tribe prefers to pay around 480 lire every year to use winter quarters, instead of building a permanent settlement. Sherif Agha replies that such permanent settlement would require not only houses but also permanent land for haymaking, wheat, and animal feed, which are already occupied. Brant concludes: “He

<sup>36</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 342-343.

<sup>37</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 343.

<sup>38</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 351.

<sup>39</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 401.

<sup>40</sup> Kasaba 2009: 27.

<sup>41</sup> Sarraf: A Persian- and Arabic-derived term denoting a money-changer or banker, responsible for currency exchange, credit, and financial services in Ottoman and Middle Eastern trade networks.

<sup>42</sup> Musellim (Turkish: *Müsellim* or *Mütesellim*): An Ottoman Turkish term denoting a local official appointed to collect taxes, enforce law and order, and oversee administrative affairs in a town or district.

<sup>43</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 363.

<sup>44</sup> Kishlak: A Turkic- and Persian-derived term denoting a winter settlement used by nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists, as opposed to their summer pastures (*yaylak*).

<sup>45</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 348.



might also have added, that as shepherds they could not attend to husbandry without entirely changing their habits of life. And at the season when the hay ought to be collected and the fields tilled, they are entirely employed in following their flocks to the mountains.” Brant concludes that the current method of providing winter quarters to the Kurds might not be bad if they did not abuse the Armenians, if the fixed sum was a fair compensation for the peasant’s labor and inconvenience, and if that sum were given to the peasant himself, and not to the Serasker of Erzurum.<sup>46</sup>

According to Brant, the Kharaj<sup>47</sup> collected from the entire area of the Bitlis pashalik amounted to 23,000 Ottoman lire, and by his approximate calculation, it can be assumed that the male rayah population over the age of four was about 12,000 people, taking into consideration the fact that kharaj was not collected from children below that age.<sup>48</sup>

As noted, starting from the 1830s, a series of campaigns were carried out against the Kurds, as a result of which several Kurdish emirates and tribal chiefdoms were eliminated one after another, or they were subjected to dispossession. The first phase of the Turkish reconquest campaign lasted from 1834 to 1839. The Ottoman commander Mohammed Reshid Pasha, whose general staff was in Diyarbekir, received an entire Nizam corps, supplemented by guard units, cavalry, and artillery, with the aim of suppressing the Kurdish rebellions.<sup>49</sup>

In this political and military context, Brant presents detailed observations about the Kurdish-inhabited territories.<sup>50</sup> Brant describes the lifestyle of the Kurds living in them, the nature of their movements, and their relations with neighboring groups.

Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of Kurds were nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists, united in tribal associations. The leaders of the tribes often gathered several tribes under their authority, but the struggle for pastures and the desire

<sup>46</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 353-354.

<sup>47</sup> Kharaj: A Persian- and Arabic-derived term denoting a land tax or tribute, typically levied on agricultural land by non-Muslim subjects in the Ottoman and Islamic administrative systems.

<sup>48</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 377.

<sup>49</sup> Safrastyan 1948: 50.

<sup>50</sup> The route of movement toward Armenia, as presented in Brant’s report, commenced on 16 June 1838. Erzurum, Hasan Kaleh, Pasin, Eipler-Koi-li, Aghveran, Khinis, Aruz Su, Gumgum, Char Buhur, Sikawah, Kirawi, Murad Chai, Chevermeh, Bin gol Tagh, Mush, Kizil Aghaj, Murad Chai, Antogh Tagh, Shin, Darkush Tagh, Agharun, Kolb Su, Nerjki, Darakol, Sarum Su, Ilijeh, Hazero, Khini. Anbar Su, Zibeneh, Arghana Maden, Kizin, Goljik, Mezirah, Kharput, Alishan, Palu, Habab, Mezirah, Chevli, Pakengog, Boghlan, Monastery of Changeri, Ziyaret, Shekiran, Arshiban, Khass-Koi, Mushaksir, Kafir Borg, Bitlis, Rashwak Khan, Tadvan, Avatak, Garzit, Gol-li, Khan-jaik, Norkukh, Akavansk, Vastan, Artemid, Van, Iskeleh Koi, Ala Koi, Merek, Bargir Kaleh, Arnis, Haidar Beg, Ardish, Ashraf, Arin, AD-el-jivaz, Akhlat, Norshunjuk, Sapan Tagh, Gujiyeh, Arbunzunk, Kara Kilisa, Kunduk, Ala Tagh, Source of the Murad, Bayazid, Ararat, Diyadin, Uch Kilisa, Murad Su, Kara Kilisa, Molla Osman, Toprak Kaleh, Chat Dereh-si, Deli Baba, Emrakum, Erzurum.

to expand power led to constant fragmentation and the formation of new tribal associations.<sup>51</sup> According to Brant, the Dujik mountain range, stretching between the plateaus of Terjan and Erzingan, with strong and defensible passes, was a Kurdish-inhabited zone. Brant described the behavior of the Kurds living there as unruly. They did not pay taxes to the Sultan's authorities, but constantly collected road tolls and plundered neighboring villages. Inside the mountain range, two influential tribes stood out: Shah Hussein and Balaban, each capable of fielding around 4,000–5,000 armed men. Brant did not have the opportunity to study the other tribal groups located south of here.<sup>52</sup>

In Mush, Emin Pasha was dominant, the founder of whose family was Alauddin Beg. According to Brant, thanks to their social position and personal qualities, this family had great influence in the country.<sup>53</sup> Brant notes that near the village of Sikava there is a small hill called Osp-polur, where the Kurdish leader Alauddin Beg successfully resisted the government forces that were sent to eliminate the independence he was trying to achieve. Since those times, with a few short interruptions, a member of the family has always governed the Pashalik of Mush with more or less independence.<sup>54</sup>

The Ottoman state was very consistent in ensuring that power was transferred and maintained in the hands of the same ruling dynasties. The goal of this policy was to form stable and strong leadership, free from threats posed by internal rivals. Under no circumstances was power allowed to pass to any person outside the ruling dynasty. If the Bey did not have a son to succeed him, the other Beys of Kurdistan were obliged to nominate a new leader, usually chosen from another branch of the same dynasty. It is noteworthy that the Sultan did not favor the appointment of non-Kurdish governors. As a result, most of the Kurdish Mirs<sup>55</sup> became significantly dependent on the support of the Ottoman authorities to maintain their positions, through which the state gained the opportunity to intervene and control the Kurdish tribal structures.<sup>56</sup>

Brant also gives the important information that Emin Pasha and his brothers were highly respected by Reshid Mohammed Pasha and had provided significant support to his actions directed against certain Kurdish forces.<sup>57</sup> Essentially, these were relations stemming from political interests. In contrast to this, Brant mentions the Kurdish Badikanlı tribe (Shin Valley), which resisted Reshid Mohammed Pasha but was stripped

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<sup>51</sup> Bayburdyan 2008: 30.

<sup>52</sup> Brant 1836: 201-202.

<sup>53</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 350.

<sup>54</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 348.

<sup>55</sup> The term "Mir" is derived from the Arabic "Emir," meaning commander, prince, or leader. In the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman Empire, it was often used as a title for local Kurdish or regional rulers who held political, military, or administrative authority over a specific area.

<sup>56</sup> Özoglu 2004: 54.

<sup>57</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 351.

of its property and armed forces after defeat.<sup>58</sup> He also mentions the Kurdish Elmanlı tribe, which lived in the mountains surrounding the southern edge of the Mush Plain and at their foothills.<sup>59</sup>

Brant describes his meeting with an old Kurdish leader of Diyarbekir, Haji Zilal Agha, whose residence was the village of Nerjki (on the road from Mush to Kharput), who had resisted Reshid Mohammed Pasha. As a result, his house was burned, his wealth lost, and his sons died due to the climate of Diyarbekir. Despite his exile, he was later returned to his district and reappointed, but was effectively stripped of power. In his words, “neither he nor his ancestors were ever subject to the Pashas or paid tribute to the Sultan, and he did not understand why he should do so now. Therefore, he resisted as much as he could”.<sup>60</sup> This idea testifies that some Kurdish tribes maintained traditional autonomy and free status towards the Ottoman Empire. The semi-independent Kurdish principalities maintained their influence from generation to generation.

According to Brant’s reports, the independent Kurdish Beys of Hazro, Ilijeh, and Khnus, who were included in the Sanjak of Tevrik, were operating in Ilijeh (Hot Spring). The first included approximately 60 villages and was governed by Rejeb Beg. In his service, there were 600 cavalymen who were regularly paid and well-armed. In addition to this, he could gather approximately 700 cavalry and 3,000–4,000 infantry from his villages, armed with swords and muskets. He was considered the richest and most powerful of the three Beys. He acquired his wealth by plundering three or four Pashas of Diyarbekir, as well as various rich caravans. However, it is generally believed that many such actions, which were carried out by others, were attributed to him.<sup>61</sup> After being defeated by Reshid Muhammed Pasha, the Bey was exiled to Adrianople (Edirne), where he lived. The income from his former territory and personal property was collected by the government, from which he was given a monthly pension of 180 lire, which was, however, very small compared to the actual amount of the collected income. This was a typical and widely used Ottoman practice.

The Beylik of Ilijeh previously belonged to Hussein Agha, who was succeeded by his eldest son, Beyram Beg—also currently exiled. After their defeat, his Beylik passed under the control of the state. The Beylik of Ilijeh included about 70 villages. The Bey could gather about 300 horsemen and 4,000–5,000 armed infantry, armed with swords and muskets. He had considerable income, but spent everything to ensure the loyalty of his subordinates.

The Bey of Khnus, Ismail, was also exiled to Adrianople. He could field 200 horsemen and 2,000–3,000 infantry. His Beylik included about 60 villages.

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<sup>58</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 354.

<sup>59</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 353.

<sup>60</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 357.

<sup>61</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 359.

These three Beys were constantly in alliance and were in almost constant war for about 15 years with Mirza Agha, whose residence was in the village of Banuka, near Hazro. He had only 100 horsemen, but about 5,000–6,000 rifle-armed infantry, but as the leader of the Silvan Kurdish tribe living near him, he could gather an additional 500 cavalymen. The clashes between the parties mainly took the form of attacks on villages. The allies would gather at a predetermined location, trying to capture the population by a sudden assault and seize everything possible. These plunders took place in the autumn, after the harvest, because the spoils were most abundant at that time.<sup>62</sup> In 1838, the Kurdish Beys, including the Beys of Hazro, Khnus, and Ilijeh, were defeated by Reshid Muhammed Pasha. Their residences were burned, and when Mirza Agha surrendered, the other Beys immediately surrendered as well, realizing that resistance was futile.<sup>63</sup>

In the Bitlis region, the Kurds of Harzan occupied vast territories. Before the final defeat of the Harzancis by Emin Pasha, the Bey's son noted that a traveler could not camp without danger where he was now stopping, and had to rely on the protection of a house, because the Kurds of Harzan constantly crossed the mountains at night for the purpose of plunder and cattle theft.<sup>64</sup> During the confrontation with Hafiz Pasha, the casualties among the Harzanci Kurds were presented as numerous. About two-thirds of the population were Armenians, but they had not participated in the conflict. The Harzancis themselves were divided among themselves. The Bey and his supporters had sided with the Pasha, and only the inhabitants of the mountainous regions had offered resistance. According to the Bey's son, if the entire population had been united, the attack probably would not have succeeded.<sup>65</sup> The region was, as always, unstable due to internal Kurdish disagreements, tribal rivalries, and relations with the central government. The Armenians, despite being numerous, remained neutral. The Beys of Bitlis were always powerful enough to maintain their independence until Emin Pasha's father finally subdued them. From that moment, the Beylik was annexed to the Pashalik of Mush, and Sherif Bey's domains—only eighty villages—constituted about one-third of the entire Pashalik<sup>66</sup>. Brant presents that a Pasha named Dervish in Van had succeeded in maintaining independence from the Sublime Porte for a long time. He had defeated three Pashas who were sent to overthrow him, but was finally defeated by Sert Mahmut Pasha, who received the help of the Pashas of Erzurum, Kars, and Bayazet.<sup>67</sup> According to Brant, Khan Mahmud and his brothers were active in the areas adjacent to the Van region, belonging to the independent Kurdish dynasty whose center was located on the southern side of the Aljeros mountains, in the district of Müküs. Although

<sup>62</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 360.

<sup>63</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 361.

<sup>64</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 376-377.

<sup>65</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 377.

<sup>66</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 380.

<sup>67</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 395.

the traditional inheritance of the family had passed to the eldest brother's son, Mahmud and his other brothers had acquired about 100 villages on their own, which had previously belonged to the Pashalik of Van. They often raided the Persian border for plunder, and the income from their villages allowed them to have great influence, maintain a group of armed followers, and resist both the authorities of Van and Persia. Recently, Mahmud had attempted to officially submit to the Serasker operating in Erzurum, through Ishak Pasha, and for this purpose, he had sent his brother, who was well received and returned with great honors. However, Mahmud rarely appeared in the city of Van, and even in those cases, he was accompanied by 400–600 armed men. Their main fortified center was the fortress in Mahmudiye.<sup>68</sup>

During a meeting with the Pasha of Van, Brant became acquainted with Sultan Agha, the leader of the powerful Hayderanlı Kurdish tribe. Although Khan Mahmud and his brothers maintained some autonomy, they were forced to make concessions to the Ottoman central authority. They had agreed to transfer taxes to the Sultan, rather than to their own treasury, and to provide military forces for the Ottoman army. They were allowed to conduct a census in their territory. The issue of other concessions demanded by the Pasha of Erzurum had not yet been clarified, but he found that if all demands were met, Khan Mahmud and Khan Abdal would receive the positions of Müsellim, meaning they would become the governors of their districts.<sup>69</sup>

This example shows the frequent practice of the Ottoman Empire. Instead of forcibly eliminating the positions of local authorities, they tried to integrate them into the state administration system by giving them positions, but in return demanding obedience. It is also noteworthy that the Ottoman state attempted to carry out a census and property registration in the provincial peripheries for the army and taxes, but especially in areas where the hereditary rule of Kurdish Beys existed, such processes were mostly unsuccessful.<sup>70</sup>

According to the testimony of the Kurdish leader Sultan Agha, the Hayderanlı Kurdish tribe was divided into two branches, one of which constantly had ties with Persia, and its territories were later recognized as Persian by the Sultan. The leadership of that branch was initially held by Sultan Agha's brother, Qasim Agha, and after his death, by his son. Although Sultan Agha was considered the leader of the Hayderanlı tribe, in fact, he led only the council of elders and did not have significant political or economic power. His position was mostly symbolic: he was the tribal chief but was not particularly rich, unlike the other influential Kurdish leaders. Agha also tells about his conflict with the Hasan Ali tribe, subordinate to the Mush Pashalik, during which the latter killed two of his men, but he did not receive justice from the Pasha of Erzurum. Brant urged him to refrain from revenge to avoid new clashes.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 387.

<sup>69</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 391.

<sup>70</sup> Özok-Gündoğan 2022: 117.

<sup>71</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 413.

According to Brant, the Zebeki and Hayderanlı Kurds were forcibly returned to Persia because they refused to leave the Turkish territories. In the Ottoman Empire, the abundance of pastures and water provided significant advantages compared to Persia, although the latter's milder winter somewhat compensated for those harsh conditions.<sup>72</sup> According to him, the Hayderanlı people were preparing to join the part of the tribe living in Persia. "An old Kurd noted that this country is no longer suitable for living." To Brant's question as to whether this was related to the fact that they were no longer allowed to plunder, he replied that he himself had never been a thief, but that the demands of Sultan Agha's Pashas had destroyed them.<sup>73</sup>

A part of the Zilanlı Kurdish tribe, led by Qasim Agha, lived in the Diadin region. Some families of this tribal group had moved across the Russian borders toward Persia, but their representatives noted that the conditions for living in the territory of Ottoman Turkey were more favorable, especially due to the abundance of water and some other advantages.<sup>74</sup>

Of interest here is the phenomenon that has been characteristic of Kurdish tribal groups living in the border regions of the two states for centuries. They took advantage of the military and political opportunities of both the Ottoman and Persian Empires, crossing the demarcation line and serving as a fighting force—a tool for creating a balance of power between these states. Both states made concessions to the tribal chiefs to maintain their loyalty, as their "presence" in the border region was considered both a threat and a strategic measure.<sup>75</sup>

The Pashalik of Bayazet was led for several generations by the ancestors of Behlül Pasha, nominally submitting to the central authority of Erzurum. However, the father of the current Pasha, Mahmud, established *de facto* independence and became an influential, though not legally established, ruler. His undertaken obligation to restore the property plundered by the Jalali Kurds from a Persian caravan in 1834 caused dissatisfaction with Esad, the Pasha of Erzurum, who appointed Demir Pasha instead of Behlül Pasha. However, the latter was so tyrannical that the locals demanded his immediate removal, threatening that if the demand was not met, they would migrate to Georgia. As a result, Demir Pasha was removed from office, and Behlül was reappointed, after which he maintained that position.<sup>76</sup>

Brant paid particular attention to the question of how the Armenians participated in the Kurdish resistance against the Ottoman authorities. For example, in the village of Darakol (on the road from Mush to Kharput), Brant asked whether the Christians had joined the Muslims during the resistance against Reshid Mohammed Pasha. The Armenians replied that they were forced to do so. However, the local Ahmed Agha

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<sup>72</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 414.

<sup>73</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 417-418.

<sup>74</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 419.

<sup>75</sup> Özok-Gündoğan 2022: 112.

<sup>76</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 422.

denied this and declared that “the Armenians were as obstinate in their resistance as the Musulmans”.<sup>77</sup> This somewhat reflected the inter-ethnic relations. Brant tried to find out whether the Armenians participated in the political processes on their own initiative or were forced to submit to the situation.

Another testimony records the cautious behavior of the Armenian population of the Khnus region during the Bey’s conflict with Reshid Muhammed Pasha. According to the report of the Kyaya<sup>78</sup>, the Armenians were extremely poor, and the taxes paid through various means totaled about 300 lire. However, from the perspective of peace, their situation had now significantly improved, so under these conditions, they did not join their Bey’s fight against the Pasha, and when the latter demanded it, they obediently surrendered their weapons.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, the position of the Armenians during the Kurdish armed clashes was mainly determined by the situation. The two testimonies together emphasize that the Armenians did not take a unified stand. The severe economic situation and security considerations often drove them to cautious or neutral behavior, which in some cases was expressed by refusing armed resistance. At the same time, inter-ethnic relations were complicated by Turkish policy: the central authority, on the one hand, tried to win the Armenians to its side and oppose them to the Kurds, and on the other hand, sought to subdue, but not destroy, the Kurds by giving them land and demanding military service in return. Under these contradictory conditions, the Armenians were forced to balance interests, first and foremost to preserve their existence and security.<sup>80</sup>

An example of such sentiments is that Brant met the village Kyaya in Kiravi, one of the villages of Mush, who answered all his questions uniformly: “How can I know about that?” However, Brant later met a priest who communicated with him more willingly and confessed that the Kyaya was afraid that if it were revealed that he had conveyed any information about their affairs, it could have painful consequences. To mitigate this concern, Brant assured the priest that he would never reveal his source of information.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, the information reported by Brant shows that in the 1830s, a number of influential Kurdish families, such as the dynasties of Emin Pasha or Mahmud and his brothers, had maintained their autonomy, while simultaneously cooperating with the Ottoman authorities when it was necessary to maintain their positions. The Ottoman state showed targeted consistency by maintaining power in the hands of hereditary and influential dynasties. This allowed the center to control the activities of local forces,

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<sup>77</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 358.

<sup>78</sup> Kyaya (Turkish: *Kâhya*): Derived from the Turkish word, meaning a village headman or local chief in the Ottoman Empire, responsible for local administration, tax collection, and representing the community to authorities.

<sup>79</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 361.

<sup>80</sup> Ghazaryan 1967: 231.

<sup>81</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 346-347.

while avoiding complete military and administrative intervention, which contributed to maintaining a certain degree of political stability in the unstable eastern provinces.

Brant's memoirs provide valuable insight into the local Kurdish tribal customs. For example, when traveling from Mush to Bitlis, in the village of Arshiban, he witnesses how the Kurdish Pasha tries to secure the support and loyalty of the local Kurdish leaders, including Mahmud Bey, Sherif Bey, and Murad Bey. Sherif Bey and Murad Bey, Mahmud's brothers, who had arrived from Bitlis, were discussing on the spot how to respond to Emin Pasha's assumption of power from Hafiz Pasha. They also discuss the order of presenting gifts to the new superior, with the goal of ensuring Emin Pasha's reappointment.<sup>82</sup>

This scene is an important indicator of the reality that Ottoman provincial governance was mainly based on the support of local influential leaders, and state power at the provincial level was formed through interactive relationships. In this context, Pasha's reappointment became a mechanism either to gain influence or to re-establish existing political ties. It is also interesting that the British Consul was accorded special attention and respect, likely due to fear of the foreign observer's records, especially those of the British, whose reports could have an influence in the capital.

Brant describes in detail the nomadic lifestyle and everyday characteristics of the Kurdish tribes. According to his testimony, Malatya had a summer residence, Aspuzi, from where the residents moved to Malatya every year for six months, and returned in the autumn to carry out the harvest and spend the winter there. During the summer months, Aspuzi was almost completely deserted; only a few people remained there to guard the houses. Brant notes that it was a rather unique phenomenon to see the entire population of a city moving to another place without any obvious natural or geographical reason for it.<sup>83</sup>

The same picture was on the road to Mush, where the villages were empty during the summer months because the residents were in the mountains in search of the best pastures.<sup>84</sup> According to his testimony, the Kurds go to their winter quarters at the end of October, where they stay for five to six months, depending on the weather in the spring. Brant also notes that the Kurds of this region do not have the custom of wearing protective armor. They carry a spear, two pistols, a rifle, a sword, and a shield. Sometimes a small bag with three arrows could be seen with them, but that weapon was now mostly unused. Brant distinguishes the Hayderanlı Kurds as brave warriors and good horse breeders.<sup>85</sup>

It should be noted that the Kurds' awareness of the world outside Kurdistan was limited, and their observations were focused on local forces—leaders and Ottoman authorities. The attempts of Kurdish tribes or Emirs to cooperate with Russia or Britain

<sup>82</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 375.

<sup>83</sup> Brant 1836: 211.

<sup>84</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 346.

<sup>85</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 415.



were conditioned by the hope of strengthening their own autonomy or practical independence from the Ottoman center.<sup>86</sup> According to Brant's testimony, some of them could not even write or read Turkish. In their thinking, it was an utterly useless activity, since from the age of bearing arms, they had hardly spent an hour without military work.<sup>87</sup>

Brant conveys information about Yazidi Kurds and other groups, based on the stories of a Kurdish tribal chief, Sherif Agha. The Yazidis reject Islam, curse Muhammad, and worship Malak Taus. They are severely offended by the word "Sheytan" (devil) and believe that if a line is drawn around them on the ground, they will not move until it is erased. Although Sherif Agha confesses that he does not have detailed information about the Yazidi faith, he also mentions the "Çırağ Söndüren" group, whose worship includes the adoration of wooden beams decorated with precious clothes. Most of the Güzik Kurds belong to this group. Muslims call them "Kızılbaş," which is applied to followers of the Shia direction or pagan sects. In general, Kurdish tribal groups are religiously diverse, with one part being Muslim and the other having other faiths.<sup>88</sup> Brant does not provide detailed information about the geography of the Yazidis' residence, except for the fact that they mainly form a part of the Kurdish tribes.

Brant also draws attention to the fact that despite the increase in taxes, the establishment of Ottoman control had a beneficial effect on general security, unlike the former instability when people were under constant danger of being plundered or murdered. According to Brant, after the actions of Reshid Mohammed Pasha and Hafiz Pasha, especially since the formation of the militia of this pashalik, the Kurds no longer dare to openly plunder, and cases of secret theft have also become rare. Brant emphasizes that the militia has become a moral restraint for this savage tribal group—which is indeed noteworthy, considering how small the number of the militia is (only a few hundred people in this pashalik), how recently this system was introduced, and how imperfect that force is, both in terms of armament and discipline.<sup>89</sup> "Until the establishment of Reshid Mohammed Pasha's rule in Diyarbekir, the residents were in a state of virtual siege; no one dared to leave the city without an escorting caravan, and the connection with Baghdad was completely cut off. These destructions and desolation were carried out by the Kurds," writes Brant.<sup>90</sup>

In the village of Alishan, before Reshid Muhammed Pasha's victory against the Kurds, the villagers were frequently subjected to plunder. However, according to Brant's testimony, complete safety prevailed after those events.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Eppel 2008: 248.

<sup>87</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 356-357.

<sup>88</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 354-355.

<sup>89</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 348.

<sup>90</sup> Brant 1836: 210.

<sup>91</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 367.

According to Brant's report, a remarkable incident occurred near Çat (Chat) not long before 1833, when a Tatar, transporting precious stones to Persia, was subjected to an armed attack and wounded while defending his goods. However, in the subsequent period, almost no cases of plunder were recorded in the region. Brant attributes this to two main factors: first, the sharp decrease in the use of that particular trade route, and second, the establishment of a more systematic and effective control over the Kurdish population by the Ottoman authorities compared to the previous period.<sup>92</sup>

He recorded these positive changes by citing the military road built by Reshid and Hafiz Pashas, which started from Samsun and reached the plain of Kharput, and which had significantly facilitated the passage of mountainous areas.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, despite the progress, many roads were impassable, especially in winter. According to his testimony, "the direct road to Erzurum is closed for three months in winter due to snow".<sup>94</sup> And generally, the road and transport network in the Ottoman Empire, especially in the deep regions of Western Armenia and Anatolia, was very poorly developed. The difficulties of communication were another obstacle to the development of agriculture and trade.<sup>95</sup>

Brant, as a consul dispatched to the Ottoman Empire for the purpose of developing trade and economic relations, addresses changes in trade routes in his notes. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire gained important significance for Britain as a source of raw material imports and a market for industrial product exports. The rapidly expanding British industry demanded new markets and supply routes, and the Ottoman Empire, with its geographical position and relatively open markets, acquired a specific strategic importance. This formulation of economic interests was codified by the Anglo-Turkish (Balta Liman) Convention of 1838.<sup>96</sup>

With the expansion of British political and economic influence over the Ottoman Empire, the economic influence and control of Christians in the Ottoman Empire expanded. These groups became increasingly involved in state trade activities, acting as intermediaries between European interests and the local population.<sup>97</sup>

Until 1832, a significant part of the trade between Europe and Persia carried out via the Black Sea was concentrated in the Russian port of Redut-Kale, located at the mouth of the Rioni River. However, after Russian customs restrictions and the blockade of the Georgian coast started by the Russians in 1831, the main trade route shifted to Trabzon, with the active participation of Armenian and Persian merchants. Thus, the trade route transitioned from the Redut-Kale–Tiflis–Caspian Sea–Persia route to the

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<sup>92</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 429.

<sup>93</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 365.

<sup>94</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 368.

<sup>95</sup> Petrosyan 2013: 220.

<sup>96</sup> Inalcik, Quartaert 1994: 825.

<sup>97</sup> Braude, Lewis 1982: 293.

south: Trabzon–Erzurum–Tabriz.<sup>98</sup> According to Brant, in 1830, only 5,000 bales of European goods passed through Trabzon on the road to Persia, whereas in 1835, about 20,000 bales were already being transported via the same route.<sup>99</sup>

This was also due to the fact that land trade was gradually yielding its importance to sea trade based on steamships. Even in places where caravan trade was still maintained, it tended to change its direction and concentrate towards the nearest ports.<sup>100</sup> In this regard, Brant's observation about restoring Trabzon as a trade center and organizing trade with Iran via the Trabzon–Erzurum–Tabriz route, bypassing the Caucasus–Georgia road controlled by the Russians, was apt, as the caravan trade aimed to be replaced by the routes of English steamships.<sup>101</sup> According to Brant, "Erzurum commands the roads to Persia, protects the entrance to Constantinople, and is now the first place of importance in Turkey, whether the entrance be from Georgia or Persia".<sup>102</sup>

Brant noted that in many regions there were favorable conditions and fertile lands for the development of agriculture and trade, but the inefficient governance system and the atmosphere of insecurity hindered overall progress. According to his testimony, the Armenian population of Van was migrating en masse to Constantinople to work and earn money. This migration was mainly temporary: people returned home to spend their savings, and then left again to work. Recently, they were registered by the community leader, and according to him, only last year (1836-1837) there were 31,000 such persons on the list. About 3,000 returned to their families every year, and the same number departed for Constantinople again.<sup>103</sup>

Brant also noted that the vast lands of the Van Pashalik often remain uncultivated or uninhabited, which testifies to serious deficiencies in governance. If the governance system were effective, such large-scale migration would not occur. Another main obstacle to the development of agriculture was the atmosphere of insecurity created by the Kurdish tribes, but according to him, there was hope that this evil would gradually disappear, as the abolition of kishlaks was planned in the region between Van and the Bandimah River. "If this is realized, it will greatly alleviate the condition of the peasantry of that region," he concluded.<sup>104</sup>

Overall, economic growth in many provinces, especially in Kurdish sections, was hindered by a decline in productivity, as the disorders in the region favored the predominance of animal husbandry over agriculture.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Braude, Lewis 1982: 290.

<sup>99</sup> Brant 1836: 189.

<sup>100</sup> Braude, Lewis 1982: 271.

<sup>101</sup> Dönmez 2019: 366.

<sup>102</sup> Brant, 1836: 200.

<sup>103</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 395.

<sup>104</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 395-396.

<sup>105</sup> McDowall 2021: 45.

Brant's conversation with the Müsellim of Khnus, Sherif Bey, is noteworthy in this regard. Sherif Bey characterized the inhabitants as "ignorant" and pointed out that they did not even use carts, even though they were widely used in other regions of the empire and were especially suitable for the local field economy. Brant, however, rightly observes that the problem was conditioned not so much by the diligence of the inhabitants as by the nature of state governance. If a person earned money through diligence and intelligence, some greedy governor would confiscate it, so that the entire incentive for industriousness disappeared. Sherif Bey partially agreed with this observation, noting that the natives, when they became rich, tended to become arrogant and forget their duty, and cited the Beys of that region as an example, who, upon becoming rich, became haughty and rebelled. Brant countered that such cases are more a manifestation of self-defense and that if the government were just and exercised proper control, there would be no incentive to rebel and the Beys would not be able to successfully become independent. Sherif Bey expressed hope that now, when the country is under the control of legal authorities, tranquility will prevail henceforth, and prosperity will follow as a natural consequence. The idea that the people should be kept under pressure and poverty to ensure obedience was characterized by Brant as "the Turkish expedient." The long-term application of this principle, according to him, was the very factor that had led the country to a socio-economically unfavorable state.<sup>106</sup>

Brant's report mentions that "the trade of Van is insignificant, and the consumption of European goods is negligible, because poverty prevents people from acquiring them. Nevertheless, Van, with its geographical position, lands, climate, and all other circumstances, is capable of becoming an important commercial center. Bad governance and the lack of security are hindering the development of its natural advantages".<sup>107</sup>

Brant also gave an assessment of the Pasha of Van, noting: "From all I saw and heard, the Pasha was a just and honorable old man, but with his age and mental unpreparedness, he was an unsuitable person to govern such a beautiful but uncultivated Pashalik. Whereas, when the formation of new orders began in Turkey, such regions should be governed by active, energetic, and enlightened leaders".<sup>108</sup> These words of the British consul were aimed at showing that the real progress of the region is possible only in the event of a radical reform of the Ottoman governance system, which would be guaranteed by a British presence.

## Conclusion

The study shows that the British consular presence, which became active in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was not only a diplomatic mission but also had clear strategic goals. Through the journeys and publications of the Consul

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<sup>106</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 363.

<sup>107</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 396.

<sup>108</sup> Brant and Glascott 1840: 395-396.

of Erzurum, James Brant, not only the socio-economic and political realities of the eastern provinces of the empire come to light, but also the real goals and practices of British foreign policy. Brant's travelogues testify that consular reports served not only as informational but also as control and influence tools, while simultaneously reflecting Britain's growing interest in the internal life of the Ottoman state.

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## MUSLIM MOVEMENTS AND INTERETHNIC PROCESSES IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN 1918–1920

Hrant Virabyan\*

### Abstract

The year 1917 was crucial for the peoples of Transcaucasia, who, living within the Russian Empire, seemed to have reconciled themselves to the situation until the proclamation of their own statehood, and each sought a way out of the situation in their own way. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dense masses of Muslim population lived in the Yerevan province and adjacent regions, such as Elizavetpol (Gandzak) and other areas. In this situation, due to the revolutionary conditions in Russia, bloody and uncompromising inter-ethnic conflicts broke out; the relative tranquility of general coexistence was violated, and an atmosphere of distrust and hostility took place between nations and ethnic groups. The collapse of the Russian Empire served as a new impetus for extremely dangerous developments, and the national consultations convened with the participation of Turkish and Armenian national-political figures ended fruitlessly. This was a consequence not only of the region's motley national composition but also of the conflicting and irreconcilable interests of various forces that could not be overcome. The anarchy contributed to the deepening of the chaos, as a result of which the undertaken reforms were not implemented, promises remained unfulfilled, and the Tsarist authorities themselves incited this conflict, often adopting the role of an observer while anticipating the desired scenario. Occupying large territories, the Muslim population obstructed the establishment of normal communication between Armenian regions in every way. In particular, the road between Yerevan and Daralagyaz passed through Muslim villages, which was the reason for frequent attacks and murders of Armenians on the Daralagyaz roads. The situation was the same in the Davalu region, which, being cut off from Gharakhay (or Karabakh), could not transport any goods beyond. Under such conditions, to assist in opening the roads, the Government of the Republic of Armenia (RA) was forced to appeal for help to the Allied British Command. The years 1918-1920 were marked by anti-state actions by Muslims living in the territory of the RA. Refusing to accept the authority of the RA, they constantly kept the

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government in turmoil. Turkey and Azerbaijan stood behind the rebellious regions, supplying weapons and financing the insurgents. The RA had both successes and failures in the fight against the rebellious regions.

**Keywords:** Transcaucasia, inter-ethnic conflicts, Muslims, Republic of Armenia, Russian Civil War

### Introduction

During the Russian revolutions (1905-1907, 1917), this supposed tranquility in the Russian Empire was frequently disrupted by inter-ethnic conflicts, which reached their peak during the 1905-1907 revolution. Under these conditions, criminal acts became frequent, committed by gangs united along ethnic lines, especially the Kurdish-Tatar groups, which became common in various provinces (Ganja, Qazakh, Jivanshir, Shusha, Zangezur, and Karyagino districts of Ganja province, and Akhalkalaki and Borchalu districts of Tiflis province), further exacerbating the food supplies, which was compounded by the increasing attacks of Muslim gangs on Armenians in the autumn of 1917.

It also turned out that there were no undisputed Armenian territories in Transcaucasia, even within the Yerevan province, including even the heavily Armenian-populated Akhalkalaki, Borchalu, and Zangezur, which sharply aggravated inter-ethnic relations. The national problems inherited from Tsarism began to play their destructive role. This was particularly vividly expressed during the so-called *zemstvo* discussions, where the overt and aggressive disagreement of the Georgian-Azerbaijani circles towards Armenians became sharp, resulting in the categorical rejection of Armenian figures' proposals to establish *zemstvos* or autonomies based on national-territorial features. This would have required changing the former administrative borders, for example, removing the Akhalkalaki district from Tiflis province and Lori from Borchalu district, which was a result of Tsarist administrative discriminatory policy. The same applied to the much more problematic Karabakh and Zangezur. Turkish-Tatar-Azerbaijani agents in the Muslim-populated regions of Yerevan province organized the population, created combat groups, engaged in subversive activities, destroyed railways and telegraph lines, and carried out ambushes on separate Russian military units.

S. Vratsian aptly noted regarding this: "An anxious, nervous state prevailed everywhere. The dark hand—that is, Turkey—acted unrestrainedly, and no effort, governmental or public, could curb or prevent the Muslim movements. They gradually expanded, acquired a persistent character, and by the end of 1917 had become the most catastrophic phenomenon of Caucasian life".<sup>1</sup> The Czech historian Miroslav Hroch also observed this well, noting that the existence of serious social conflict along ethnic or national lines was a decisive factor in the dissemination of national ideologies and

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<sup>1</sup> Vratsian 1993: 72.



their transformation into mass movements, which was very pronounced in the Caucasus during 1905-1909 and 1917-1921, including the bloody Armenian-Tatar clashes.<sup>2</sup> The ethnic clashes became an impetus for the consolidation of the Tatar-Azerbaijani population, which had previously demonstrated a relatively restrained demeanor, against the Armenian population, which was encircled by a dense Tatar mass in almost all regions of Transcaucasia, even in the territory of the future Republic of Armenia.

In this regard, the Azerbaijani author A. Balaev also notes that the Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes during that period became the main impetus for the consolidation of "Azerbaijanis" and had a significant impact on the nation-building processes in "Azerbaijan".<sup>3</sup> B. Rezvani, a researcher of ethnic issues from the University of Amsterdam, presents the ethno-political relations at the beginning of the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century quite uniquely, concluding that as a result of social and economic disparities, Armenians were disliked by their neighbors in the South Caucasus. Inter-ethnic clashes between Armenians and Muslims in the South Caucasus became routine, even before the First World War, the Armenian Genocide, and the mass migration of Armenian refugees from the Ottoman Empire. He notes that these clashes first erupted after the Russian Revolution of 1905, when various parts of the Russian Empire were dragged into widespread unrest, which soon turned into purely ethnic and religious conflicts, in which material gain also played an important role. According to B. Rezvani, they were clearly expressed in Nakhichevan, where Armenians were not as wealthy as the Muslim elite, but organized Muslim gangs took advantage of the chaos to kill and loot Armenians. The violence spread throughout Transcaucasia, and overall, 3,100 to 10,000 people were killed as a result of the Armenian-Tatar violence in the South Caucasus.<sup>4</sup>

As a result of all this, the undertaken reforms were not implemented, promises remained unfulfilled, and the national forces ended up at opposite poles. According to F. Shafiyev's conclusion, the brutal clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in 1905-1906 were the first in a series of incidents that occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which later turned into a protracted, large-scale inter-ethnic conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.<sup>5</sup> This circumstance, according to Azerbaijani authors<sup>6</sup>, and particularly N. Gozalova, disrupted the ethnic and territorial delimitation of the South Caucasus in 1918, as well as the economic and everyday structure of its population, which had been formed over centuries, thus creating sharp contradictions between the national states regarding future borders. She finds that this was the result of the mass resettlement of Armenians from Western Armenia and Iran into the Transcaucasian territories, which was encouraged by the Russian government and was an integral part of Tsarist colonial

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<sup>2</sup> See Shissler 2002: 11.

<sup>3</sup> Balaev 2012: 212.

<sup>4</sup> Rezvani 2013: 175.

<sup>5</sup> Shafiyev 2015: 199.

<sup>6</sup> Yavuz 2023: 20.

policy, aiming to change the region's demographic picture by increasing the proportion of Armenians in the population of the South Caucasus.<sup>7</sup>

However, this only partially reflected the reality, as the Tsarist authorities did not provide final solutions to the issues, but merely situational ones, conditioned by the balance of regional forces. According to Russian sources, the clashes were characterized as "Armenian-Tatar massacres" or "Armenian-Muslim massacres"<sup>8</sup>, the reasons for which Azerbaijani authors see in the Russian colonial policy that caused uneven development in different ethnic communities in the South Caucasus.<sup>9</sup> Azerbaijani author F. Jabbarov practically concurs with the opinion expressed by Armenian author T. Vardanyan<sup>10</sup> that the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh is presented as an organic continuation of the Armenian-Turkish hostility from the 1890s to 1923 and the Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes of 1905-1906, as part of this conflict.<sup>11</sup>

### **A New Wave of Tension in Inter-ethnic Developments**

Under these conditions, extremist actions became frequent, committed by gangs united along ethnic lines, especially Kurdish groups, which became common in the Surmalu district and elsewhere, further exacerbating the food and security situation, which was compounded by the increasing attacks of Muslim gangs on Armenians in the autumn of 1917. The issue of creating the so-called *zemstvos* or autonomies based on the national-territorial principle inherited from Tsarism reached a deadlock<sup>12</sup>; it was sabotaged by the Tatar-Azerbaijani and Georgian leaders who found common interests.

According to the Polish researcher T. Swietochowski, inter-ethnic violence spread throughout Transcaucasia, as a result of which thousands of people perished in the South Caucasus due to the Armenian-Tatar clashes<sup>13</sup>, a view shared by the Turkish researcher E. Karakoç.<sup>14</sup> According to Swietochowski, the victims were mainly Muslims, although he later adds that Armenians also suffered significant losses: "In fact, all available evidence suggests that the Muslims, who were usually the aggressors, suffered greater losses than the Armenians, though not overwhelmingly."<sup>15</sup> According to T. Swietochowski, the fact that Muslims suffered greater losses than Armenians indicated the Armenians' higher level of organization and military superiority.<sup>16</sup> It is also

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<sup>7</sup> Gozalova 2019: 37, 39, 41-43.

<sup>8</sup> Shafiyev 2015: 199.

<sup>9</sup> Shafiyev 2015: 200.

<sup>10</sup> Vardanyan 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Dzhabbarov 2017: 55.

<sup>12</sup> Shahkhatunyan 1918.

<sup>13</sup> Hovannisian 1967: 264.

<sup>14</sup> Karakoç 2011: 1015.

<sup>15</sup> Swietochowski 1985: 41.

<sup>16</sup> Swietochowski 1985: 41. Swietochowski 1995: 69, 133.

worth noting that a large part of the Armenian armed forces had gained substantial combat experience on various fronts of World War I having served in the Volunteer units and the Armenian Legion and taken part in several key military operations. In case of proper organization, it was fully capable of defending itself against Muslim assaults.

### **The Russian Upheaval of 1917. The Self-Proclamation of Independent Caucasian Republics. A New Phase of Ethnic Clashes**

Inter-ethnic violence erupted again a decade later, during the First World War and the Russian Civil War (1917-1923), with severe consequences. It is not surprising that inter-ethnic violence in the South Caucasus has always emerged when the central authorities of the Russian Empire or later the Soviet Union were weak or absent, or simply when, due to various geopolitical reasons, processes of collapse occasionally occurred in the Russian Empire, which accompanied Russia throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Such acts of violence took place in the period following the Russian Revolution of 1905, during the period of the First World War and the Russian Civil War, as well as during the period of *glasnost* and *perestroika* (“transparency, restructuring”) and the collapse of the Soviet Union<sup>17</sup>. In Azerbaijan and Armenia, respectively, the attitude of Armenians and Azerbaijanis grew into hatred, and conflict followed the hatred.<sup>18</sup>

However, the real turmoil arose immediately after the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, and for a short period—1918–1920—chaos reigned in the Transcaucasian region, and armed clashes erupted between Azerbaijanis and Armenians.<sup>19</sup> The Ukrainian historian Y. Pilipchuk believes that the prerequisites for ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus were laid with the arrival of the Russian Empire in the South Caucasus, and by falsifying historical realities, he notes that the Romanov dynasty contributed to the resettlement of Armenians from Anatolia and Iran to the territory of the South Caucasus, considering Muslims to be an unfaithful population, not conscripting them into the army, and not involving them in the administration of the region. Y. Pilipchuk concludes that these very actions led to the start of inter-ethnic clashes between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the provinces of Yerevan, Elizavetpol, Sharur-Nakhichevan, and Daralagyaz at the beginning of 1918.<sup>20</sup>

The Abkhaz political scientist E. Kavtaradze goes even further in falsifying historical facts, regarding the anti-Georgian-Azerbaijani policy of the First Republic’s political leadership. He finds that one of the first large-scale ethnic cleansing operations of Azerbaijanis from Transcaucasian territories by Armenian formations was carried out in the Yerevan province, writing that during the period from February 17-21, 1918, Armenian regular armed formations commanded by Colonel Pirumov, using artillery,

<sup>17</sup> Rezvani 2016: 175-176.

<sup>18</sup> Rezvani 2013: 14, 175.

<sup>19</sup> Yunusov 2002. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Pilipchuk 2021: 107, 109, 118, 137, 143.

razed 21 Azerbaijani villages in that province to the ground, and 197 Azerbaijani villages were looted and destroyed.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, the purpose of such historical falsification is to deny that, during this period of chaos in the Transcaucasus, efforts were made to incite anti-Armenian movements, undermine the rear of Armenian military units, and create a front against them, an attempt that ultimately failed. The newly formed Armenian forces succeeded in delivering crushing blows to the enemy, forcing it to halt the bandit raids on Armenian villages and the destruction of roads, railways, and bridges. This brought stability to Surmalu, Zangibasar (Masis), and Vedibasar (Aygavan), thereby refuting the above-mentioned false accusations of alleged Armenian actions aimed at ethnic cleansing.

On May 26, 1918, the fragile Transcaucasian Federation disintegrated, and Georgia was the first to proclaim its independence. After that, the question was raised: how best to focus attention on the national states in Transcaucasia (Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia) that had separated from the former Tsarist Russian Empire?<sup>22</sup> The proclamation of independence by Azerbaijan<sup>23</sup> and Armenia followed one after the other. Armenians went to this reluctantly<sup>24</sup>, which the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Hovhannes Qajaznuni, considered as *de facto* captivity in the hands of Turkey (Tachkastan in the document – H.V.), battles with Georgia and Azerbaijan both outside and within the country's borders, the extreme collapse of the economy, famine, epidemic, the brutalization of morals, and general despair.<sup>25</sup>

And from that moment, Azerbaijan began to present accusations against Armenia, particularly accusing it of bellicose separatism, falsely claiming that Armenians had pretensions to Mughan, Zangezur, and Karabakh (Artsakh).<sup>26</sup> Azerbaijani author I. Niftaliyev, in this context, believes that the Azerbaijani people, who restored their state independence in May 1918 and at that time constituted almost half of the South Caucasus population, received a territory that did not at all correspond to its ethnic and historical borders. He states that in the territory of Western Azerbaijan (according to him, the former Irevan province), the Armenian state—the Ararat Republic—was the first in the South Caucasus to be created by the Dashnaks in May 1918, and this republic, not satisfied with the Azerbaijani lands already occupied, also claimed the territories of Karabakh, Zangezur, and Nakhichevan, which constituted the indigenous lands of Azerbaijan, and the majority of the population were Azerbaijanis.<sup>27</sup> According to Niftaliyev and authors in agreement with him, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun/ARF), created in 1890, played a central role in the proclamation of the

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<sup>21</sup> Kavtaradze 2022: 36.

<sup>22</sup> Urushadze 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Harutyunyan 2025: 75-99.

<sup>24</sup> Suny 1994: 191.

<sup>25</sup> Qajaznuni 2023: 16.

<sup>26</sup> Gogitidze, Sabanadze 2019: p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> Niftaliyev 2010: 21, 110, 123, 132.

Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic in 1917–1918, and then the First Republic of Armenia, after the collapse of the Russian Empire.<sup>28</sup> But the creation of separate Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani republics did not mean the end of inter-ethnic conflicts. The republics had competing claims over territories that, for historical or demographic reasons, they believed belonged to them. Georgia and Armenia entered a short-lived war for the border territories of Javakhk, Lori, and Borchalu.

According to the conclusion of Ch. Berglund, M. Dragojevich, and Th. Blauvelt, the outbreak of conflict prompted the Georgian authorities to take extreme measures against the peaceful Armenian population of Georgia—arresting Dashnak political figures in Tiflis, closing their newspapers, dismissing Armenian state employees, and even alienating merchants' property. Thus, in the opinion of the aforementioned authors, Armenians found themselves in a difficult situation in the Georgian state during 1918–1921, and the subsequent Soviet invasion did not alleviate their problems. The use of their native language by Armenians in Tiflis in daily life was relegated to the background; the majority attended Russian-language schools and learned Georgian through social interactions, and by the 1926 census, Georgians gradually gained a significant presence in Tiflis, and became the majority by the 1970 census. In Javakheti (Javakhq), Armenians adapted to a de facto isolated lifestyle from Georgians, and the presence of a Soviet military base in the region had a Russifying influence on the local Armenian population.<sup>29</sup> The Turkish military occupation of Transcaucasia continued until mid-November 1918. Soon Baku fell, and the Turkish army, accompanied by Azerbaijani fighters, took revenge on the Armenians. In addition to the war with the Ottoman Turks, Armenia fought wars with Azerbaijan over Nakhichevan, Zangezur, and Karabakh, and with Georgia over the Akhalkalaki and Lori regions, located in southern Georgia and northern Armenia.<sup>30</sup>

According to the Information Bureau of the RA diplomatic representation in Tiflis, based on data collected regarding only 18 districts of the Transcaucasian region, 393 Armenian villages, totaling 55,076 households, were destroyed during that period. Furthermore, the number of looted Armenian households in the regions of Alexandropol, İğdır, Ardvin, Nakhichevan, Nukha, Baku, Shamakhi, Guba, Derbent, Geokchay, and the areas near Baku reached about 100,000, as a result of which a population of more than 600,000 was deprived of means of subsistence<sup>31</sup>, (Nor Bayazet district, Gyokcha district, Novobayazetskiy, etc.: a district in the northeastern part of the Yerevan province, in the coastal region of Lake Sevan. It bordered Kazakh and Gandzak districts to the north, Jevanshir to the east, Sharur–Daralagyaz and Yerevan districts to the south, and the Ejmiatsin district of Yerevan to the west<sup>32</sup>) and the damage caused,

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Berglund, Dragojevich and Blauvelt 2021: 112–113.

<sup>30</sup> Rezvani 2013: 177.

<sup>31</sup> NAA, f. 278, c. 1, doc. 4, l. 41.

<sup>32</sup> Hakobyan et. al. 1998, 24.

according to 1919 data, amounted to about 8 billion rubles.<sup>33</sup> During the short period of Musavat rule—only in 1918-1919 in the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic—according to the testimony of the Baku newspaper “Komunist” on August 9, 1920, 120 Russian, 82 Armenian, and 110 Azerbaijani villages were fundamentally destroyed.<sup>34</sup>

In 1918-1920, inter-ethnic clashes and massacres were added to the horrors of war in Transcaucasia. The revolts organized and incited by Turkish and Azerbaijani agents among the Tatar (Azerbaijani) population of Armenia did not cease throughout the entire period of the republic's existence. And here, the Tatar-Azerbaijani side, supposedly to protect themselves from Armenian encroachments and demands, tied their hopes to the Ottoman state.<sup>35</sup> H. Adjarian noted this moment well: “Just at that time, the rebellion explodes even inside Armenia. West of Yerevan, from Mets Vedi to the Persian border, the Turks rebel and establish an independent government. The main stronghold of the rebellion was Böyük-Vedi (a village in the Yerevan district of the Yerevan province, now Vedi<sup>36</sup>), which the Armenians could not capture despite fighting for two months. On the other hand, the Turks (Ottomans) begin to encroach on the southern borders. Armenians reach all sides, curb the rebels, stop the Turks, and on the other hand, take care of internal order and the strengthening of the state.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Inter-ethnic Disputes Between the Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan**

In 1918-1920, from the perspective of ensuring the territorial integrity and security of the Republic of Armenia (RA), the issue of those regions where there was a greater possibility of violating the rights of the Armenian population became particularly important, as a large number of Muslim inhabitants lived there who often did not maintain a law-abiding position towards the authorities. Thanks to joint measures by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and regular military units during the Armenian-Tatar clashes, a significant number of the Muslim population was expelled from Armenia. Concentrating mainly in the border zones, this population became a carrier of a unique explosive charge, creating anti-state and anti-Armenian pockets of unrest.

On February 12, 1919, the Council of Ministers discussed the issue raised in the telegram from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, as the Azerbaijani side had complained about the actions of Armenian military units in the Lake Sevan region, which allegedly crossed the border of Azerbaijan and attacked several Turkish villages, while not holding themselves responsible for the actions of the Turkish population. In this regard, the RA Council of Ministers adopted a corresponding decision: “Taking into account the report of the Minister of Military Affairs, the Minister of Internal Affairs is instructed to immediately appoint a strict investigation to ascertain the authenticity of the

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<sup>33</sup> Ghulyan 2009: 56.

<sup>34</sup> “Kommunist”, 1920, no 69, August 9.

<sup>35</sup> Gasimli 2024: 343.

<sup>36</sup> Hakobyan et. al. 1986, 729.

<sup>37</sup> Adjarian 2004: 465-466.

attacks and pressures mentioned in the telegram, as well as the actions of the so-called 'groups,' and to hold the culprits accountable".<sup>38</sup>

The Armenian side's response noted that regular RA troops had not participated in the unrest in the Basargechar region (Vardenis district; in 1969 it was renamed by a decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR<sup>39</sup>), but rather about 10,000 Armenian refugees had attacked Muslim villages. Seeking to regulate the situation, the RA authorities returned the Muslims to their villages and handed over their looted property, while the culprits were held accountable.<sup>40</sup> In this context, orientalist and historian D. Knyazyan supports the opposite viewpoint, noting that the cause of the aggravation of the situation in the Basargechar region was the Armenian side, in the person of Western Armenian refugees who had been left homeless and unfed. D. Knyazyan finds that the military unit that arrived from Yerevan removed the Armenian refugees from the Muslim villages, but the irresponsible conduct of the unit's commander, Rotmistr Alexander Silikyan, became an inciting pretext for the Muslim revolt and the massacre of the troops.<sup>41</sup> All this led to the escalation of tension, the infiltration of armed groups from Azerbaijan into the territory of the RA, and the delivery of weapons to the rebels. Following this, preparations began for the capture of Chambarak and Bashkend, while simultaneously a mobilization was announced, in which 1,000 Georgian officers came to the aid of Azerbaijan.<sup>42</sup>

It must be said that, nevertheless, it was positive for the RA that the British command and its military-political representative, Colonel Clive Temperley, practically supported Armenia in resolving the issue, unlike their overtly pro-Azerbaijani position shown in Nagorno-Karabakh, Zangezur, and elsewhere. Thus, they contributed to the preservation of the territorial integrity of the RA in the Sotk/Zod-Basargechar region, confirming the legitimacy of the RA authorities' actions. The incident also clearly showed that Azerbaijan was claiming, in one way or another and by all means, all those Armenian regions where there was a compact Muslim population.<sup>43</sup>

A very interesting observation made by the RA Ambassador in Baku, T. Bekzadyan, on May 5, 1919, speaks about the ambiguity of British policy on Karabakh and other issues, and the aggressive aspirations of the Azerbaijani-Turkish population. He noted that the "uncertainty and ambiguity of General Shattelworth's policy in the Karabakh issue is worsening the already grave situation of Karabakh, which is cut off from the capital cities."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> NAA, f. 199, c. 1, doc. 96, l. 25; doc. 100 (43), l. 26; f. 201, c. 1, doc. 486, part I, l. 37; "Arev" 1919, February 13; "Yarach" 1919, February 16.

<sup>39</sup> Hakobyan et. al. 1986, 609.

<sup>40</sup> Knyazyan 2008: 92-93.

<sup>41</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 263, l. 4, 6, 9-10, 15, 34, 44; "Arev" 1919, February 11.

<sup>42</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 263, l. 47, 54-55, 60; doc. 294, l. 77.

<sup>43</sup> "Kavkazskoe slovo" 1919, April 5, 25, Tiflis; "Yedinaya Rossiya" 1919, March 26.

<sup>44</sup> Tigran Bekzadyan 2025: 113.

Addressing the military operations that took place in the Shushi district and the extremely reckless and unrestrained actions of the Muslim population, who did not even consider it necessary to reckon with the British command—being confident that, as in many cases, they would again remain unpunished and not answer for their criminal steps—Bekzadyan considered it necessary for the British command to provide clarifications regarding the overly tolerant attitude towards the Muslims. And on the night of May 3-4, “the Tatars, occupying the elevated part of the city—above the boulevard—began shelling the Armenian part of the city at 12:00 AM, as well as the British headquarters, shattering the windows of the houses where the British were stationed. The British moved their troops between the Tatar and Armenian positions, intending to end the fighting in this way, but the Tatars, ignoring this, did not cease fire. As a result, one British Indian soldier was killed by a Tatar bullet, one was wounded, and on the Armenian side, one officer was killed and four fighters were wounded.

It is known from reliable sources that Turkish officers participated on the Tatar side in the battles, and Kurds from the tribe of Doctor Sultanov and Turkish soldiers remaining from the Turkish army were in the positions. There are Russian officers in the Tatar military units, and the organizer of the Kurdish-Turkish military units is the Turkish officer Kazim Bey.” Bekzadyan recorded in his diary that he informed the presidium of the National Council about these facts.<sup>45</sup> These newly revealed facts shed new light on the history of both the Muslim movements and the Karabakh-Artsakh issue.

It is noteworthy that in a conversation with the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, Nasib bey Usubbekov, on April 15, 1919, in response to RA Ambassador T. Bekzadyan’s assertion that the appointment of Doctor Sultanov was undesirable for Armenians, Usubbekov retorted that for them, the Muslims, the appointment of Andranik in Zangezur was undesirable, and he himself did not see an aggressive act on the part of the Tatars in the appointment of Sultanov.<sup>46</sup>

This explains the activation of Muslim movements throughout 1919. All the more or less significant cases of the expulsion of the Muslim population from the territory of the RA took place in the second half of 1918 - beginning of 1919, and conversely, from the Armenian regions of Azerbaijan to Armenia.

In a highly confidential report (N127) prepared on March 1, 1919, by Khan-Kotursky, one of the heads of the special department of the RA General Staff, which received the attention of the Minister of Military Affairs, special mention was made of the newly formed “Nakhichevan-Arazdayan” republic by Muslim leaders. It noted that the main reason for its emergence was the Garni-Basar events—the latter allegedly being the aggressors in order to prevent an Armenian invasion and protect the lives and property of the Muslims. This highly important document also noted that the general-governor of this essentially self-proclaimed republic was Jafar Quli Khan Nakhichevanski, his assistant was Kalabek Tairov, the commander of the troops was

<sup>45</sup> Tigran Bekzadyan 2025: 114-115.

<sup>46</sup> Bekzadyan 2025: 93.



Kerbalay Ali Khan Nakhichevanski (Jafar Quli Khan's son), and the head of the detachment operating near the Armenian border was Bagram Khan Nakhichevanski. It presented facts about the presence of a well-armed officer corps of about 100 people and 2,000 soldiers among the Muslims, despite a certain shortage of ammunition. The report emphasized that the goal was to unite the Arazdyan Republic with Azerbaijan, for which, on February 28, delegates led by Abbas-Quli-bey, a member of the Kars "Shura,"<sup>47</sup> were sent by British train to Tiflis-Baku-Elizavetpol, anticipating aid from Azerbaijan.<sup>48</sup>

Remarkable facts about the anti-Armenian activities of Muslims in Nakhichevan and the agency network are contained in the report (N 136) of the head of the special department, Podporuchik Bashinjaghyan, on March 13, 1919, which confirms the existence of the "Nakhichevan Republic." To realize this, Bagram Khan was sent to Tiflis-Elizavetpol-Baku and was very cordially received by the British, who in principle did not object to the existence of the self-proclaimed Nakhichevan government. It was also said that Bagram Khan was received by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Georgia, who congratulated him on the success of the Nakhichevan government in the fight against Armenia, and asked him to greet the glorious Tatar troops. It was noted that one of Bagram Khan's goals was to obtain aid in money, weapons, and ammunition from Elizavetpol and Baku, that the rebels had a large quantity of bullets brought from Persia, and that military instruction was being conducted by Turkish and Azerbaijani officers, led by Khalil Bey. In this regard, it was also noted that Hajji Riza Kasumbekov, who arrived in Yerevan on the instructions of the Nakhichevan government, was arrested on charges of espionage and was required to pay a fine of 100,000 rubles and leave for Tabriz. It was also noted that a stable telegraph connection was maintained between Nakhichevan and Baku via the Tabriz-Tehran line. The information also stated that the necessary communication for the rebels was carried out via the Maku-Bayazet-Gharakilisa line.<sup>49</sup>

Important information about the activation of the Muslim movement is contained in the summary (N 8) of the Intelligence Department of the RA Ministry of Military Affairs General Staff on December 11, 1919, which speaks of Azerbaijan's activity in the Kulpi region<sup>50</sup>, in the person of Shamil-bey Ardlinski from the village of Parnaut, who had 3 assistants and 400 cavalry at his disposal, 80 of whom were Turkish *askyars* (soldiers).<sup>51</sup> They received large sums of money from Azerbaijan, and 50 *askyars* led by an officer were also sent from there for propaganda and the organization of detachments, with the aim of hindering the capture of Kulp (Koghb, Kokhb, Kulp, Kulb, etc.: a village, small town in the Surmalu district, on the right-bank tributary of the Araks,

<sup>47</sup> Muslim National Council

<sup>48</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc 212, l. 61.

<sup>49</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc 212, l. 75.

<sup>50</sup> Surmalu district of Yerevan Province.

<sup>51</sup> NAA, f. 204, c. 1, doc. 133, l. 37.

the Koghb River (formerly Vardamarg).<sup>52 53</sup> In an appeal dated June 21, 1919, addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the head of the intelligence department, Lieutenant Colonel Al. Shneur, emphasized the destructive work of the Turks in the Nakhichevan region, and particularly the activities of the agitators of the Turkish “Union and Progress” organization’s committee, to prevent the return of Armenians to their native settlements<sup>54</sup>. Of interest is the secret report (N 00156) of July 2, 1919, from the commander of the Yerevan Army Group, Dro, addressed to the Commander of the RA Forces. It reveals that during the stay of the British military representative, General J. P. Plauden, in Nakhichevan, the Tatars complained about the illegal actions of the Armenian authorities, and particularly the arrests carried out on the orders of the Armenian counterintelligence that allegedly had “no reason,” which made a repressive impression on the Muslims, causing many to start leaving Nakhichevan.<sup>55</sup>

In the operational information of July 8, 1919, Colonel M. Zinkevich reported that the situation in Zangezur was very alarming. According to the head of the Shah-Takhti region, the movement of a Muslim cavalry hundred in the mountains in a northern direction was observed. A detachment of Turks and Kurds, about 8,000 people, prepared to attack Iğdır. For this purpose, on July 6, heavy rifle fire from the enemy began from the area of the Ali-Mamed village on the right flank of the Armenian positions, to which the Armenian military unit counter-attacked. It was reported that about 500 armed men from Sadarak, led by Meshadi Alasker Gamzaev, arrived from Yengija to Böyük-Vedi on July 5-6. However, representatives of Yengija cautiously appealed to the commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> regiment with a request to send their *aksaka/s* to Böyük-Vedi to persuade them to submit to the legitimate Armenian authorities.<sup>56</sup> All this directly attests to the policy aimed at subjugating the separatist actions of the Muslim population living in Armenian territories, which was also facilitated by the effective work of the intelligence services.

In a memorandum presented to the RA Prime Minister on January 3, 1920, by the head of the Intelligence Department, Muradyan, and his assistant, Podporuchik Khachatryan, mention was made of the Tatar revolt in the Nakhichevan region, the participation of Turkish military forces in it, and the congress of representatives of Aralikh, Vedibasara (a village in the Yerevan district of the Yerevan province, now Aygavan<sup>57</sup>), and Milistan (Turkey) convened in Nakhichevan at the initiative of Khalil Pasha<sup>58</sup>. The summary (N 10) of January 22, 1920, testifies to Azerbaijan’s subversive activity in Nakhichevan-Sharur, as well as the Turkish officers and *askyars* secretly sent

<sup>52</sup> Hakobyan et. al. 1991, 196.

<sup>53</sup> NAA, f. 204, c. 1, doc. 133, l. 38.

<sup>54</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 155, l. 41.

<sup>55</sup> NAA, f. 199, c. 1, doc. 73 (71), l. 67.

<sup>56</sup> NAA, f. 199, c. 1, l. 293.

<sup>57</sup> Hakobyan et. al. 1998, 794.

<sup>58</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 441, l. 41, Ghazaketsyan 1993 (ed.): 165.

to Zangezur to organize a revolt. Moreover, the Azerbaijani government exempted Kurdish rural communities from military tax, in return for which the latter were obliged to provide riflemen with equipment, weapons, and horses, as the organization of Kurdish military units was planned under the leadership of Sultanov<sup>59</sup>, who later showed great activity in Karabakh. The report of Captain Muradyan and his assistant, Podporuchik Dodokhyan, on February 7, 1920, mentioned the situation in the Sharur-Nakhichevan region and the concentration of Tatars in Böyük-Vedi.<sup>60</sup>

Some intelligence memoranda and reports of 1920 report interesting data on the coordinated Azerbaijani-Turkish actions in Sharur-Nakhichevan, Surmalu, Kars region, and Zangibasar (a village in the Yerevan district of the Yerevan province, now Masis<sup>61</sup>), which is also confirmed by T. Devoyants, one of the heads of the Intelligence and Counterintelligence Department of the RA General Staff: "Information from our agents shows that the Muslim population of Armenia, especially in the Kars province and the Sharur-Nakhichevan regions, did not want to reconcile with the idea of submitting to the Armenian authority, and with the help of Turkish officers and soldiers who remained there or newly arrived, they organized armed groups and prepared to revolt against Armenia".<sup>62</sup>

In the memorandum of March 20, 1920, the head of the Intelligence Department, Captain V. Muradyan, and his assistant, Captain T. Devoyants, presented facts about the activation of the Muslim movement, the activities of Turkish-Azerbaijani agents, and the 300 *askyars* who arrived from Shah-Takhti to Davalu (a village in the Yerevan district of the Yerevan province, now Ararat.<sup>63</sup>). It was reported that the Tatars, being interested in friendship with the Kurds, rewarded their leaders with large sums and gifts, sending 60,000 rubles to Fatti Bek Shamshatdinski. Kerbalay Khan Nakhichevanski became the commander-in-chief of the Nakhichevan forces, and he began organizing Kurdish detachments, expecting the arrival of a cavalry detachment of 500-600 people and numerous officer-instructors.<sup>64</sup>

That memorandum of March 20, 1920, reported on the activity of Muslims in Surmalu, noting that in Kulpi, besides local gangs, Shamil-bek Ayrumlinski had 200 Turkish *askyars* and 2 cannons, adding that ammunition was sent to Kulpi from Bayazet by 7 camels.<sup>65</sup> The intelligence summary of April 5, 1920, testifies to the arrival of Turkish *askyars* from the Bayazet *sanjak* (district) to Nakhichevan, led by Jafar Quli Khan and Kerbalay Khan Nakhichevanski.<sup>66</sup> In the summary, Captain Devoyants and

<sup>59</sup> NAA, f. 204, c. 1, doc. 133, l. 42.

<sup>60</sup> See Ghazakhetsyan 1993 (ed.): 166-167.

<sup>61</sup> Hakobyan et. al. 1988, 266.

<sup>62</sup> Devoyants 1945: 84.

<sup>63</sup> Hakobyan et. al. 1998, 41.

<sup>64</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 33, l. 11-12.

<sup>65</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 33, l. 11-12.

<sup>66</sup> NAA, doc. 427, part II, l. 252.

Podporuchik Dodokhyan reported that the Tatars of the Nakhichevan region were fully arming themselves, learning the art of marksmanship, and also receiving machine guns from Baku.<sup>67</sup> The summary (N 15) of April 23, 1920, contained facts about the arrival of 300 Turkish and 550 Azerbaijani *askyars* and 15 officers in Nakhichevan, who brought 17 million rubles with them.<sup>68</sup>

The intelligence department's summary (N 16) of May 7, 1920, provided data on the Sharur forces' Bash-Norashen headquarters, which was headed by the Turkish officer Osman Pasha, who was looking for ways to establish connections with Zangibasar.<sup>69</sup> The summary (N 17) of May 23, 1920, expressed alarm regarding the military-political situation in the region, reporting that money and ammunition were entering Nakhichevan from Azerbaijan through Persia via smuggling routes.<sup>70</sup> And in the summary (N 20) of July 6, 1920, the arrival of cavalry from Maku to Yayji and V. Aza (10 versts from the Julfa station) was reported, consisting of 125 men accompanied by two Turkish officers, as well as an expected attack by Edif Bey on Tsghnakh (Chananaab) and Goghtan.<sup>71</sup> And finally, the intelligence summary of the RA General Staff of September 25, 1920, already testified to the activation of the Red Army in the Nakhichevan region, emphasizing the near unfitness for combat of almost half of the Red troops<sup>72</sup>, which was not confirmed by subsequent facts.

Data on the activation of the Turks in the Kars region are also of interest, if only from the perspective of the background of the Turkish-Armenian war of 1920. An intelligence summary (N 8) of the General Staff, which relates to the events and various incidents that took place in the Kars Province during the period up to January 5, 1919, is quite interesting. The author of the summary, officer L. Bashinjaghyan, addresses the order prevailing in some military units of the Kars Province, emphasizing that despite the measures taken, desertion continues. He simultaneously addresses the situation prevailing in the remaining small Turkish military units and the widespread propaganda of Turkish officers among the population of the Kars Province, and particularly the Kurds, against the Armenians. The memorandum noted that the Turkish population of the province was well-armed, stating that large reserves of food had been accumulated by the Turks in the Nakhichevan region of the Kaghzvan *okrug* (district), in Digor and other villages, as well as at the Kızıl-Chakhchakh (or Ghızıl-Chakhchakh) station. The final part mentioned the activity of the Shah-Takhti Tatars, as well as the active accumulation of Kurds in the Aralikh region (in the villages of Bashkend, Ortakend, Shakhler, and others).<sup>73</sup> Also interesting is the operational-intelligence summary of the

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<sup>67</sup> NAA, doc. 427, part II, l. 252.

<sup>68</sup> NAA, doc. 427, part II, l. 262.

<sup>69</sup> NAA, doc. 427, part II, l. 279.

<sup>70</sup> NAA, doc. 441, l. 122.

<sup>71</sup> NAA, doc. 33, l. 40.

<sup>72</sup> NAA, doc. 427, part II, l. 383.

<sup>73</sup> NAA, doc. 92, l. 60.

Commander of the RA Forces, which provides data on the situation prevailing in the Kars Province up to August 23. It reported that the provisional government formed in Erzurum decided to occupy the Kars Province up to Arpachay, noting the violation of the Armenian border by Turkish officers for intelligence purposes. A conclusion was drawn that all Muslim revolts in the territory of Armenia take place on the instructions of Turkish agents, who had organized widespread espionage in the Republic of Armenia, relying on the local Muslim population. It was noted that having been expelled from the Nakhichevan and Sharur regions by Armenian military units, the leaders of the Tatar bands had moved their activities to the Kars Province.

The summary was sent to the RA Diplomatic Representative in Georgia to be handed over to the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies in Transcaucasia, W. Haskell.<sup>74</sup> Valuable information regarding the Kars Province is contained in the Intelligence Department's summary (N 14) of April 5, 1920, in which T. Devoyants and M. Dodokhyan reported that on the eve of the Chaldyr revolt, a Turkish regiment of 700 men was sent towards Merdenek, of which 300 left for Oltu. However, due to the events that took place in Dersim, they were forced to send them in the direction of Erzincan, and that allegedly on the eve of the Chaldyr [Chyldyr] movement, Eyub Pasha was summoned to Erzurum, where he was offered to organize a group of *chetniks* (irregular fighters) and operate in the direction of Sarighamish. At the same time, it was reported that Khalil Bey, the former head of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Caucasian Rifle Division, along with several Turkish officers and *askyars*, was conducting a mobilization of 18-40 year-olds in the Oltu region, accompanying it with exercises, and then sending the organized groups to the border villages.<sup>75</sup>

On April 14, 1920, Major General Hovsepyants, in a telegram (N 00322) sent from Kars to the Commander-in-Chief and the Minister of Internal Affairs, reported that after the Chaldyr battles, he had arrested the leaders of the revolt, Qamil Abdullah Oghli and Veysal Yusup Oghli, who were handed over to the governor at his request. He added that the arrested individuals possessed valuable information about the participation of Azerbaijani and Turkish agents in the organization of the revolt, emphasizing that for the welfare of the region, he considered it necessary to subject them to strict judicial punishment. This important message was sent to the Minister-President for his information by Captain Devoyants on April 15, 1920 (N P 0269).<sup>76</sup> The intelligence memorandum of June 3, 1920, testified to the coordinated rebellious actions of the local Muslims of the Kars Province, and even Molokans, with the Turkish army of Qamil Pasha. For this purpose, 4 Turkish officers and 15 *askyars* had arrived in Bashkey and Bekkey, and a consultation had taken place in Nor Selim with representatives of the Molokans of the Kars Province.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> NAA, doc. 92, l. 387.

<sup>75</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 427, part II, l. 249.

<sup>76</sup> NAA, doc. 271, l. 172-173.

<sup>77</sup> NAA, doc. 33, l. 33.

The fact that the RA government was relatively well-informed about the events taking place in the Kars Province (June-July 1919), including the intelligence activities carried out by Colonel G. D. Leslie<sup>78</sup>, representing Denikin's Volunteer Army, related to securing the influence of the Russian Volunteer Army in the province, undoubtedly attests to the sufficient activity of the Intelligence and Counterintelligence Department of the General Staff. It became clear to the Armenian side that Leslie, the military and political representative of the so-called "Special Council" under the Volunteer Army to the RA government, negotiates in Kars with Muslim representatives and the command of the Turkish 12<sup>th</sup> Army, so that after their withdrawal, the province would be handed over to the Russians.<sup>79</sup> Colonel Leslie's meeting with the "Shura" and the Turkish command in mid-January 1919 caused dissatisfaction among Armenian party-political circles. In this regard, on January 21, S. Tigranyan, in a letter addressed to Colonel Leslie, demanded an explanation regarding the negotiations held with the British Governor of Kars, K. Temperley, as to whether there was an intention "to establish not Armenian but Muslim rule under the leadership of a Russian governor".<sup>80</sup> Leslie replied on January 22 that "I have not had an official conversation about political issues in Kars, but I advised the British military governor, Colonel K. Temperley, that to get out of this difficult situation, it is necessary to appoint a Russian by nationality as governor, who will be in direct contact with the Government of Armenia. It was never demanded by me to establish Muslim rule in the province".<sup>81</sup>

All this, however, deepens the dissatisfaction with Leslie's activities, and the Yerevan newspaper "Zhoghovurd" simply wrote in N 10 of 1919 that "Colonel Leslie, General Denikin's representative, entered into unauthorized negotiations with British Colonel K. Temperley and conducted anti-Armenian propaganda in Yerevan, Echmiadzin, and strives to pit the British against us. His goal is to create a Russian-Tatar administration in the Kars Province".<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, the Popular Faction of the RA Parliament demanded that the Presidium of the RA Council inquire of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Military Affairs whether it was known to them that "Colonel Leslie, the representative of the Volunteer Army, is absolutely conducting agitation against the Armenian people and the Republic of Armenia, and is it true that Colonel Leslie receives 1000 rubles monthly from the Ministry of Military Affairs, and if so, from what funds".<sup>83</sup>

Naturally, the session of the RA Parliament on February 11, 1919, addressed this issue and expressed its attitude, presenting facts, and trying to reveal who Leslie was,

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<sup>78</sup> Leslie Georgy [Yuri] Dmitrievich [April 1, 1887 - February 2, 1957] - (December 1, 1917 - 1920 - Volunteer Army). Ganin 2009: 266, 481, 537, 595, 730.

<sup>79</sup> See Petrosyan 2006: 156.

<sup>80</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 164, l. 4, 10.

<sup>81</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 164, l. 5, 11.

<sup>82</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 164, l. 6, 14.

<sup>83</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 164, l. 17.

whom he represented, and what position he held<sup>84</sup>, but many questions were not made public. It is understandable that the RA government and the military department, including the intelligence service, were trying to maintain secret ties with non-Soviet state and other formations in the South of Russia, which could give rise to various parliamentary and political speculations. Based on this, the heads of the RA Foreign Affairs and Military Departments assured that the Colonel of the Volunteer Army had not abused his position and had not engaged in any specific anti-Armenian activity. This demonstrates the fact of cooperation between the special services of the two sides.

The Commissioner of Administration and Police of the Territory of Armenia, in a report addressed to the Minister of Internal Affairs on March 11, 1919, emphasized that throughout the Armenian-Turkish clashes, 111,560 Tatars and Kurds were expelled from the borders of the RA, including 15,000 Kurds. Of these, 29,000 Tatars returned, but the expelled Kurds did not return. He also stressed that the number of villages free from Muslims in the territory of Armenia reached 248, of which 50 were ruined, and the 56 completely free villages were occupied mainly by refugees from Western Armenia and the Kars Province—142 villages.<sup>85</sup> The RA government sought to create a homogeneous population in the border zone, securing itself from the dangers coming from Azerbaijan and Turkey. In this regard, H. Harutyunyan expressed disagreement with this view, finding that it did not correspond to reality and that such phenomena did not occur.<sup>86</sup>

In this context, we want to emphasize that it is one thing for any more or less established state to strive for the indigenous population to prevail in its territory, and for only the problems of governing and “using” ethnic minorities to remain, as we can find in many European countries today. It is another thing to be a minority in the territory of one’s own homeland and constantly be endangered. At the present stage, any more or less organized country, for example, the USA, the Russian Federation, and other countries, cannot feel threatened, say, by even a few million non-ethnic Russian, Armenian, and other populations living in their territories.

### **Search for a Way out of the Ethno-Political Crisis**

Nevertheless, during the years of the First Republic, the significant mass of the Muslim population living in the territory of Armenia itself was so large that it truly posed a problematic situation from the perspective of securing the RA’s security interests. It was sufficient to keep the RA in a state of alarming tension, especially since spies, various emissaries arriving from Azerbaijan and Turkey, were trying to organize this population and incite “rebellion” against the legitimate authorities, thereby supporting separatist sentiments. According to the RA government memorandum presented to the US Senate by Hovh. Qajaznuni on November 10, 1919, the number of Muslims—

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<sup>84</sup> NAA, f. 198, c. 1, doc. 15, l. 133.

<sup>85</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 44, l. 16.

<sup>86</sup> Harutyunyan 2012: 307.

Tatars, Turks, Turkmens, Karapapakhs—was 588,000 people, or 27% of the entire population.<sup>87</sup>

However, the data from a French statistical document (1919) on the ethnic composition of the population of Transcaucasia and the Black Sea region are of greater interest:

**Table 1<sup>88</sup>**

Province/Region	Area, sq. km	Armenians	Muslims	Georgians	Other Ethnic Groups
Tiflis	32,289	411,747	116,562	642,636	302,363
Kutaisi	19,776	4,605	281	939,412	36,113
Elisavetpol (Ganja)	41,529	418,859	797,593	1,030	57,649
Baku	36,572	120,087	934,616	9,004	317,798
Kars	17,569	123,170	153,401	136	114,227
Batumi	6,450	15,182	16,079	76,839	12,811
Sukhumi	6,179	20,743	2,799	50,383	136,746
Zakatali	3,737	2,530	35,736	4,664	368
Total	164,001	1,117,723	2,057,067	1,724,104	978,081

Let us also add that 139,691 were considered Georgian Muslims, 452,691 were Russians, 56,977 were Yazidis, 40,401 were Roma, and the Jews were 65,822 people.<sup>89</sup>

And here is the picture presented by Armenia and the adjacent regions from an ethnic description perspective in another proportion, according to the same French source:

**Table 2<sup>90</sup>**

Region/District	Area, sq. km	Armenians	Tatar, Turkmen, Khazar	Kurd	Georgian	Russian
Ardahan (partly)	15,000	120,690	73,321	44,967	4,095	49,292
Akhalkalaki	2,550	82,775	8,308	904	7,428	7,759
Borchalu	3,200	64,000	7,600		1,150	2,050
Qazakh	3,400	61,000	90,000			1,929

<sup>87</sup> Qajaznuni 1993: 11.

<sup>88</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 452, l. 1.

<sup>89</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 452, l. 1.

<sup>90</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 452, l. 1.



Elisavethpol (Ganja) (partly)	4,000	32,000	16,500			6,200
Jivanshir	3,700	22,000	17,000			
Shushi <i>gavar</i> (district)	2,300	98,000	30,000			
Zangezur	6,000	100,000	50,000			
Yerevan	24,750	669,871	373,841	36,508	21,854	7,012
Total	64,900	1,250,336	666,570	82,379	34,527	74,242

Another, more complete version of the ethnic composition of the Ardahan and Yerevan Provinces is also of interest:

**Table 3<sup>91</sup>**

Province/Region	Area, sq. km	Armenians	Muslims	Georgians	Others
Ardahan	15,000	120,896	118,188	4,095	109,730
Yerevan	24,750	669,871	410,349		34,778
Total	39,750	790,767	528,537	4,095	144,508

Moreover, of that calculation, 81,375 were considered Kurds, 49,558 Yazidis, 23,504 Roma, Russian, Greek, and 32,236 Assyrians.<sup>92</sup>

In this regard, the RA government had significant tasks to perform, facing serious security challenges, trying to resolve the issues and mitigate inter-ethnic tensions, and manage ethnic developments based on the strategic interests of the RA almost everywhere: in Sotk-Basargechar<sup>93</sup>, in Zangezur, in Kars, and in general. Historian E. Gevorgyan addresses precisely this issue: “In 1918-1920, inter-ethnic clashes and massacres were added to the calamities of war in Transcaucasia. The disturbances organized and incited by Turkish and Azerbaijani agents among the Tatar (Azerbaijani) population of Armenia did not cease throughout the entire period of the Republic’s existence. Their goal was to destroy and weaken the independent state of Armenia, and to prepare the ground for its conquest and thereby eliminate the territorial division between Turkey and Azerbaijan. After the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Armenia at the end of 1918, a significant number of officers remained there, who had armed detachments to organize disturbances.

<sup>91</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 452, l. 2.

<sup>92</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, doc. 452, l. 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> Basargechar - a district and a village of the same name in the Nor Bayazet *gavar* (district) of the Yerevan Province, currently in the southeastern part of the Gegharkunik Province of the RA. By the decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR on June 2, 1969, it was renamed Vardenis. The place name originates from the Turkish words “basar” (to attack, to trample) and “geçer” (to pass). Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan 1986: 609; Hakobyan, Melik-Bakhshyan, Barseghyan 1998: 782-783.

After the departure [of the Turkish troops], the Tatars organized gangs and began looting operations against neighboring Armenian villages and military units. Turkey and Azerbaijan were making territorial claims against a number of parts of the Republic of Armenia: Kars, Mountainous Karabakh, Zangezur, Nakhichevan, Sharur, Daralagyaz, and Basargechar. To achieve their goal, Turkish agents and the Azerbaijani diplomatic representatives in Yerevan had carried out subversive activities during those tense years, resorting to plots against the RA authorities and the Armenian population that had barely survived the Genocide.

After the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Armenia at the end of 1918, the not-small number of officers who remained there, who had armed detachments, were the main instigators of the anti-Armenian, anti-state revolts. At the same time, a significant part of the Azerbaijani population voluntarily left their settlements after the Turks' departure, fearing that the Armenians would punish them for helping the Turks and for their provocative actions. However, all this became a cover for further provocative steps. After leaving, the Tatars organized gangs and began looting operations against neighboring Armenian villages and military units. And despite all this, nevertheless, around 30,000 Azerbaijani refugees returned and resettled in Armenia by the spring of 1919. Simultaneously, a large number of Armenians emigrated from Azerbaijan during the First World War and inter-ethnic clashes—around 300,000 people.<sup>94</sup> According to V. Khojabekyan's data, the number of Armenians who emigrated from Azerbaijan during the First World War and inter-ethnic clashes (not counting all the districts of Elisavethpol) was around 235,000 people, only a part of whom later returned.<sup>95</sup> The main part of them settled in Eastern Armenia, and the other part passed through Georgia to the North Caucasus. During the years of Musavat rule, other nationalities also emigrated from Azerbaijan along with Armenians. Only in 1918-1919, due to emigration, the total population of Azerbaijan decreased by 401.5 thousand people.<sup>96</sup>

Azerbaijan's new strategy towards Armenia was to create independent Muslim formations inside and bring them out against Armenia. On July 6, 1919, the RA diplomatic representative T. Bekzadyan, visiting the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan, N. Usubbekov, and S. Jafarov, newly elected as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, also raised the issue of means to influence the official and non-official press so that they refrain from influencing the Muslim population in Armenia and from false, inflammatory publications about the condition of the Muslims<sup>97</sup>, because those rumors deepen the enmity and ruin inter-ethnic relations, that is, sow hatred. However, while outwardly showing that they shared the Armenian side's concern, the Azerbaijani leaders by no means abandoned the strategy of inflaming passions among the Muslim population of Armenia. This was vividly manifested during the aggressive preparations

<sup>94</sup> Qajaznuni 1993: 12. Gevorgyan 2024: 26.

<sup>95</sup> Khojabekyan 2001: 136-137.

<sup>96</sup> Khojabekyan 1979: 190.

<sup>97</sup> NAA, f. 278, c. 1, doc. 3, l. 37; "Nor Ashkhatavor" July 12, 1919.

against Zangezur and Nakhichevan in the summer of 1919 in the border regions of Armenia through propaganda, strengthening anti-Armenian Muslim groups, and supplying them with arms and ammunition. On July 17, 1919, T. Bekzadyan informed the Chairman of the RA Council of Ministers about this: “The recent events in Zangezur and Nakhichevan are being covered in the local Muslim press in such concentrated colors that it causes absolute hatred among the backward masses and pushes them to undesirable incidents in the form of demonstrations, which were supposedly planned for July 18”.<sup>98</sup>

And by the time of the Sovietization of Armenia, the country was at the extreme low point of its modern history. Armenians were not only expelled from the part of the Armenian Highlands under Turkish rule by the genocidal massacres and forced displacement of 1915, but the population of Russian Armenia had also sharply declined since the outbreak of the First World War due to war, migration, and epidemics. As a result of the war, epidemics, and emigration in 1914-1919, the population of present-day Armenia decreased by about 600,000, a 30 percent decline, and as a result, at the moment of the establishment of the Soviet regime, on December 2, 1920, 720,000 people lived in Armenia.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, almost half of this population consisted of refugees. In fact, by force of circumstances, Eastern Armenia, which had provided shelter to Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian refugees during the war years, also became a center of emigration.

### **Sovietization and the Proposal of Radical Variants for the Resolution of Inter-Ethnic Tension**

The numerous public and political institutions that Armenians had built over the centuries in the Caucasus and Turkey were destroyed. The Armenian middle class, at one time the privileged elite in Tiflis and Baku, no longer enjoyed the confidence of the new Soviet governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan and was pushed off the stage. Their unenviable choice was either to adapt to the foreign socialist order or emigrate to the West. During the seven years of war, genocide, revolution, and civil war (1914–1921), Armenian society had in many ways been “de-modernized,” reverting to its pre-capitalist agrarian economy and a more traditional peasant society. As historian V. Virabyan describes, this was a difficult period during which the Turkish side, taking advantage of the deepening political chaos and instability in Russia, expanded a destructive intelligence network in Western Armenia—Erzincan, Baberd, Erzurum (Karin), and elsewhere—operating behind the Russian lines through its agents and with the provocative support of the Muslim population, particularly the Kurds and their tribal leaders. Kurdish cavalry units also carried out marauding attacks against the Armenian population, a situation further facilitated by the indecisive actions of the disintegrating Russian army’s command, widespread desertion driven by the circumstances, and

<sup>98</sup> Mikayelyan *et al.* 1992 (eds): 307-308.

<sup>99</sup> Khojabekyan 2006: 101.

revolutionary unrest. Turkish agents infiltrated Erzincan, Baberd, and other cities of Western Armenia, conducting active propaganda among Kurdish tribal leaders and the broader Muslim population, working to incite strong anti-Armenian sentiments, fuel the already spreading desertion within army units, and encourage Kurds to launch plundering raids against the Armenian population.<sup>100</sup>

And so, the First Republic, without real sallies and overly ambitious in its attempts to create a Greater Armenia under conditions of severely limited resources and powerful adversaries, found itself in a narrow geopolitical dead end and collapsed, the only alternative being the forced option of Soviet Armenia.

According to the Azerbaijani author T. Zeinalova, Sovietization led to the loss of a part of Azerbaijan's historical territory. In her view, Northern Azerbaijan occupied 113,895.97 square kilometers at the beginning of 1920, but after Sovietization, it lost 29,338.2 square kilometers, of which 12,779.6 square kilometers were transferred to Armenia. As a result of the policy pursued by Soviet Russia, the territory of Armenia, which was 9.2 thousand square kilometers when the Republic was formed in 1918, increased to 28.1 thousand square kilometers in the period 1920–1922.<sup>101</sup>

Summarizing the contradictory data, according to the Azerbaijani authors themselves, the territory of Armenia, according to the 1926 census, was 30.24 thousand square kilometers<sup>102</sup>. However, ignoring these facts, they make unsubstantiated claims that Azerbaijan supposedly lost 12,000 square kilometers of its territory during the years of Soviet power<sup>103</sup>, which contradicts the census data they themselves cite. V. Gafarova concludes that the following regions were “given” to Armenia: Kapan, Goris, Sisian, and Meghri, which total approximately 4,504.5 square kilometers, and it was only the presence of Turkish troops in Nakhichevan and the resistance of the local population that prevented Armenia from annexing this region as well.<sup>104</sup> To emphasize its importance, another Azerbaijani historian, Y. Mahmudov, invokes the aid of K. Atatürk, who supposedly considered Nakhichevan the “Gate of the Turks”.<sup>105</sup> These are factually unfounded claims, based on distortion of data, which contradict the statistical data circulated by the very same authors.

And so, in Transcaucasia, and particularly in Armenia, the aggressive aspirations of the Muslim population in the Muslim-inhabited regions of the Republic of Armenia and anti-state, anti-Armenian movements aimed at violating the territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia became active in 1918–1920. Inter-ethnic clashes and conflicts escalated unprecedentedly throughout the Republic, as a result of which some national minorities, particularly Azerbaijanis, left the territory of Armenia. At the same time, a

<sup>100</sup> Virabyan 2018: 104.

<sup>101</sup> Zeinalova 2004: 33, 49.

<sup>102</sup> TSFSR 1929: 1.

<sup>103</sup> See Musaev 1996: 328.

<sup>104</sup> Gafarof 2010: 205.

<sup>105</sup> Mahmudov 2005: 32.

much larger number of Armenians were forced to leave Azerbaijan, attempting to find a peaceful refuge and escape massacres. In this regard, the Turkish researcher Ç. Çağla arrives at an interesting conclusion, finding that the process of Azerbaijani nation-building had a specific regularity, where the rise of nationalism was based on ethnic identity and preceded the formation of the national state, and that Azerbaijani nationalism emerged in the unusual cultural and political liberal constitutional atmosphere of Baku.<sup>106</sup>

T. Vardanyan-Ayvazyan concludes, to which she adds the opinion of Harvard University Professor T. Martin, that in the USSR, and naturally also in Soviet Armenia, national issues in the 1920s–1930s were mainly resolved within the framework of the policy of indigenization and were subject to the logic of that policy. Generally having a progressive direction, she characterizes it as a “policy of positive action,” and this approach gained universal recognition in both post-Soviet and Western professional circles.<sup>107</sup>

And indeed, at that stage, the national policy in the Soviet republics was manageable, generally balanced, and notable successes were recorded in the cultural and economic spheres of the life of the ethnic communities. However, border issues did not find a final solution; they remained among the main causes of bloody wars between the two states. They partially ended after the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1920, as the Soviet government “imposed” a moratorium on these conflicts.<sup>108</sup> Peaceful coexistence was not established between the national states of Transcaucasia because it was not possible to eliminate the reasons and grounds that gave rise to them, which mainly stemmed from irreconcilable disagreement over territorial delimitation, incited by regional geopolitical forces. As a result of all this, inter-ethnic clashes, the mutual expulsion of large groups of the population from one republic to another, and a discriminatory policy against national minorities were common occurrences during that historical period, the violent manifestations of which were most clearly and negatively expressed in the national policy of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918–1920.

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<sup>106</sup> Çengiz 2019: 52.

<sup>107</sup> Vardanyan-Ayvazyan 2015: 91.

<sup>108</sup> Niftaliev 2021: 57.

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# THE OUTCOMES OF U.S. COLONEL W. HASKELL'S MANDATE IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND TRANSCAUCASIA IN THE CONTEXT OF ETHNO-POLITICAL AND INTERSTATE CONFLICTS AND TERRITORIAL DELIMITATION IN 1919–1920

Vanik Virabyan\*

## Abstract

U.S. Army Colonel W. Haskell served as the Supreme Commissioner (High Commissioner) of the Allies in the Republic of Armenia from July 5, 1919, until August 17, 1920, replacing General James Harbord.<sup>1</sup> Haskell's conduct was the same "British foresight in the governance of colonies": only the musicians changed, but the music remained the same, following the motto: "Divide and rule, divide with promises."

With his pro-Azerbaijani position, Colonel W. Haskell failed in the issues of territorial demarcation—the realization of the foreign policy interests of the Republic of Armenia in the disputed territories of Karabakh-Artsakh, Nakhichevan, and others. He contributed to the strengthening of Azerbaijan's positions in the region, which led to the fall of the Republic of Armenia, and Haskell himself hastily left Armenia.

**Keywords:** W. Haskell, USA, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Sharur-Daralagyaz, Nakhichevan, Entente, J. Rey, Karabakh-Artsakh, disputed territory, conflict.

Haskell's residence was in Tiflis. On July 5, 1919, the heads of the Allied delegations adopted a corresponding decision regarding this appointment: "By this

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<sup>1</sup> Haskell, William Nafew [1878-1952] – U.S. Army Colonel, Chief of Military Operations and Deputy Chief of Staff of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army of the U.S. Expeditionary Forces; served as the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies in the Republic of Armenia from July 5, 1919, until August 17, 1920. In Armenia, he was mainly engaged in providing food, opening orphanages/children's homes, and creating jobs/workshops for the Armenian population. The position Haskell held on the U.S. General Staff and his belonging to any particular branch of the armed forces is not indicated. However, when Haskell was in Soviet Russia in 1921 as the Director of the American Relief Committee, the special services of the Soviet state found out that the former Supreme Commissioner of the Entente and the USA in Armenia was the chief of the Russian department of the intelligence of the U.S. Army General Staff. See in detail: Ohanian D. 2010. On the activities of U. Haskell, see also: Makhmuryan 2017; Hovhannisyan 2014: 231-244.

Council, U.S. Colonel W. N. Haskell is appointed to act in Armenia as High Commissioner on behalf of the Governments of the United States, France, and Italy, with the understanding that Colonel Haskell was to be simultaneously appointed as the Overall Director of the relief measures of the various aid organizations operating in Armenia".<sup>2</sup>

A resolution introduced by U.S. Secretary of State R. Lansing on July 5, 1919, and adopted by the Council of Five, also stated: "Colonel W. N. Haskell, USA, is appointed by this Council to act as High Commissioner in Armenia on behalf of the Governments of the United States, British, French, and Italian. It is understood that Colonel Haskell is, at the same time, designated to coordinate all operating relief measures in Armenia carried out by the various organizations operating there. All representatives of the United States, British, French, and Italian Governments in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Constantinople should immediately receive instructions to cooperate with Colonel Haskell and assist him".<sup>3</sup>

These powers were given to Colonel Haskell for both Caucasian Armenia and Turkish Armenia. However, due to the non-publication of his powers, the conviction was created in Caucasian political circles that Colonel Haskell had been given the post of Supreme Commissioner of the entire Caucasus. Based on this term, the representatives of the highlanders of the North Caucasus asked him to assume the role of an arbiter (impartial referee and mediator) between them and General Denikin. The U.S. government did not express satisfaction with the fact of such an expansion of Haskell's powers. In addition, the British military-political authorities in Tiflis, who had assured the Armenian government that the presence of British troops in Armenia was necessary, treated Haskell's arrival with sarcasm, as he was not accompanied by any military force, being convinced that he was just a colonel who would achieve nothing without troops. This led to Haskell's practical isolation, as he did not receive the necessary support from the other Allied missions to the practical degree required for the success of his undertaking.<sup>4</sup>

After the term of the American Relief Administration (ARA) expired in the summer of 1919, when the burden again fell on private agencies, a certain degree of official representation was ensured by appointing Colonel W. Haskell as the Director of the Joint American and Allied Relief, through which the Armenian people received certain food and other aid. Major J. Green was appointed the head of the American Relief Administration (ARA) in Tiflis, and Major Ch. S. Forbes was appointed the director of the Yerevan office. It is noteworthy that from the very first day of Ch. Forbes' service, July 11, A. Khatisyan began discussing the possibility of purchasing military uniforms for

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<sup>2</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 66.

<sup>3</sup> Hovhannisyan 2005: 371.

<sup>4</sup> Hovhannisyan 2005: 155.

30,000 Armenian soldiers<sup>5</sup>, which at that moment impressed the Armenians and encouraged the government.

Thus, instead of providing a mandatory power (mandate country), determining exact borders, and ensuring the future of Armenia, the Peace Conference provided a resident-commissioner for advice, supervision, and consolation—though it seems such an intention was never present, as Haskell declared after his arrival at the session of the Armenian Parliament on August 22, 1919: “since that treaty [the ratification of the Treaty of Peace - V.V.] and the League of Nations have not been ratified, the issue of the Mandate for Armenia cannot be made a subject of consideration”.<sup>6</sup>

However, W. Haskell, whose appointment was announced on July 9, had neither administrative abilities nor a strong character to deal with the complexities of the Transcaucasia.<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, this irritable and sometimes panic-prone man could create greater problems, especially in a poor country like Armenia, and Admiral Mark L. Bristol was also dissatisfied with this appointment.<sup>8</sup> This is also clearly visible from the telegram of July 11, 1919, sent by Secretary of State R. R. Lansing to his assistant V. V. Phillips in Paris to the American Peace Delegation. It announced the resolution adopted by the member states of the Council of Five with the support of the President, according to which Colonel W. N. Haskell of the U.S. Army General Staff was appointed by this council as the High Commissioner in Armenia, acting on behalf of the Governments of the United States, Britain, France, and Italy. The adopted resolution also emphasized that he was entrusted with managing by all means the provision of aid to the various charitable organizations operating in Armenia. In addition, this resolution instructed all representatives of the Governments of the United States, Britain, France, and Italy in Armenia, Georgia, and Constantinople to support Colonel W. Haskell. It was noted that the Colonel would act as an employee of the State Department in the given region, and a desire was expressed to reach an agreement with Minister N. D. Baker regarding Haskell's long-term appointment to this position. Furthermore, it was stated that he would need a few more officers for the implementation of this task, and the travel and additional expenses of W. Haskell's mission should be covered by aid funds.<sup>9</sup>

Precisely based on these circumstances, as early as July 21, 1919, Khan-Tekinski was demanding from his government that Azerbaijani troops be concentrated on the borders of Armenia and sounding the alarm that Armenian troops continued to move to Sharur, where military operations were taking place: “Armenia is straining all its forces... The appearance of our troops on the borders will sow panic among the Armenians, strengthen desertion, and raise the spirit of the Muslims. I have already informed Aliyev, the military attaché in Tiflis, about the number of Armenian troops, asking him to inform

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<sup>5</sup> National Archives of Armenia (NAA), f. 200, c. 1, d. 304, part 1, l. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Protocols of the Sessions of the Parliament of Armenia 2009, 253.

<sup>7</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 67.

<sup>8</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 69.

<sup>9</sup> Armenia in the Documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917-1920, 2012, 154-155.

the Minister of War about it. If you want to take advantage of the moment, take swift and decisive measures".<sup>10</sup> "We must immediately declare war on Armenia"<sup>11</sup> and "finish with Zangezur within two weeks, move the troops to Ghamarlu," wrote Khan-Tekinski to the President of the Government of Azerbaijan on August 1 and 3, 1919. "Now is the most convenient time. After the arrival of the American Commissioner of Armenia, Colonel Haskell, it will be too late. Organize the attack without declaring war. I strongly urge you to use the moment and not lose time".<sup>12</sup>

According to the Azerbaijani researcher I. Niftaliyev, the most acute issue was that of borders, and Haskell was, of course, aware of the territorial conflicts that took place in the South Caucasus. Haskell knew the position of the former British command regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Karabakh and Zangezur. Therefore, according to I. Niftaliyev, it is no coincidence that one of Haskell's first statements regarding these issues was solidarity with the position of the Entente Allies, which Nasib Bey Usubbekov<sup>13</sup> announced on August 28, 1919: that Karabakh and Zangezur are an inseparable part of Azerbaijan, simultaneously referencing Haskell's approach in the Armenian Parliament. According to him, the Armenians voiced threats against Azerbaijan, which, according to I. Niftaliyev, Haskell considered not corresponding to reality.<sup>14</sup>

According to the Azerbaijani historian B. Najafov, Haskell took the work seriously enough and, despite the Armenians' complaints and demands, adopted a generally objective position: "I am not the 'advocate' of the Armenians, and my task is not to permit inter-ethnic clashes in the Transcaucasia. I have the same benevolent attitude toward all republics".<sup>15</sup>

Najafov concluded that according to Haskell's plan, Karabakh and Zangezur (disputed territories) were to be governed by Azerbaijan, while the territories of the districts of Nakhichevan, Sharur, and Daralagyaz were to enter a Neutral Zone under the general leadership of an American Governor-General, but on the condition that the local administration remained in the hands of the Azerbaijani authorities. Najafov insists that, naturally, this position of the American Supreme Commissioner was not to the liking of the Armenian nationalists, who initially flattered Haskell but later began to accuse him of non-objectivity, which was followed by the confusion and uncertainty in the actions of the Armenians themselves at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Secret Documents 1920, 36.

<sup>11</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 299, part I, l. 14, no. 601; The Republic of Armenia 1918-1920, 2000, 116.

<sup>12</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 299, part I, l. 14-15, no. 601, 606.

<sup>13</sup> Usubbekov Nasib-bek Yusif oglu (1881-1920) was a statesman and publicist of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, who served as Minister of Finance and Education, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Minister of Internal Affairs (1918-1920).

<sup>14</sup> Niftaliyev 2018: 236.

<sup>15</sup> Najafov 1994: 84.

<sup>16</sup> Najafov 1994: 84; "Azerbaijan" 1919, August 31.

According to E. Ismailov's conviction, Armenia tried to realize its territorial claims against Azerbaijan with the help of the USA, but during the negotiations held in Baku at the end of August 1919, W. Haskell declared the recognition of Karabakh and Zangezur as inseparable parts of Azerbaijan, while simultaneously proposing the creation of a Neutral Zone in the southern part of the former Yerevan province, including the districts of Nakhichevan and Sharur-Daralagyaz, under the leadership of an American Governor-General. On October 24, 1919, he announced the creation of the Governor-Generalship and the appointment of Colonel Daley as the Governor of the Neutral Zone. Ismailov concludes, however, that due to the sharp counter-reaction of the Azerbaijani government and the strong protests of the population of Nakhichevan, the Americans' idea failed, and from that moment, Colonel Daley's activities in Nakhichevan proceeded not as Governor but as a representative of the Paris Conference.

In November 1919, the US proposal to extend the mandate of Haskell's mission to Azerbaijan as well was blocked by the delegations of England and France at the Versailles Conference.<sup>17</sup> According to A. Akhmedov, Haskell's objectives included ensuring a "Modus Vivendi," which was one of the goals of his Transcaucasian mission. Akhmedov nevertheless concludes that Azerbaijan represented a greater interest for the USA, and that Baku oil was at the center of American interests in the Transcaucasia.<sup>18</sup> On January 22, 1920, a treaty was signed in Tiflis between the Republic of Armenia and Colonel Haskell, the Allied Supreme Commissioner in Transcaucasia and Armenia, according to which the Americans were to make purchases for Armenia, including from Azerbaijan, and ship them to Armenia<sup>19</sup>, from which the American side received a considerable profit. The price of one *pood* (about 16 kg) of oil brought by the Americans for the Republic of Armenia reached up to 80 rubles, while the actual price did not exceed 38 rubles<sup>20</sup>, clearly demonstrating the self-interest of the Americans.

And so, after previously holding positions in Bucharest and Constantinople, Haskell arrived in Constantinople on August 2, 1919, and after speaking with Patriarch Zaven Esayan, promised to help and alleviate the condition of the suffering Armenians. W. Haskell immediately traveled from Romania to the Caucasus, while his colleague, Colonel James Ray, and 30 other individuals traveled to Batumi on the ship "Martha Washington".<sup>21</sup> On August 5, he appealed to Franchet d'Espèrey, the senior Allied commander in Constantinople, protesting the British withdrawal from the Caucasus, when it had been repeatedly stated that "the presence of an adequate number of Allied troops is absolutely necessary for the protection of the relief measures currently being

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<sup>17</sup>Ismailov 2010: 243.

<sup>18</sup> Akhmedov 2018: 105-111.

<sup>19</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 417, l. 82.

<sup>20</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 417, l. 82.

<sup>21</sup> Hovhannisyan R., Vol. II, 203.

implemented, to prevent the annihilation of the Armenians, as well as to prevent general anarchy in the Caucasus, to halt the universal anarchy throughout the Caucasus”.<sup>22</sup>

W. Haskell sent this memorandum to H. Hoover and the Paris Peace Conference, pleading with them to convince the British to stay<sup>23</sup>, but to no avail, as information was received from A. Balfour on August 11 that the long-adopted decision to evacuate British troops from the Transcaucasia was an inevitable step. It must be said that the essence of this adopted British position was logically reflected in the words of the high-ranking American military officer, Vice Admiral, and Turcophile, Mark Lambert Bristol, on April 8, 1919. Bristol was against the USA taking on a mandate from European countries, and particularly regarding Armenia, his characteristic description of British policy could be considered: “a practically empty territory, devoid of natural resources and practically without railway communication or any port.”

Bristol, mentally imagining what would happen in case of the possible dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, wrote after a trip to Batumi, Tiflis, and Baku in June: “The fact is that these so-called republics of the Caucasus [Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia] are a complete farce. The members of the government do not represent the people but are the stooges of secret societies that have been trained for years in intrigues and deceptions. With very few exceptions, they are untrustworthy and generally abuse their positions. This situation in the Caucasus is a clear example of what will happen to the rest of Turkey if it is fragmented into small states”.<sup>24</sup> This is clearly stated, as Bristol’s starting point was the conviction that “the Turk has certain characteristics of character that are so superior to the characteristics of other peoples that one can only sympathize with the Turk, although one must never forget the bad features of his character, which are manifested in actions against subject nationalities”.<sup>25</sup>

After his first visit to Armenia, Haskell stated in his appeal that the conditions in the country were indescribably horrific and desolate. He deemed it urgent to keep the supply routes open for the armed forces and to restrain the Muslim rebels, as the actions of the Muslims became increasingly horrific and audacious with the withdrawal of British troops from the region. He believed that the arrival of even just one military unit could decide the fate of the Armenian allies, who could be annihilated if the troops did not hurry.<sup>26</sup> This was explained by the entire complexity of the situation, about which Rouben notes: “The Georgians sitting on the road absolutely desired not to permit transport. Although they were pressured by Haskell, the representative of the Allies, and others, on the other hand, the Denikinists were showing their teeth... but Georgia was able to create so many difficulties that instead of receiving millions of poods of grain and

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<sup>22</sup> Hovhannisyan R. 2007, 167.

<sup>23</sup> Hovhannisyan R. 2007, 167; Hovhannisyan 2014: 133.

<sup>24</sup> Hovhannisyan 2005: 361.

<sup>25</sup> Hovhannisyan 2005: 356-357.

<sup>26</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 146.

other materials, perhaps the food we received did not reach 100,000 [poods] (of which over 30,000 was seed grain, through Haskell). Armenia was forced to give the Georgians both a bribe and a percentage of what was brought, sometimes 50 percent, in order to get the grain promised or bought. On the other hand, the Denikinists began to slow down their aid, seeing that the Georgians were taking a share of the shipments, and that circumstance was not in their favor, as they were favorably disposed toward Georgia".<sup>27</sup>

The situation was alarming, which was also understood by the chief spy of Azerbaijan in Yerevan, the experienced diplomatic representative Tekinski, who, reporting to the Azerbaijani government on August 3, 1919, about sending artillery and shells with 8 trucks to Dilijan, Nor Bayazet, and Basargechar, and the presence of the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment in those regions, concluded that "the Armenians are making these preparations against the Muslims" and demanded from the government to "take the necessary and essential measures and military preparations".<sup>28</sup>

As for the High Commissioner Haskell, he arrived in Tiflis on August 15, 1919<sup>29</sup>, and after meeting with the advisor of the diplomatic representation of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis, M. Tumanyan, and the military attaché, General Hovsep Kishmishyan, as well as the heads of the French and British military-political representations<sup>30</sup>, he understood Armenia's military weakness and its need for weapons and ammunition for self-defense. Haskell arrived in Yerevan on August 21, accompanied by an honor guard.<sup>31</sup> The city was decorated with American and Armenian flags. He received a warm welcome from the people, who cherished hopes and looked for a way to salvation.<sup>32</sup> These facts were recorded in Haskell's report, adopted by the Allied Supreme Council on August 19, 1919, where it was stated that "the sending of an army to Armenia is strictly necessary, which will save the population from ruin".<sup>33</sup>

Being in Yerevan for the second time on August 21<sup>34</sup>, Haskell declared in a conversation with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Al. Khatisyan, on August 21, 1919, his intention to "take measures to defend the existing borders of Armenia," that the Paris Congress had instructed him to take on the internal and external security of the Armenian people, their provisioning, and the safety of

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<sup>27</sup> Rouben 1982: 260-261.

<sup>28</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 299, part I, l. 15, no. 616.

<sup>29</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 362, l. 81.

<sup>30</sup> "Nor Ashkhataavor" 1919, August 16; "Borba" 1919, August 16, August 17, August 21.

<sup>31</sup> Hovhannisyanyan 2014: 232.

<sup>32</sup> "Nor Ashkhataavor" 1919, August 26; "Hayrenik" 1919, November 23; Vratsyan 1928: 274.

<sup>33</sup> Armenian Question Encyclopedia 1996, 281.

<sup>34</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 362, l. 81.



immigration<sup>35</sup>, which at that moment was significantly threatened by the bandit-like Turkish-Muslim uprisings.

W. Haskell had a long interview with the Prime Minister, to whom he reported that “he had instructions from the [Peace] Conference to protect all Armenians, wherever they might be—in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, or Georgia. He cannot give military aid for now, but he has already sent 3 officers to Paris, asking for troops to be immediately sent to Armenia, and has also requested that a part of the British troops be left in Armenia. He will take every measure to protect the borders of Armenia and will demand that the government of Azerbaijan stop the provocative activities among the Muslims of Armenia. He will also take drastic measures for Armenia to receive weapons and military supplies and for the Georgian government not to obstruct their transport. In particular, he will work to secure the provisioning of Armenia and the procurement of food”<sup>36</sup>, which was in an extremely catastrophic state at that time.

On August 22, 1919, the Supreme Commissioner of Armenia attended the session of the Parliament; the presiding officer, Hovsep Arghutian, welcomed him with warm words. W. Haskell delivered an impressive speech in the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia, which gave hope to the Armenians:

“I am happy to be here and have the opportunity to speak with you... The American people act slowly; they hesitated to participate in this World War, but when they did participate, they exerted their full energy, all necessary means, and reached the final goal. There is no doubt that [Armenia] will receive military aid, not to act against Georgia or Azerbaijan, but to protect the borders of Armenia. With those troops, at least the temporarily defined borders of Armenia will be secured.

I came to the conclusion that Armenia needs military aid, and the British troops must remain in the Transcaucasia until they are replaced by the troops of one of the Allies. When I learned in Constantinople about the order to withdraw the British troops from the Transcaucasia, I immediately expressed my protest to the Peace Conference... I hope my request will be respected, and the English troops will remain in the Transcaucasia. But even if the British troops leave the Transcaucasia, we will find a sufficiently powerful army to replace them. Corresponding arrangements have been made for the provisioning and financial aspects of Armenia, as well as for clothing. But now this is a secondary issue.

The circumstance that Azerbaijan has violated the borders determined by the British government is unquestionable. This phenomenon obligates me to go to Tiflis and then to Baku to warn Azerbaijan that if it does not take measures against the facts already committed and ceases military operations, this will not only have serious consequences for Azerbaijan, but the members of the Azerbaijani government will also be held personally responsible.

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<sup>35</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 2, d. 37, l. 1-3, 7-8; Armenia in the Documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917-1920, 2012, 193-194.

<sup>36</sup> Vratsyan 1993: 320-321.

In Tiflis, I will consult with the British command regarding the issue of immediately providing military aid to Armenia.

As a result of the instructions I received from the Peace Conference, I must protect the interests of your country”<sup>37</sup> However, on August 23, when Haskell left for Tiflis and then Baku, he forgot about the statements he had made in Yerevan and the promises he had given.<sup>38</sup>

Ensuring the achievement of the goal, W. Haskell seemed ready to send his officers to Turkey as well, so that, in addition to the aforementioned goal, they would protect the remaining Armenians there (with the exception of Cilicia). Moreover, the Colonel had decided to deliver a note to the Baku authorities, a document in which the entire responsibility for an occupying policy or for provoking the Muslims of Armenia would be placed on the Azerbaijani government. The experienced staff of officers at his disposal<sup>39</sup> was handed over to the Republic of Armenia’s hall to become army instructors, and directors in the fields of railways and food.<sup>40</sup>

In a conversation with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the High Commissioner noted that he planned to contribute to Yerevan receiving military uniforms (bullets, rifles) and to influence the Georgian government to allow them to pass through its roads. The inventory included “a sufficient quantity of full uniforms [accessible] via Batumi-Ardahan, 150 mules with harnesses, Lebel rifles.” Subsequently, he set the task of regulating all territorial disputes in the Transcaucasia.<sup>41</sup>

During the very first consultation, Haskell informed Khatisyan that he was responsible for protecting the Armenians of the Caucasus and Anatolia and for regulating relief operations, and had already appealed to Paris regarding the issue of military assistance, that the borders of United Armenia still needed to be determined, and that General J. Harbord would arrive to investigate the related issues and the military situation, while simultaneously advising them to undertake only defensive operations until the final settlement of the issue, promising to warn the Azerbaijani government against provocative steps.<sup>42</sup>

There were serious expectations and hopes for Haskell as an ally, and in this regard, the speech of Hovsep Arghutian, the chairman of the Parliament, at the session on August 23, 1919, is noteworthy. He believed that the Allies felt an obligation to protect Armenia, to prove that Armenia was not alone, and that the Armenian people had served them with their armed forces for five years<sup>43</sup>. In response, Haskell offered

<sup>37</sup> Protocols of the Sessions of the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia 2009, 252-252; “Nor Ashkhatavor” 1919, August 27.

<sup>38</sup> History of Armenia 2010: 189.

<sup>39</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 370, l. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Issues of Armenian History 2017, Vol. 18, 49-75.

<sup>41</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 370, l. 1-1 rev.

<sup>42</sup> “Nor Ashkhatavor” 1919, August 26, August 27, Tiflis; Vratsyan 1928: 274-275.

<sup>43</sup> “Nor Ashkhatavor” 1919, August 27, 1919; “Hayrenik” 1919, October 21.

reassuring words that Americans usually hesitate to do anything, but once a decision is made, they move quickly. At the same time, he said that the issue of the Armenian mandate would hardly be resolved until the Versailles Treaty and the US position on the League of Nations were clarified. Nevertheless, he was called upon as the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies to preserve the physical existence of the Armenian people. In this regard, he had already taken steps to ensure the uninterrupted flow of supplies from Batumi and to maintain the British forces or bring other Allied forces to the Caucasus. He would take appropriate steps in Baku because Azerbaijan had violated the temporary borders set by the British authorities.<sup>44</sup>

In a telegram addressed to the President of the Paris Peace Conference, G. Clemenceau, on August 27, 1919, Colonel W. Haskell stated that he had personally investigated the situation in Armenia, considered it indescribably grave, and believed that aid must reach those in need in time to prevent starvation. He found it necessary to be supported by troops, deeming the arrival of cavalry essential in the first place. In that telegram, Haskell believed that forces equivalent to one reinforced American infantry brigade would save the situation in Russian Armenia, emphasizing that Tatars were launching attacks in the east and south, and that Tatar uprisings were escalating daily in all internal regions. He also found that the arrival of even one regiment could decide the fate of their Armenian Allies, who could be destroyed at any moment if the troops did not hurry. Haskell noted that the British were leaving the Caucasus and had already refused even the temporary use of their troops in Armenia, insisting that orders from above forbade the deployment of any British troops in Armenian territory. Haskell believed that if British policy forbade the protection of the Armenians under the aforementioned circumstances, it should be changed, or other troops should be found to arrive immediately, also noting that the British troops remaining in the Transcaucasia were mainly Indian.<sup>45</sup>

However, both Haskell and the British military figures were extremely inconsistent in their positions. Expressing sarcasm about Haskell, the British understood well that without military assistance, he could not achieve any substantial result in any serious matter, especially in the territorial demarcation crucial for the Republic of Armenia. It was clear to the British that their interests would not align with Armenia, and based on the rapid changes in the situation, they leaned toward Azerbaijan and the Muslim world, which also consumed W. Haskell. It became evident that the American commissioner was unable to create the necessary “modus vivendi,” a situation exacerbated by the fact that he simply had pro-Azerbaijani orientations and instructions from his own government.

In this regard, the conclusion of General A. Denikin of the Volunteer Army is remarkable: “Armenian figures, not being seasoned in the political game of world diplomacy and being poorly informed, did not understand that there was no single state

<sup>44</sup> Vratsyan 1928: 275-276; “Hayrenik” 1919, October 2, Boston; “Borba” 1919, August 28.

<sup>45</sup> Armenia in the Documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917-1920, 2012, 200.

among the Entente countries that desired to shed blood for the Armenians, that the American Colonel Haskell, the Supreme Commissioner of the Entente in Armenia, who arrived along with a philanthropic mission, came with broad powers and a pre-determined decision: 'not to send a single American soldier to Armenia.' The 'moral image of America' was supposed to stop the bloodshed in the warlike countries of the Near East, where only force instilled respect, fear, and obedience...".<sup>46</sup>

The Georgian leaders partially understood the same thing. Thus, when British Lieutenant General Charles James Briggs<sup>47</sup> traveled to Tiflis in April 1919 for negotiations between Georgia and the command of the Volunteer Army regarding the withdrawal of Georgian troops from the Sochi region, he faced this very problem. Meeting the complete intractability of the Georgian political figures, the general reproached the Georgians: "The British and Italians will leave, but Russia will remain forever, and friendly relations with her will be the best thing that can be... The League of Nations has not yet taken a definite form... The Peace Conference will end, and Russia will become great and powerful, and you should prepare yourselves for a more favorable future...".<sup>48</sup>

In mid-1919, the British withdrew (at that moment, they remained only in Batumi), and the Transcaucasian military-political and diplomatic environment found itself in new anxieties. Solutions to territorial, border, and other important issues were constantly delayed. Soon, Captain Gould, who was acting as the English arbiter, declared to the representatives of the two interested republics at the end of September that, according to corresponding instructions received from London, they no longer had the right to interfere in the affairs of the Neutral Zone of Lori, and that the solution would henceforth be under the jurisdiction of the Allied Supreme Commissioner, W. Haskell<sup>49</sup>, who invited the representatives of Armenia and Georgia to discuss and resolve the disputed issues.

The government of the Republic of Armenia did not share W. Haskell's position, who was inclined only toward partial solutions, by resolving the problem of the Lori Neutral Zone. They were of a different opinion, believing that border-territorial issues should be considered and resolved entirely (one might say, in one package), and in this situation, W. Haskell's mission failed. The parties were only satisfied with W. Haskell's recommendation to hand over the control of the Neutral Zone to Major Livingston as Governor or Commissioner. And this was just the beginning of the demarcation issues. As a result of the complex situation and Colonel W. Haskell's arbitration mission, and according to his proposal, it was decided that Captain Douglas in his supervisory role could be replaced by one of W. Haskell's staff members, Charles Livingston, for whom Alaverdi was chosen as a residence, which was supposed to ensure the necessary

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<sup>46</sup> Denikin 2002, vol. 4, 317.

<sup>47</sup> Charles James Briggs [1865-1941]—Head of the British military-political mission to the Armed Forces of South Russia.

<sup>48</sup> Denikin 2002, vol. 4, 323.

<sup>49</sup> Tumanyan 2012: 199.

communication.<sup>50</sup> Colonel Haskell, however, was not distinguished for political impartiality, and at times his actions created real confusion in the process of resolving border disputes, aggravating Armenian–Georgian military-political relations. The Armenian authorities realized that although U. Haskell had been sent with broad authority, he had no actual power behind him that could halt the military operations of the Azerbaijanis and the Turks.<sup>51</sup>

The complex situation created in Armenia negatively affected the military-political and economic activity of the government, preventing it from concentrating significant monetary and material resources and solving various military problems.

On August 23, 1919, W. Haskell urgently left for Tiflis, and upon arriving in Baku on August 29, he received a good impression of the Azerbaijani leaders, Prime Minister Nasib Bek Usubbekov and Foreign Minister Mamed Yusif Jafarov. He informed the latter that he had come not as an advocate for the Armenian Question, but as a proponent of humanitarian aid and peaceful coexistence until a political settlement, and to put an end to the provocations and suffering of the Muslim and Armenian populations from both sides. He proposed the creation of a Neutral Zone under American supervision in the southern districts of the Yerevan province.<sup>52</sup>

W. Haskell's proposal came one week after Khosrov Bek Sultanov had forced the Armenians to recognize his authority in Karabakh-Zangezur, creating a real danger for Zangezur as well. This also weakened the Armenian claims on Sharur and Nakhichevan, and complicated Armenia's path to Syunik-Zangezur. It gave Azerbaijan a real opportunity to expand in the Arax valley, since, as Turkish researcher Erhan Karakoç concludes, the strategic corridor of Karabakh represented the link or barrier connecting the Turkic-Muslims of the Eastern Caucasus and Anatolia, and Asia Minor.<sup>53</sup>

Naturally, this “Haskellian” maneuver, a draft of proposal with a playful nature aimed at territorial demarcation, was entirely acceptable to Nasib Bek Usubbekov, and he gave his verbal consent to Haskell's proposal—a 21-article draft through which an agreement titled “Neutral Zone” emerged, which contradicted the promises he had given to the Armenians in Yerevan, and was done without consulting the Republic of Armenia.

According to the Agreement: “A Neutral Zone must be immediately established in the districts of Sharur-Daralagyaz and Nakhichevan,” the administration of which was to be carried out by the Governor-General appointed by Colonel W. Haskell. The third point of this agreement stipulated that the local administration was to be Tatar, with the exception of those districts where Armenians constituted a majority.

According to the following points of the Agreement:

4. The Armenian and Azerbaijani governments were to immediately withdraw their troops from the Neutral Zone, and no military unit was to return.

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<sup>50</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 187-188.

<sup>51</sup> History of Armenia 2010: 137.

<sup>52</sup> “Nor Ashkhatavor” 1919, September 1; “Azerbaijan” 1919, August 30-September 5.

<sup>53</sup> Ercan 2011: 1016.

5. The Armenian and Azerbaijani governments were to immediately recall their agents and agents of other countries from the Neutral Zone who could incite the local population.
6. Azerbaijan and Armenia were to declare a general amnesty, which would extend to crimes committed against private individuals until September 1, 1919. The amnesty did not apply to crimes already under the jurisdiction of the British military authorities.
7. Local officials in the Neutral Zone could only be appointed by the American Governor-General.  
Points 8-9 of the Agreement stated that the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan should use all their influence to calm the Armenian and Tatar populations in the Neutral Zone, the provinces of Yerevan and Zangezur.
10. Both the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan were to take under their protection the lives and property of Armenians and Tatars living in their territories.
11. The railway and telegraph line stretching from Yerevan to the Persian border and passing through Sharur-Daralagyaz was to be immediately restored and was to operate immediately with Armenian and Tatar personnel. The railway was to serve the population without national discrimination.
12. The Azerbaijani government agreed to facilitate in every way the work of the American relief organization "Near East Relief" in provisioning and providing food to the population of the Shushi and Zangezur regions.
13. The Azerbaijani government agreed to implement all measures and provide transport costs for the return of all Armenian refugees located in Azerbaijan that the Governor-General deemed necessary.
14. The Muslim population of Pokr Vedi was to be resettled from that village, under the instructions of the American Governor-General, to another village intended for them in the territory of the Neutral Zone, allowing them to move all their property with them.
15. The Baku-Julfa railway line under construction was to be exclusively under the disposal of the Azerbaijani government.
16. The border between Armenia and the Neutral Zone along the railway was to be the place called Gayli Drunq (Wolf's Gate).
- 17-21. These articles referred to the measures for collecting taxes allocated for administration, financial assistance to be provided by the Azerbaijani government if necessary, the restoration of the daily activities of schools and churches, the establishment of freedom of conscience, and the provision of food aid by "Near East Relief" without national discrimination.<sup>54</sup>

However, the subsequent course of events reversed everything that had been gained, as the decisions on paper were not reinforced by other, more substantial steps.

<sup>54</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 11, l. 19-24, 46, 46 rev., 47, 47 rev., 51; "Bulletin of Armenian Archives" 1993, 116-119; Harutyunyan 2021, 168.am, August 30; Harutyunyan, Balyan 2021: 59-72.

Thus, “Supreme Commissioner of Armenia” Colonel W. Haskell, acceding to the demands of the Azerbaijanis, declared the regions of Sharur-Daralagyaz-Nakhijevan to be disputed territories. This practically meant that, according to the agreement, the indigenous Armenian territories—Syunik-Zangezur, Nakhijevan, Karabakh, and Sharur-Daralagyaz—were being handed over to Azerbaijan.

The regions of Nakhijevan and Sharur-Daralagyaz were to form a neutral zone under the jurisdiction of the American governor appointed by Haskell, and the troops were to be withdrawn. Haskell conveyed the bait of “pacifism” offered by Azerbaijan to Khatisyan, convinced that there would be no option to refuse. However, the latter understood this in his own way—that Haskell had allegedly been misled (which, undoubtedly, was not the case; it was simply Khatisyan’s illusion - V.V.) due to insufficient knowledge of the borders and the situation, and that this allowed Azerbaijan to gain a dominant position over the Araks valley and the key corridors and roads, acquiring a wide corridor leading to it and closing the only vital communication route between Yerevan and Syunik-Zangezur.<sup>55</sup>

By Haskell’s decision, on September 1, 1919, Nakhijevan and Sharur-Daralagyaz were considered a neutral zone, headed by an American General-Governor. However, the decision regarding this was not implemented during that historical period.<sup>56</sup> Haskell’s project put the Yerevan province on the same plane as Zangezur-Karabakh, seemingly creating a basis for recognizing Azerbaijan’s sovereignty over those territories to the same extent as the sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia over the Yerevan region.<sup>57</sup>

In this regard, let us quote an important expression from Colonel W. Haskell, taken from the article “Caucasus. Colonel Haskell on the Mutual Relations of the Transcaucasian Republics,” published in the Georgian newspaper “Borba” on September 2, 1919: “...the colonel said that he considered it necessary that Karabakh, including Zangezur, should definitively pass to Azerbaijan, and as for Nakhijevan, Sharur, and Daralagyaz, that zone should become a Neutral Zone. That zone should be governed by the local population itself through its elected bodies, and a European or American General-Governor should stand at the head of the administration”.<sup>58</sup>

The extreme importance of the issue compelled Khatisyan to discuss Haskell’s proposal with the ARF Bureau on September 5, 1919, and to inform the Parliament that the formation of an American governorship was fundamentally acceptable, as was Haskell’s call for a ceasefire.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Arsham Khondkaryan criticized the Dashnaks (ARF representatives) for blindly believing in the Allies. He noted that they had done nothing in the Caucasus to protect the fundamental rights of the Armenian people, that the

<sup>55</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 236.

<sup>56</sup> Armenian Question Encyclopedia 1996, 281.

<sup>57</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 1, d. 193, l. 2, 25; Yarrach 1919, 7, 8, October 21-22; Gajiev 2004: 150-151.

<sup>58</sup> “Borba” 1919, September 2.

lovers and proponents of the neutral zone proposal were simply helping to drown the young republic. He also criticized them for believing Haskell's promise, who had promised just a few days earlier that Azerbaijan would be held accountable for its aggression. However, he did the opposite, and by going to Baku, he became a puppet in the hands of the Khans and Beys, drafting his proposed shameful document without even consulting the government of the Republic of Armenia, calling on the ruling party to revise its foreign policy, abandon the hypocrisy of the West, and turn its face toward Russian democracy:

"The bitter experiences of an entire year have shown that we can expect nothing good from foreign powers. What did the Allies, on whom the Armenian people had placed all their hope, give us? A week ago, Colonel Haskell was the subject of enthusiastic demonstrations in this building by the Parliament and the Armenian people. A week ago, he declared from this podium that it was beyond doubt for him that the government of Azerbaijan had violated the instructions received from England regarding the borders of Armenia, that Azerbaijan was the author of all the recent incidents, and he promised to hold its government personally responsible for this. But now, a week later, after visiting Baku and without even returning to Yerevan and listening to the opinion of our government, sitting in Tiflis, he sends instructions to the government of Armenia for implementation, from which it is clear that he is now shifting that responsibility onto the government of Armenia.

What have the Allies, these lovers of neutral zones, who have been coming to Armenia one after another throughout this year, given us? The British came, and barely two weeks later, they created neutral strips between us and Georgia. The American came, appointed as the Supreme Commissioner of Armenia, and his first words were about new neutral strips. What is Colonel Haskell now proposing to us? To create a series of neutral strips between us and our neighbors, so that the encirclement of Armenia, which is already surrounded on four sides, becomes complete.

It is time to finally fundamentally review our foreign policy".<sup>59</sup>

A part of the Dashnaks was also dissatisfied with the course of events and therefore proposed to consult with Haskell, after which they authorized the government to make its final decision. Moreover, to demonstrate their solidarity with the main part of A. Khondkaryan's criticism, the Dashnaks ensured it appeared in the newspapers "Hayastani Ashkhatavor," "Yarrach," and "Ashkhatavor," where it was emphasized that the enemies of Armenia were in favor of creating a neutral zone in order to maintain the borders imposed on the Republic of Armenia by the Turks in June 1919. It was noted that Haskell might also create another neutral zone in the Kars region, yielding to the wishes of Muslim beys and agents, and that the Allied powers were allowing the richest lands of Russian Armenia to be simply taken away from the Republic of Armenia.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Minutes of the Sessions of the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia 2009, 260-261; Hovhannisyan 2014: 237.

<sup>60</sup> "Nor Ashkhatavor" 1919, September 11, Tiflis; "Hayrenik" 1919, November 23.



Haskell's letter was discussed at the sessions of the Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Armenia from September 3-6, 1919, where it was decided to send a commission to W. Haskell to clarify the situation.<sup>61</sup> It can be assumed that in this regard, Haskell was not simply misled by the Azerbaijanis (for which Azerbaijani historians praised him), but he had deliberately favored oil-rich Azerbaijan, which was also desirable for Great Britain. For this purpose, he asked Levon Evanguyan, the diplomatic commissioner of Armenia in Tiflis, not to publish his speeches and opinions about his activities in the newspapers.<sup>62</sup>

On September 6, 1919, Khatisyan, accompanied by R. Ter-Minasyan, traveled to Tiflis to clarify the issue. There, the Prime Minister had six meetings with the author of the project between September 6-14. Nasib bek Usubbekov had also arrived there at Haskell's suggestion, in connection with the Armenian side receiving explanations from Haskell. The demand of the Republic of Armenia was as follows:

1. Sharur-Nakhijevan was accepted as part of Armenia by the British military authorities, and if this was accepted, they would respect Haskell's proposal and agree to the American governorship proposal, considering the inclusion of Daralagyaz in the neutral zone absurd, stating that Azerbaijan had violated the instructions of the Paris Peace Conference, wanting to build a railway from Zangezur to Nakhijevan without preconditions.
2. Zangezur has been and must remain a part of Armenia, which was accepted by General J. Cory and violated by Usubbekov, and the name "Neutral Zone" should be replaced by the name "American General Governorship".<sup>63</sup>

And so, N. Usubbekov also arrived in Tiflis and insisted on his amendments with new proposals and additions to the points. According to his insistence, the Muslim population was to remain armed, and the governor was to be deprived of the right to dismiss officials. Baku was not only to pay extra compensation but also ensure the circulation of its own bonds (bonuses), reserving the monopoly for the railway to be built up to Julfa. In return, Azerbaijan accepted the supremacy of the Republic of Armenia in Daralagyaz.<sup>64</sup>

During the negotiations, W. Haskell fully accepted the point of view of the Republic of Armenia and reduced his list to nine points. In the final version, the American zone included only Sharur-Nakhijevan, and all administrative expenses were covered by the US or jointly. The existing population in Vedi was disarmed, and the construction of the railway branch leading to Julfa had to be agreed upon with the Republic of Armenia by a separate treaty. During the bilateral discussions, W. Haskell confirmed that Zangezur was unequivocally an Armenian region and suggested to A. Khatisyan to use the

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<sup>61</sup> The Republic of Armenia 1918-1920 2000, 119-121.

<sup>62</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 175, l. 55.

<sup>63</sup> "Nor Ashkhatavor" 1919, September 10.

<sup>64</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 101, l. 90 rev.

services of A. Denikin's Volunteer Army without concluding official agreements. He admitted that "the arrival of troops is not expected in the near future".<sup>65</sup>

Thus, as in the case of the Azerbaijanis, Haskell considered the Armenians' proposals acceptable, seemingly trying to influence Azerbaijan regarding the changes. However, Usubbekov initially remained inflexible on the issues of Daralagyaz, the use of Azerbaijani currency, and the Baku-Aliat-Julfa railway, believing that the American governor should only play the role of an external supervisor, although he later conceded on the Darayagyaz issue.

Azerbaijan's stubborn adherence to principles was essentially due to the fact that Haskell, not having sufficient military forces at his disposal, would not be able to establish an American General Governorship. Consequently, the Azerbaijani government simply assumed the role of an indifferent and calculating observer, not wanting to be accused of torpedoing Haskell's project, being convinced to the end that Haskell would not dare to establish a governorship in a Muslim-populated region without their consent.

Haskell's game with both the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides was obvious, and Khatisyan, returning to Yerevan on September 14, reported that Haskell had seen the shortcomings of the proposal.<sup>66</sup> However, this argument merely recorded the momentary situation and nothing more, as no assessment was given to Haskell's changeability. Summarizing the characterization of the figure Haskell, one can conclude that during his mere three weeks in Transcaucasia, he managed to change his position three times, swinging from one extreme to the other, saying one thing in Yerevan, another in Baku, and in Tiflis renouncing a part of the agreement already signed by him. This meant the discrediting of a country and his own person, who had delegated him to Transcaucasia. Haskell's signature had no value, and it seemed that his career should have had a sad end, but the opposite happened some time later. Haskell received a promotion, and his authority was extended to Georgia and Azerbaijan as well.

Trying to explain Haskell's behavior, Prime Minister S. Vratsyan wrote: "Thus, the 'Supreme Commissioner of Armenia' was giving Karabakh-Zangezur to Azerbaijan as well. And the surprise and fury that gripped everyone in Yerevan when Haskell's order was received—to 'sign without delay and send back' the agreement—was understandable." Seeking ill will or enmity in Haskell's step was inappropriate, of course, as the game being played was so open. The man was simply a victim of his ignorance and gullibility and the intrigues spun in Baku. The government of Azerbaijan provided him with inflammatory facts and figures, and the poor man did not know whom to believe or what to do".<sup>67</sup> S. Vratsyan adds to what was said that in Azerbaijan "at the same time they demanded the formation of 'a mixed investigative body from

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<sup>65</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 101, l. 90 rev.

<sup>66</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 239.

<sup>67</sup> Vratsyan 1993: 324.

representatives of all the Allies' to investigate 'the violence committed by the Armenian Dashnak bandits against the Azerbaijanis of the Yerevan Vilayet'."

It is understandable that such appeals and facts must have influenced the American Haskell, who was neither familiar with the Caucasian conditions and customs nor endowed with the foresight of an Englishman trained in governing colonies.<sup>68</sup> It turned out that Haskell's behavior was the same "British far-sightedness in the matter of governing colonies." Only the musicians changed, but the music was the same, as old as the world: "divide and rule"—divide promises that will not be fulfilled, give promises to Armenians on even days, and to Azerbaijanis on odd days, which makes the strategy of American Colonel W. Haskell understandable—that he was merely the expresser and implementer of his government's will, for which the Armenians should have been grateful to the "Armenophile" W. Wilson. Haskell was also the successor to the British anti-Russian policy after the British left Transcaucasia, which was well characterized by Colonel M. Zinkevich, the representative of the Volunteer Army in the Republic of Armenia, who headed the General Staff of the Republic of Armenia for a long time. He simply states: "Haskell demanded from the government of Armenia that it should not have relations with the Commander-in-Chief (Denikin - V.V.), bypassing him. Moreover, in cases where the Americans saw manifestations of sympathy for Russia, they persuaded the Armenians that Russia would never become a great power again and, for that very reason, could not be relied upon for aid".<sup>69</sup>

On September 12, 1919, Khatisyan complained to J. O. Wardrop<sup>70</sup> that the Allies' delay in helping the Armenians had reduced their prestige in the face of the steps being taken by the Paris Conference. At the same time, great doubts arose regarding Haskell as the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies. It became evident that without military force, he could do nothing, leaving the impression of a harmless American missionary on the Muslims, which caused a negative feeling. Khatisyan's conclusion clearly shows the moment of distrust among the leaders of the Armenian state, who were encouraged when any high-ranking British, American, or other officer seemingly did the opposite, despite the numerous difficulties caused by the latter.<sup>71</sup> From November 1919, W. Haskell received the right to control the relations of the Transcaucasian republics. In his report to the Council of the Allies on November 14, 1919, Colonel W. Haskell informed that the three Transcaucasian republics—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—were in a state of relations "drawn with a dagger" in almost all respects.<sup>72</sup> In November-December 1919, Haskell participated with the Prime Minister of Armenia, A. Khatisyan, in the development of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty.<sup>73</sup> From the letter presented by

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<sup>68</sup> Vratsyan 1993: 324-325.

<sup>69</sup> Denikin 2002, vol. 4, 320.

<sup>70</sup> Wardrop, John Oliver – British representative in Transcaucasia.

<sup>71</sup> Hovhannisyan 2007: 196.

<sup>72</sup> Mahmudov 2008 (ed.): 223, 321.

<sup>73</sup> Armenian Question Encyclopedia 1996, 281.

Major General H. Kishmishyan, the representative of the Military Department accredited to the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis, to the manager of affairs of the same mission on November 12, 1919 (No. 288), we learn that Lieutenant Bekzadov is the liaison officer attached to the Supreme Commissioner Colonel W. Haskell<sup>74</sup>, and at that time no one was appointed in Azerbaijan due to the disagreement of the parties.<sup>75</sup> Instead, only the candidacy of a certain Sergeev was nominated until a suitable officer was found. And he was found, and the duties of the military attaché of the Republic of Armenia in Azerbaijan were entrusted to General Pavel Melik-Shahnazaryan.<sup>76</sup>

And so, taking advantage of W. Haskell's leniency, the Muslims left his seemingly correct proposals hanging in the air. Furthermore, they responded with treacherous calls and actions, despite Colonel James Rae informing the Muslim Council of Nakhijevan on September 16, 1919, of the necessity to submit to the American governor, stating that Colonel Edmund L. Daily had already been proposed as governor and was appointed on October 26. Regarding this, Rae urgently departed for Baku to expedite Daily's appointment, after which he left for Yerevan with several American officials and the Vice-Consul of Tiflis, M. Tumanyan, and the Muslim Council and all local military and civilian officials were called upon to participate in the ceremonies.<sup>77</sup>

During this time in Nakhijevan, Samed Bek Dzhamalinsky and the military minister of the Arasdajan Republic, former Russian and Great Britain colonel, descendant and heir of the Nakhijevan Khans, Kyal'-Ali Khan Nakhichevansky, resisted Colonel Rae, who had arrived there. They were joined by the Muslim Council, which boasted that they would not submit even to Baku and would not risk the American governorship when the territory had been handed over to the Armenians. In the end, Rae returned to Yerevan, leaving Daily in Nakhijevan, thereby aborting the American project, for which Rae and Haskell angrily and seemingly seriously declared Azerbaijan guilty of violating its promises.<sup>78</sup> Azerbaijan accepted this circumstance calmly, and in response, Jafarov noted that his government had merely declared that it would take on the role of an observing spectator.<sup>79</sup> This was a victory for Baku, as Usubbekov's government clearly understood that, given the absence of Allied armed forces in the region, they could take a tougher position in their Caucasian policy with impunity, a fact that was not well grasped by those who formulated the foreign policy calculations and priorities of the Republic of Armenia.

<sup>74</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 196, l. 38.

<sup>75</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 197, l. 34.

<sup>76</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 177, l. 210.

<sup>77</sup> Struggle for the Victory of Soviet Power in Azerbaijan 1967, 313-314; "Azerbaijan" 1919, October 23; "Ashkhataavor" 1919, October 24.

<sup>78</sup> "Ashkhataavor" 1919, November 2, "Hayrenik" 1919, December 30; Great October and the Struggle for Soviet Power in Azerbaijan 1958, 364-370, Hovhannisyan 1982: 204.

<sup>79</sup> Gadzhiev 2004: 156-157; Zohrabyan 2012: 215-216.

By the second half of October 1919, it was already evident that the establishment of the American governorship in Sharur-Nakhijevan had been thwarted by Azerbaijan, which had conditioned it on the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Zangezur, while the opposite process was underway. Khatisyan called this a pretext to sabotage Haskell's plan, which was not entirely correct.

Finally, one more step seemed to be taken: on October 6, 1919, Jafarov, in a conversation with J. O. Wardrop, expressed doubts about Haskell's authority in the political affairs of Transcaucasia, stating that without renouncing its jurisdiction over Sharur-Nakhijevan, it would not resist the American proposal and, like Armenia, would agree to appoint a representative to escort the American governor to Nakhijevan. Considering himself successful, Haskell departed for Paris to report to Herbert Clark Hoover, head of the "American Relief Administration," to clarify the scope of aid and request an extension of his authority. In his place, the American governorship in Nakhijevan was handed over to the Chief of Staff of the American Mission, Colonel James S. Rae, who served as Acting Supreme Commissioner during Haskell's absence.<sup>80</sup>

The British were also dissatisfied with W. Haskell, a sentiment expressed by George Kidston, head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, who said that Haskell should have represented all Allied powers but had arbitrarily indulged in all kinds of orders without informing the Allies of anything.<sup>81</sup> In a conversation with Crow in Paris on November 28, 1919, he stressed that Haskell's appointment initially inspired confidence, but by comparing information from several people arriving from the Caucasus, he had concluded that Haskell was the last person who could be entrusted with such a delicate and difficult task and was absolutely unsuitable for dealing with Orientals.<sup>82</sup>

Meanwhile, the Muslim world was consolidating, spreading toward Transcaucasia, toward their brethren. T. Devoyants, the resident-intelligence officer of the Republic of Armenia in Constantinople and head of the agency network, made the following interesting note in a report (No 32) addressed to General G. Ghorghanyan on October 6, 1919: he reported that three Georgian and two Azerbaijani officers were present with Mustafa Kemal Pasha at the meeting convened in Sivas and participated in the Sivas Congress<sup>83</sup> to discuss the issue of defending the Turkish borders, finally undertaking all measures to strengthen army units and Kurdish-Tatar bands along the entire length of the Armenian border. He cited a telegram sent by the commander of the 15<sup>th</sup> Turkish Corps from Erzurum to the Minister of War in Constantinople, which emphasized that preparatory measures were being taken on the Armenian border in connection with the approaching events. The report stressed that these preparations were not, in fact,

<sup>80</sup> Mahmudov 2008 (ed.): 313, 612.

<sup>81</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 240.

<sup>82</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 478.

<sup>83</sup> Archive of the Republic of Armenia (Boston), No. 17/17, store. 12, d. 3, l. 40.

delayed. As proof of the activation of Turkish forces in the areas adjacent to the Armenian border, the report mentioned the maneuvers of Turkish units confirmed by intelligence data, particularly the movement of the 9<sup>th</sup> Turkish Division in the direction of the Olti region, the operations of the 11<sup>th</sup> Division in the areas adjacent to the Sharur-Nakhijevan and Zangibasar regions, and the regrouping of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Divisions in the Trebizond and Erzurum regions, which were also confirmed by other sources.

This document recorded that small groups of *chetniks* (irregulars) were heading to the Caucasus from the Erznka and Shinikh-Garahisar regions via Erzurum. In addition, it was stated that the “Milli” organization was expanding more successfully in the Tortum region, with separate detachments heading to the Olti, Alashkert valleys, Sarighamish, Kaghzvan, Kulpi, and Sharur-Nakhijevan regions.<sup>84</sup> The report also made an important conclusion that, parallel to the successes of the Bolsheviks, Turkey had been encouraged and was rushing to use it to strengthen its Pan-Islamist goals with the aim of destroying the Armenian Question. At the same time, Captain Vahagn Muradyants also expressed alarm regarding the possibility of the Allies showing possible indifferent behavior towards them, noting that the nightmare of the past year could be repeated in more horrifying forms. Based on this, one of the main intelligence officers of Armenia, Captain V. Muradyants, concluded that it was necessary to immediately inform the Allies about everything so that they could take timely measures to ensure the physical existence of the Armenians.

Muradyants then addressed another important circumstance. He noted that the Turks, taking advantage of the fact that they had refrained from all kinds of punitive measures against the rebellious Tatars—who were committing illegal acts on legitimate Armenian territory—in accordance with the proposal of Supreme Commissioner Haskell, were continuously supplying the rebels with weapons, ammunition, and even artillery, organizing the Tatars in all the villages of Zangibasar, Vedibasar, Sharur, and Nakhijevan. Muradyants also referred to the anti-Armenian activities of Khalil Pasha in Nakhijevan, where the latter called for unification with Turkey in his speeches. At the same time, other concrete facts were noted: at the beginning of December, a representative of Azerbaijan sent about 100 Turkish officers from Constantinople to Baku, and Miralay Riza Bey, who had worked as a police chief for the Turks, was again sent by Nuri Pasha to Azerbaijan to take up his old post, and so on. There is a note by Major General H. Akhverdyan on this highly important report, in which the latter emphasized his complete agreement with the facts and views presented in Captain Muradyants’ report.<sup>85</sup>

The result was that on November 23, 1919, through the arbitration of Colonel Rae, and with the aim of overcoming the crisis, a compromise agreement was adopted, signed by the Prime Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, by which the parties undertook to open the roads leading to Zangezur and to end the clashes through

<sup>84</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 271, l. 85-86.

<sup>85</sup> NAA, f. 204, c. 1, d. 133, l. 26-27; f. 200, c. 1, d. 271, l. 86.

peaceful negotiations. The document entered into force from the moment of signing but was subject to ratification. J. Rae, Acting Supreme Commissioner, was recognized as the principal and neutral arbitrator for every issue. The process of ratifying this agreement is also attested to by the Georgian Foreign Minister E. Gegechkori.<sup>86</sup>

The issues of disarmament, refugees, the inviolability of semi-autonomous enclaves, and the status of Karabakh and Sharur-Nakhijevan were omitted from the agreement<sup>87</sup>, which led the issue to a dead end. On December 3, W. Haskell, who had returned to the Caucasus, was angered by the failure of the American governorship. He blamed Halil Bey and the Azerbaijanis, but then unnecessarily blamed Rae and demanded that Khatisyan recall the Armenian troops from Zangezur and adopt a more conciliatory position toward Azerbaijan.

Haskell took other steps, which gave Admiral M. Bristol cause to criticize Haskell, who then blamed Rae, causing the latter to resign and sever his ties with the American aid agencies.<sup>88</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Edmund L. Daily replaced Rae as Haskell's Chief of Staff. In this context, Admiral M. Bristol in Constantinople protested to Haskell, saying that Rae and the other Americans in Tiflis had failed to distinguish fact from propaganda, as they had swallowed the Armenian line about a major Turkish-Azerbaijani plan to unite on the Karabakh-Zangezur-Nakhijevan land bridge. He stated that he did not believe the forces attacking Zangezur from Nakhijevan were led by regular Turkish officers, but he had no doubt that those forces merely included Turkish deserters, officers, and men, and that the British were indeed at fault because they initially supported one side and then the other, while the Caucasian races, like the Greeks, considered it right to kill, plunder, and expel all other peoples.<sup>89</sup>

Azerbaijani authors also wrote about W. Haskell's authority and thus the conditionality of the Nakhijevan Neutral Zone he drew, testifying that Azerbaijan was not uninvolved in hindering Haskell's plans. N. Jamalova writes about this, noting that the attempts of Colonel William Haskell, the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies in the South Caucasus, to create a Neutral Zone and hand over Nakhijevan to the Armenian administration failed due to the efforts of the ADR government, particularly citing the conference held in Baku on August 29, 1919, with Haskell's participation. At the conference, it was proposed to create a Neutral Zone in Sharur-Daralyagyaz and Nakhijevan under the leadership of an American governor. The American administrator appointed by Haskell was entrusted with the governance of the neutral zone, the interests of Azerbaijan and Armenia were to be equal in the Neutral Zone, the Baku-Julfa railway was to be under supervision, and the Azerbaijanis and both sides in general were obliged to withdraw their troops. N. Gozalova believes that the

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<sup>86</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 282, l. 35-36; Nagorno-Karabakh in 1918-1923 1992, 352-353; The Republic of Armenia 1918-1920 2000, 140-141.

<sup>87</sup> Hovhannisyan 2014: 263-264.

<sup>88</sup> "Yarrach" 1920, January 22; "Ashkhatavor" 1919, December 18.

<sup>89</sup> Hovhannisyan 1982: 227.

government of Azerbaijan did not approve of Haskell interfering in its internal affairs. Haskell's proposal for a neutral zone was viewed as interference in the borders of the Azerbaijani state. To prevent the interference, the Azerbaijani government gave diplomatic initiative privileges to the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister M. Y. Jafarov, who was concerned about the deviations from the agreements, addressing British High Commissioner Oliver Wardrop with a diplomatic message about this on October 9.<sup>90</sup> However, according to N. Gozalova, although Azerbaijan agreed to the creation of a neutral zone, it simultaneously considered that the mentioned territories were part of Azerbaijan, and a demand was put before Haskell to defend the unification of these territories with Azerbaijan during the Paris Peace Conference. And finally, in N. Gozalova's conclusion, Azerbaijan presented objections that Haskell played an important role in favor of Azerbaijan by resolving issues through bilateral agreement, which led to Armenia's dissatisfaction. As a result, the Azerbaijani government was able to achieve territorial supremacy by establishing relations with the representatives of foreign countries in the South Caucasus, and the British, Turkish, American, and Italian representatives supported the position of the Azerbaijani government regarding the Nakhijevan and Sharur-Daralagyz regions.<sup>91</sup>

And so, in November 1919, Haskell returned to Paris to report on the conditions in Armenia and to request that his authority be extended to Georgia and Azerbaijan.<sup>92</sup> He then presented a report to the Peace Conference that Armenia was still isolated and vulnerable to pressure from the governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan, which controlled transport routes, railway workshops, and fuel supplies. W. Haskell's request to be vested with broader powers was granted, despite the reservations of the British, who had already sent J. Oliver Wardrop to Tiflis as the Supreme Commissioner for the Caucasus, not trusting the abilities of the American officer.<sup>93</sup> W. Haskell was not unequivocally accepted by the main rivals of the Entente. J. Kidston, in a letter to Eyre Crowe on November 28, again addressing the issue of extending W. Haskell's authority, had stated that according to information received from the Caucasus, they had concluded that Haskell could not be trusted with such a delicate and difficult task, also accusing him of ignorance, arbitrary imposition, and lack of knowledge of Eastern affairs. A similar view was held by the acting commander of the French military mission in the Caucasus, Commander Émile de Nonancourt, who had complained to his government as early as October 12, emphasizing that Haskell was very ambitious<sup>94</sup>. This idea is also confirmed by Al. Khatysyan in a telegram sent to the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia in Washington, Garegin Pasternadjian (Armen Garo), on November 18, 1919: "After the departure of the English, we are under

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<sup>90</sup> Jamalova 2023: 166.

<sup>91</sup> Jamalova 2023: 167.

<sup>92</sup> Mahmudov 2008 (ed.): 270.

<sup>93</sup> Ismailov 2010: 185-186.

<sup>94</sup> Hovhannisyan 2007: 300.



the protection of the Americans, but that protection is only platonic, because the Americans, being deprived of military force, have no opportunity to force the Tatars and Turks to carry out their orders... Thanks to Haskell's intervention, an agreement has already been adopted by which the regions of Sharur, Nakhijevan, and Goghtan were to form an American Governorship, a neutral zone, until the conference".<sup>95</sup>

On December 9, 1919, after a meeting with J. O. Wardrop<sup>96</sup> and W. Haskell, Evangulyan came to the not very confident assumption that before concluding any treaty, it was important to smooth out the border disputes; that reaching an agreement with Georgia was a priority, believing that this would compel its ally, Azerbaijan, to be accommodating towards Armenia, adding that the final resolution was hindered by the Alaverdi mines.<sup>97</sup> Evangulyan had concluded that they had been unable to reach any constructive agreement the previous year, and the Georgians had used the very arbitration agreement concluded with the Armenians to submit the dispute to arbitration.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, according to Evangulyan, the parties came to a preliminary agreement that Akhaltsikhe should be ceded to Georgia, and the Neutral Zone, without the Alaverdi region, should be ceded to Armenia, leaving the Alaverdi region under Georgia's control as a disputed territory until a decision was reached by the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>99</sup> And finally, whom was L. Evangulyan proposing to take on the role of arbitrator in the Armenian-Georgian dispute? L. Evangulyan considered possible the head of the Greek representation, Stavridakis, who was less an Armenophile than a Turcophobe, speaking against the candidacy of the High Commissioner of the Republic of Armenia, W. Haskell, who was an advocate of rapprochement with the Muslims.<sup>100</sup>

On December 18, 1919, the Head of the Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Alkhazov, reporting on a consultation held with Colonel W. Haskell, stated that the Government of the Republic of Armenia, through General J. O. Wardrop and Captain J. Gracey, had raised the issue before the British government of sending military instructors to Armenia. In connection with this, Colonel W. Haskell, who spoke at the consultation, expressed his readiness to assist in this matter, promising that there would be no obstacles and that the Government of the Republic of Armenia could submit the corresponding request<sup>101</sup>, but it did not materialize and remained on paper.

From December 18-21, 1919, during his visit as High Commissioner to Armenia, he traveled to Kars, Alexandropol, and Karakilisa. On the first day of the trip, in Yerevan, he met with A. Khatisyan, the Minister of Finance and Provisioning S.

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<sup>95</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 395, l. 4.

<sup>96</sup> Wardrop John Oliver – British representative in Transcaucasia.

<sup>97</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, sheet 125.

<sup>98</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, reverse side of sheet 125.

<sup>99</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, sheet 125.

<sup>100</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, sheet 126.

<sup>101</sup> NAA, f. 201, c. 1, inv. 427, part I, sheets 28-28a; Virabyan 1999: 38.

Araratyan, and the Minister of Welfare and Labour A. Babalyan. In the debates, the republic's authorities complained about being kept out of the distribution of their provisions.<sup>102</sup>

As of December 21, 1919, the acting Chief of Staff reported that despite some disagreements among the leaders of the Turkish national circles, Kazim Karabekir Pasha and Rauf Bey themselves, relying on the indecisiveness of the Entente "Allied" countries, and the absence of sufficient forces at their disposal, wanted to immediately seize Smyrna (Izmir, Symrna) and the northern part of the territory up to Arpachay with their own forces, considering this the most opportune moment for enthusiasm and for creating general sentiments among like-minded people, given their belief in the possibility of realizing these ideas. And secondly, in order to present the Paris Conference with a *fait accompli* by seizing the territory of Turkey with national forces and strengthening the propaganda of the principle of Turkey's indivisibility, thereby bringing about the annulment of the Armenian Question.

The mentioned document also stated that reliable intelligence sources had revealed that a congress of the commanders of the Turkish corps was to be held in Erzurum at the end of November 1919, with the participation of representatives of Kurds, Ajars, the Azerbaijani military, and Russian Bolsheviks, with the aim of acting against Armenia and the strengthening of the Allies, hindering the dismemberment of Turkey's territory, and ultimately, developing a general plan of action against Turkey's enemies.

Losing extremely valuable time, the Armenians relied until the very end on W. Haskell's promises and assurances.

It must be emphasized that Haskell's personality cannot be evaluated unequivocally. The latter stressed his impartiality and sometimes his pro-Armenian position, but in reality, his position was unstable, not subject to certain standards, and ultimately, like his country's policy, was two-faced, inconsistent, and built upon great political self-interest, hence subject to change. This is evidenced by his following noteworthy expression (November-December 1919): "The Yerevan politicians are doing everything to provoke a massacre, and it looks like they truly want it, so that they can announce it to the whole world and create a new uproar in these spheres. They are speculating on this in vain; if this continues indefinitely, the whole world will know the truth and stop believing. The Tatars are all the same to me, and the interests of the Armenians are dear to me as the High Commissioner of Armenia, and it would be painful for me if these things were known".<sup>103</sup> What wonderful demagoguery, which was sometimes believed, and sometimes taken seriously, harming Armenian interests.

According to the telegram (No. 1064) of the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis, Evangulyan, dated February 21, 1920, he concluded that

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<sup>102</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 638, sheets 1-2, inv. 362, sheet 99.

<sup>103</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 183, sheet 146.

both Wardrop and Haskell were against the return of Russia to the Caucasus.<sup>104</sup> Evangulyan insisted that in this situation, both Wardrop, Haskell, Gabba, and Nonancourt, and even Venizelos [who had a reputation as a friend of the Armenians - V.V.], were proposing the realization of the idea of a confederation as a way out of the situation. However, according to Evangulyan, the issue of “forming a union with Georgia and Azerbaijan” for the Republic of Armenia had a “direct connection” with the “Volunteer Army”<sup>105</sup>, and that no matter how bad the situation was with the latter, they should not take any steps of an absolutely aggressive nature against Russia.<sup>106</sup> Accordingly, the representative of the Republic of Armenia concludes: “My conversations with Haskell and Wardrop personally leave the impression that their governments are against the return of the Caucasus to Russia. I even think that the Allies will not allow the command of the Volunteer Army to cross the line it currently holds. Colonel Haskell, according to reliable information, assured Vakilov, the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Georgia, that Russia would not enter the borders of Azerbaijan. W. Haskell told Abdurakhman-bek Hakhverdov, the representative of Azerbaijan in Armenia, that if the Armenian-Azerbaijani conference yielded no results, he intended to attach the Armenian part of Zangezur to Armenia, and Nakhichevan to Azerbaijan”<sup>107</sup>, obliging them to allow the return of refugees and let the nomads pass.<sup>108</sup>

On May 14, 1920, during the Bolshevik uprising, W. Haskell issued a statement that if the rebels did not lay down their arms, the USA would refuse to provide material assistance<sup>109</sup>, which sounded like a direct threat. In a telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs dated May 16, 1920, T. Bekzadyan reported on a meeting with Colonel Haskell on May 13, according to which W. Haskell’s main observation was that he had expressed alarm over the seizure of American warehouses by Bolsheviks in Alexandropol, demanding decisive action against the Bolsheviks. In response, T. Bekzadyan assured him that, thanks to the drastic measures taken by the government, these issues would be resolved within 2-3 days, and train traffic would be regularized. Addressing the complexity of their relations with the Georgians, T. Bekzadyan informed Haskell that the Government of Georgia had promised not to create obstacles to the regular delivery of cargo.<sup>110</sup> T. Bekzadyan also reported that Haskell, after being assured of the Armenian government’s anti-Bolshevik disposition, only then confirmed that the American Committee would be obliged to hand over the provisions to the

<sup>104</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, reverse side of sheet 123; f. 200, c. 1, inv. 440, sheet 1.

<sup>105</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, sheets 124-124 reverse side.

<sup>106</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 440, sheet 3.

<sup>107</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 116, sheet 123.

<sup>108</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 116, sheets 125-126.

<sup>109</sup> Armenian Question. Encyclopedia 1996, 281; Tigran Bekzadyan. Diary of the Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Armenia in Azerbaijan Tigran Bekzadyan (March 11, 1919 – August 27, 1919). Edited by VI. Harutyunyan, Yerevan, Author’s publication, 2025, pp. 156, 158.

<sup>110</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 116, sheets 125-126; Armenian Question. Encyclopedia 1996, 281.

Government of the Republic of Armenia in Batumi, and therefore there needed to be a person in Batumi to whom the goods could be entrusted. Haskell was assured of the full readiness of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, proposing the candidacies of Yer. Ter-Minasyan or Consul General M. Atabekyan for the position of authorized representative. The issue of the military attaché was also addressed, suggesting that Captain Bekzadyan, an officer of the communication service, be sent to Batumi to Haskell, stating that the latter was well acquainted with their customs and would always keep them informed about the state of affairs, which would prevent many surprises.<sup>111</sup>

The May Uprising of 1920 caused deep demoralization for the Republic of Armenia; two years later, the army did not remain completely loyal to national independence, and the officer corps proved to be inept and indecisive. These events were fatal in Haskell's contradictory activity in the Transcaucasia, during which he ordered his relief workers in Yerevan to leave the country, and he himself departed via Batumi, about which Lieutenant Colonel Charles Livingston informed Prime Minister H. Ohanjanyan, saying that he had received an order to evacuate all military personnel. At the moment of his hasty departure, W. Haskell had issued an order to suspend American grain shipments and to reroute cargo destined for Batumi to other European ports.<sup>112</sup> On May 3, Ch. Livingston informed Prime Minister Ohanjanyan that he had been ordered to withdraw all military personnel, as well as the women of the Near East Relief, and Dr. Clarence Usher was left behind to take responsibility for further relief operations.<sup>113</sup>

Haskell's flight caused dissatisfaction among the Allied representatives in Tiflis, which showed that the symbolic partnership with the Allies was useful only when confined to charitable work. H. Luke reported that they had learned about this two hours before Haskell's departure, that it had caused slight panic and a sense of shame among them, and Commander Charles-Marie de Nonancourt complained that Haskell and other American officers in the Caucasus were "rude, clumsy, ignorant of local conditions." Haskell was described as "personally antipathetic to the Armenians, who criticize him for his lack of intelligence and his complete and persistent ignorance of the country and its inhabitants".<sup>114</sup> And Sh. M. de Nonancourt, the head of French mission in the Caucasus, approached the matter more strictly, finding that Haskell and many other American officers in the Caucasus behaved rudely, inconsiderately, were unaware of the local conditions, and that he had become personally antipathetic to the Armenians, who accused him of intellectual poverty and complete and persistent ignorance of the country and its inhabitants.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> NAA, f. 275. c. 5, inv. 212, sheet 80.

<sup>112</sup> NAA, f. 199, c. 1, inv. 128, sheet 64; f. 200, c. 1, inv. 412, sheet 52.

<sup>113</sup> Hovhannisyan 1996: 248.

<sup>114</sup> Hovhannisyan 1996: 248.

<sup>115</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015: 302.

Historian Christopher Walker presents Haskell as a swindler who was about to be exposed as an embezzler: "On May 5, 1920, when the Caucasus was shaken by the uncertainty caused by the Bolshevik coup in Transcaucasia and the uprising in Armenia, Haskell received notice that a financial investigation commission was on its way, along with inspecting auditors. With lightning speed, he and his staff fled Tiflis, scattering evidence right and left. His justification was his concern about the spread of Bolshevism. Haskell issued an order that the records should be destroyed. His staff in Yerevan received a similar order".<sup>116</sup>

After suppressing the May Uprising, Haskell authorized the last shipment intended for Armenia. Haskell then briefly returned to the Caucasus, but did not dare to leave Batumi, requesting that the Government of the Republic of Armenia appoint a representative with whom he could deal. After several warm messages with Ohanjanyan, at the end of June 1920, he departed from Batumi once again, never to return. Colonel C. Telford placed the aid organized by the American and Allied states under the private patronage of the Near East Relief.<sup>117</sup>

In Armenia, Colonel C. Telford transferred aid sponsored by the American and Allied governments to the private patronage of the Near East Relief, where he called the Armenians ungrateful, "professional beggars." Subsequently, the following month, Haskell visited the Foreign Office in London and, in a speech there, used the same words against the Armenians as C. Telford. The British government, in turn, had little faith in the administrative capabilities of the Armenians, and the May Uprising provided a convenient pretext to further delay the supply of arms and equipment for the Armenian army.<sup>118</sup>

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the permissiveness of Haskell and the other Allies, the Georgian side had become active, openly claiming the disputed and neutral territories. On July 31, 1920, Ohanjanyan, reporting that he had received a private secret letter of July 29, demanded that the Armenian Ambassador in Tiflis, T. Bekzadyan, strongly protest to the Georgian government and point out the consequences that such an aggressive policy could entail at a time when they were sparing no means to end the border disputes by mutual agreement, including in the Neutral Zone. He also informed him about Colonel Haskell's letter, which recalled the Governor-General of the Neutral Zone of Borchalu District, Major Mark Alpin, suggesting negotiations with the Georgian government to work out a new form of administration for that region, or to temporarily divide the region into two districts with Armenian and Georgian administrations, or to form a joint administration whose head

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<sup>116</sup>Walker 1980: 287.

<sup>117</sup> NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 412, sheets 52-53; f. 200, c. 1, inv. 442, part II, sheets 553-554; "Yarraj" 1920, August 3.

<sup>118</sup> Hovhannisyan 1996: 248.

would be chosen by mutual consent.<sup>119</sup> He also suggested negotiating with the Georgians regarding Batumi, with certain guarantees for the Republic of Armenia.

However, none of this prevented the Armenian side from showing a certain overt servitude and presenting a gift to W. Haskell. Thus, in a letter (No. 0289) from the Chief of Staff Baghdasarov on August 4, 1920, addressed to General H. A. Kishmishyan, military attaché to the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis, the issue was raised for the chargé d'affaires Bekzadyan to purchase a Caucasian sword for Colonel W. Haskell as a memorial and thank you for the assistance he provided in the matter of the people's salvation. The letter requested that the best sword be bought, regardless of the price, and that an inscription be placed on it.<sup>120</sup>

With this, the US government aid program ended, and the new General Director of the Caucasian branch of the Near East Relief, the famous missionary, participant in the Defense of Van and the First Congress of Western Armenians, E. Yarrow, moved his residence from Tiflis to Alexandropol.<sup>121</sup>

On August 6, 1920 (No. 2752), the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia addressed the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, reporting that, according to a message received from High Commissioner W. Haskell, they were leaving Transcaucasia, recalling the Governor-General of the Neutral Zone of the Borchalu district. Accordingly, the Governments of Georgia and Armenia were advised to agree on matters of future governance. The chargé d'affaires proposed, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, to immediately jointly discuss the final territorial affiliation of the zone, asking the Georgian government to promptly submit its considerations.<sup>122</sup> In a telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia on August 17, 1920 (No. 2892), the diplomatic representative reported that he had appealed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia to reach an agreement on the further administration of the Neutral Zone, saying that he was waiting for instructions from the government regarding negotiations with the Government of Georgia.<sup>123</sup>

It was precisely this way that the Allies, W. Haskell, and others further deepened the quarrels among the Transcaucasian republics and abandoned them when they were no longer within the sphere of their interests. And generally, it must be noted that there are some noteworthy facts that the Allied representatives in Transcaucasia and Armenia, taking advantage of the cover of their official duties, even dedicated time to solving personal problems and enriching themselves, which left an extremely oppressive impression on the public. In this regard, S. Vratsyan recorded an incident, again related to Colonel W. Haskell's departure from Transcaucasia: "There was much talk about Haskell's activities, but the result obtained was insignificant... On the way,

<sup>119</sup>NAA. f., inv. 139, sheets 31-32; f. 275, c. 5, inv. 211, sheet 222.

<sup>120</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 114, sheets 10-12.

<sup>121</sup> Makhmuryan 2016: 108-109.

<sup>122</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 207, sheet 100.

<sup>123</sup> NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 207, sheet 117.

near Trabzon, Haskell's ship was attacked by a group of masked robbers who snatched a bag of diamonds and other precious stones from Mrs. Haskell, which Mrs. Haskell had collected while accompanying her husband and was now taking to America. It was said that the Georgians had organized the act, which was not far from the truth".<sup>124</sup>

Essentially, the US representatives were overly self-centered in their actions, the foundation of which was only bare self-interest. After Colonel Haskell's flight and the suspension of American aid, the Government's position became difficult; outwardly belligerent and self-assured, it was nevertheless shaken by the army's unreliability during the recent unrest, the skepticism shown by the Allied forces towards Armenia, the concentration of the Red Army along the borders, and the spiraling intensity of popular discontent, terrible inflation, and food shortages. The government's military achievements against the Muslim rebels were nullified; generally, a much more difficult situation was recorded in internal affairs.

The final addressee of T. Bekzadyan's continuous appeals to US Consul Charles Moser was E. Yarrow, who took over the post of Director of American relief operations in Armenia after Haskell's departure. After Haskell left, E. Yarrow assumed responsibility for relief work, which included caring for over 20,000 orphans, including about 10,000 in Alexandropol, 6,000 in Kars, and 3,000 in Yerevan.<sup>125</sup>

On October 5, 1920, Yarrow reported that the Turks had attacked Merdenek, Sarighamish, and Kagzvan without warning, causing the flight of more than 50,000 Armenian refugees. He concluded that Armenia had very few resources left, lacked money for external purchases, and appealed to America for aid. The petition regarding this was transmitted through Vice Admiral M. Bristol, the US High Commissioner in Constantinople, to the State Department, which did not believe the reports transmitted by the Armenians, even asserting that the Armenians were the cause of the troubles, having been the first to enter Olti in the summer. Furthermore, in his letter of October 5 to the US State Department, considering the fact of the existence of the Armenian republic to be vague and unrealistic, he concluded that the Armenians' assurances of being against Bolshevism should not be taken at face value, and that the Armenians were merely trying to extort aid and money with their actions.<sup>126</sup>

P.S. – Before his final departure for America, High Commissioner W. Haskell bade farewell to the Government of the Republic of Armenia, expressing desperate joy over the successes of the Armenian people and donating \$15,000 for the benefit of the army. In his farewell speech, he also expressed hope that the resilience and striving for life shown by the Armenian people would ensure that the aid provided would not be in vain, and that the Americans understood this well.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>Vratsyan 1966: 63, 65.

<sup>125</sup> Hovhannisyan 1996: 278.

<sup>126</sup> Hovhannisyan 2016: 243-244.

<sup>127</sup> Tumanyan 2012: 323.

These emotional outpourings in no way prevented the “humanitarian” Colonel W. Haskell, without the slightest hesitation and with his pro-Azerbaijani position, from completely derailing the vital interests of the Republic of Armenia in matters of territorial demarcation—in the Karabakh-Artsakh, Nakhichevan, and other disputed territorial disputes. He hindered the realization of the priorities deemed important for the foreign policy interests of the Republic of Armenia and essentially contributed to the strengthening of Azerbaijan’s positions, just like his Entente partners, and particularly the British. This ultimately led to the isolation and capitulation of the Republic of Armenia before Turkey and Bolshevik Russia, and its brutal dismemberment by them, while W. Haskell hastily left Armenia, where he no longer had anything to say and, in essence, nothing to do.

In any case, there were expectations towards the Allies, which were illusory but without an alternative. St. Ghorghanyan, Governor of Kars, well described the moment of this delusion: “...from recognized Europe, from the great ‘Allied’ Allies, we thought that one way or another, we were under pan-European patronage. And all these conditions forced us to believe that those exploding bombs, the nervous comings and goings, the panic, and the everywhere clatter of weapons were merely a sweet dream. That threatening and feverish atmosphere disposed people to be enchanted once again by national ideals, and all of us, with very high spirits towards right and truth, followed that current, which was so easily alluring and so unsparing”.<sup>128</sup> The Armenians nevertheless harbored hopes that “Against the allied forces of our internal and external enemies, we must oppose our nationally educated and disposed army, and we must direct our state sails in the same direction”.<sup>129</sup>

In terms of completing the colorful image of Colonel W. Haskell, it is characteristic that after the May events of 1920, fearing those movements, he quickly departed for Tiflis, by which his activities in Armenia essentially reached a dead end. In this regard, Al. Khatisian’s words are remarkable: “If we also mention the certain political role that Col. Haskell tried to play, we can consider the role of the ‘Allies’ in the Caucasus, and especially in Armenia, to be exhausted”.<sup>130</sup> Zurab Avalov (Avalishvili), the Georgian representative, diplomat, and historian at the Paris Peace Conference, expressed a very apt opinion about W. Haskell: “Unfortunately, the idea of an Armenian mandate encountered many obstacles. True, Armenia received the most extensive charitable aid. The Supreme Council sent the American Colonel Haskell as a special commissioner (with very broad and vague powers), who, on behalf of the Allies, provided special official assistance to all persons and organizations working in Armenia. It seems that he was mainly a high-ranking ‘tow-truck’ for wagons with flour, condensed milk, and other goods sent from Batumi to Armenia. ‘Condensed milk... instead of a mandate’—this, it seems, is how the result of the American plans and the hopes associated with them in

<sup>128</sup> The Province of Kars within the Republic of Armenia 2018: 442.

<sup>129</sup> The Province of Kars within the Republic of Armenia 2018: 101-102.

<sup>130</sup> Khatisyan 1968: 192-193.



the field of the Armenian Question can be briefly expressed. ...Assurances that Armenia's fate would be secured in any case. Harbord and Haskell spoke in this sense—that Mustafa Kemal's national movement was somewhat of a bluff, and so on. It must be admitted that even the most careless person could believe in the reality of the American assurances".<sup>131</sup>

Haskell assumed this position from the Allied Conference merely to give advice, supervise, and console the Armenian people. With his appointment, the European Allies of the Republic of Armenia seemingly thwarted the positive actions aimed at the formation of the Armenian state and their contradictory approaches and resolutions aimed at solving the Armenian Question. As a result, Armenia found itself in a dead-end situation in terms of selecting future political prospects. The security interests of the Republic of Armenia were essentially jeopardized, and the Turkish-Armenian War of 1920 offered no other possibility or foreign-policy option besides self-sacrifice and forced Sovietization. W. Haskell also "contributed his share" to this, whom is sometimes unfairly presented as a "humanitarian, naive" American commissioner who was "misled" in the dark labyrinths of the Caucasus. This, in reality, was Colonel W. Haskell, the Allied High Commissioner in Armenia and Transcaucasia, with all the colorful layers of his character.

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<sup>131</sup> Avalov 1924: 227, 232.

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# PHILOLOGY

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## CONSISTENT MANIFESTATIONS OF ELOQUENT CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TIES BETWEEN ARMENIANS AND RUSSIANS

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### Abstract

There is no specialized study on the psychological foundations of Armenian-Russian cultural ties. Meanwhile, the lack thereof is keenly felt, as these ties contain a centuries-old history, and in an international sense, they have enriched universal human culture and science in their numerous manifestations.

The purpose of the article is to reveal the diversity and consistent manifestations of centuries-old Armenian-Russian ties in a cultural and historical context.

The main concept boils down to the idea that Armenian-Russian relations were initially formed on the foundation of the Christian faith and moral values, and subsequently, they transformed into universal human values in the context of a cultural and historical dialogue.

The methodological basis includes the main principles of psychology, the key ideas of L. S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory – in the vector of development, while the research methods considered are historical-comparative analyses and observations by famous Russian and Armenian cultural experts and literary critics concerning the friendly ties between the two peoples. In this sense, the work also includes analyses of circumstances, the study of memoirs, the comparison of cultural and historical values, and conclusions.

**Final Result.** The cultural and historical Armenian-Russian ties formed at different periods were strengthened by universal human values as a practical platform for the dialogue of the two peoples in Russian-Armenian relations.

The main conclusion is that the commonality of Christian and moral values of the two peoples led to the formation and further deepening of universal human values, which Russian and Armenian writers, and well-known cultural figures, addressed at different times. The mutual acceptance and trust between the Armenian and Russian peoples led to the strengthening and deepening of friendship.

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Armenian-Russian relations developed starting from the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the first manifestations of economic and cultural ties between ancient Rus' and Armenia are seen. Armenians participated in the Battle of Grunwald in 1410 – the allied army included two regiments formed from Armenians living in Galicia. Armenian-Russian relations began to deepen and strengthen when the first Armenian colonies were founded in Russia. The oldest of these was the colony in Kyiv.

Armenian-Russian relations began to develop even more when the secular and spiritual leaders of the Armenian people deemed it necessary to turn to the state support of Christian Rus' to preserve their national identity.

In 1701, Melik Israel Ori of Syunik, along with Archimandrite Minas, traveled to Moscow and presented an appeal from the Meliks to the Russian court, in which they implored the Russian Tsar to liberate them from the Persian-Turkish yoke.

This request remained in effect during the national liberation uprisings led by David Bek, when Tsar Peter the Great sent his envoy, Ivan Karapet, to Transcaucasia, who assured the Armenian rebels that they would receive military aid; however, after the death of Peter the Great (1725), the plans of the Russian court changed.

The Armenian people's dream of liberation from the Muslim yoke with the help of Russia came true during the Russo-Persian War of 1826-1828, when Eastern Armenia was completely liberated from the Persian yoke and became part of the Russian Empire. This significant historical event was reflected in the novel "Wounds of Armenia" by Khachatur Abovyan, the founder of new Armenian literature, which includes an appendix titled "Zangi," dedicated to singing the praises of Armenian-Russian friendship. Recalling the fact that Armenians had statehood for centuries, Abovyan presents part of this passage of the novel in Grabar (Classical Armenian) as the ancient royal language. This is an interesting psychological moment. He expresses his gratitude to mighty Russia in the language of the ancient Armenian kings – Tigran the Great and Trdat the Great. Abovyan encourages the sons of the Armenian people by stating that the mighty hand of Rus' will be a spear, and gratitude must always be felt towards this hand. Mother Volga will be the elder sister of Mother Araks of Armenia; they will kiss in the waves of the Caspian Sea. And Lake Sevan and the sacred Masis will bless this sisterly friendship with their paternal greeting.

**Keywords:** Russia, Armenia, Christian, psychological connection, Kh. Abovyan, St. Nazaryants, Lazarevs, friendship.

### Introduction

The mutual psychological attachment of two different peoples is explained by the civilization of these two different nations and their preservation of Christian principles and universal humanistic values.

In a cultural sense, there are so many facts testifying to the selfless and warm Armenian-Russian ties that entire volumes could be written about them. It is enough to

recall the names of two geniuses – Ivan Aivazovsky and Aram Khachaturian. In world encyclopedias, they are presented as figures of Russian culture.

In the encyclopedia “Collins Gem Dictionary of Biography,” published in London in 1976, the biographies of about 4,000 famous people are presented, starting from Homer up to the third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In it, we read: “Khachaturian Aram Ilyich (b. 1903), Russian composer, was inspired by Russian folk music. His works include the ballet ‘Gayane’ (with ‘Sabre Danse’), and concertos for piano and violin”.<sup>1</sup>

During the lifetime of Ivan Aivazovsky, Armenia did not have statehood, and the artist was educated at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts. The Armenian classical writer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Vahan Teryan, made the following notable observation regarding Aivazovsky: “One young Armenian publicist said that if Aivazovsky had operated in the Armenian reality, he would have been a drawing teacher in a parochial or, at best, in a diocesan school, no more than that”.<sup>2</sup>

An important psychological manifestation is the relocation of the wealthy Lazarev family from Persian New Julfa to Astrakhan, and then to Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The most vivid manifestation of the spiritual connection between the Armenian and Russian peoples was the Lazarev School, opened in Moscow in 1815, which later became a first-class institute – a celebrated educational center for the progressive ideas and knowledge of its time.

### **Liberation of Eastern Armenia from the Persian Yoke and Its Accession to Russia**

The Armenians of Eastern Armenia saw the realization of their aspirations with the end of the Russo-Persian War of 1826-1828. Historical facts prove that the victory of the Russian army caused boundless joy and enthusiasm not only in the hearts of Armenians living in Armenia but also in the souls of Armenians in Russia and colonies in other countries. Numerous greetings and congratulations were received. The congratulation received from the Armenians of India is particularly noteworthy, which stated: “Armenians living in various cities of India feel immense delight that their homeland – the Ararat land, along with the centuries-old Mother Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin – is within the borders of Russia”.<sup>3</sup>

Another fact is worthy of attention: the Russian government, as an exception, gave the Armenian province that became part of its empire the right to have its own coat of arms and flag. The center of the coat of arms depicted the two Massis (Ararat), with Noah’s Ark on the larger one.

It is known that during the forced relocation of Armenians by Shah Abbas in 1604, the Shah of Iran, with special caution, relocated the residents of the wealthy, trading Julfa to a place close to his capital and gave them privileges to develop the city of New

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<sup>1</sup> Mallory 1976 (Ed.): 286.

<sup>2</sup> Teryan 1961: 258.

<sup>3</sup> Nersisyan 1985 (Ed.): 249.



Julfa. And New Julfa very quickly began to prosper and established close trade ties with Russia.

The following historical fact is characteristic: In 1660, Khoja Zakar Sherimanyan arrived in Moscow with his nine friends. He presented Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich with many gifts from the trading house of New Julfa, “including the famous ‘Diamond Throne,’ made by Armenian craftsmen from sandalwood and decorated with gold, silver, diamonds, and pearls”.<sup>4</sup> This unique throne is currently exhibited in the Moscow Kremlin Armory.

### **Khachatur Abovyan – A Symbol of Armenian-Russian Cultural and Psychological Ties**

In 1829, Professor Friedrich Parrot of the University of Dorpat (Tartu) arrived in Armenia with the goal of climbing Mount Ararat to conduct natural history and meteorological scientific experiments. Parrot informed the Catholicos of his intentions and requested that a young monk be assigned to him who would serve not only as a guide but also as an interpreter. The Catholicos’s choice fell on Abovyan, and soon the natural scientists began their ascent of the mountain. Along the way, the newly ordained monk told the scientist about his dream—to continue his studies in Russia—which he couldn’t realize due to a lack of financial means.

Parrot promised Abovyan he would take him to study at the University of Dorpat and, upon returning to St. Petersburg, appealed to the Russian Minister of Education, Livenin, who ordered that Abovyan be provided with a sum from state funds for three years of study at the University of Dorpat, which also included travel expenses.

Abovyan studied in Dorpat for six years. During this time, he taught the children of university professors the Russian language, which he had mastered while studying at the Nersisyan School in Tiflis (Tbilisi). The Nersisyan School in Tiflis was Armenian, but Russian was a mandatory subject and was taught at an excellent level.

Abovyan’s love for Russian literature originated at the Nersisyan School, where students were assigned to read the works of Russian classics in the original. Among these authors was Nikolai Karamzin, whose works Abovyan made valuable translations from. The date of his first translation of Karamzin’s works is known. In 1826, during the Russo-Persian War, Abovyan was at the Haghpap Monastery and apparently had Karamzin’s travel notes, “Letters of a Russian Traveler” at hand. From this, he translated a passage about the last king of the Cilician Armenian Kingdom, Levon VI:

“There are many paintings and monuments. Among others, the monument to Leon, King of Armenia, who, having been driven out of his land by the Turks, died in Paris in 1393. Froissart, a contemporary historian, says the following about him: ‘Deprived of his throne, he retained his royal virtues and even added a new one to

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<sup>4</sup> Bunin 1988: 17.

them: magnanimous patience with his benefactor. He treated Charles VI as a friend, without forgetting his own royal rank, and Leon's death was worthy of his life".<sup>5</sup>

This excerpt from Karamzin's travel notes awakened a psychological hope in the soul of the very young Abovyan that, thanks to Russia, Armenia would be liberated from the Muslim yoke.

### **The Lazarev Institute in Moscow as a Symbol of Culture, Literature, Languages, and the Psychological Devotion of the Russian and Armenian Peoples**

The Lazarev Institute in Moscow left such a profound psychological mark on the cultural life of the Armenian and Russian peoples that it served as the basis for the creation of first the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies and then the renowned MGIMO (Moscow State Institute of International Relations). Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO and Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, writes on this matter: "It is deeply symbolic that the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lazarev Institute became the main theme of the III International Forum of MGIMO Graduates on October 22-24, 2015, in the capital of Armenia – hospitable Yerevan – with the participation of guests from several dozen countries".<sup>6</sup>

The Lazarev Institute, initially established as a school, was opened in the heart of Moscow, in a beautiful building belonging to the Lazarev family.

Empress Catherine the Second, or Catherine the Great, of Russia, taking into account the devoted service of the Lazarev family to their country, awarded them a noble title.

The Lazarev School began its educational activities on May 14, 1815, and its first inspector was Harutyun Alamdaryan, who, in 1824, was invited by Nerses Ashtaraketsi, the head of the Tiflis diocese who greatly assisted Russian troops during the Russo-Persian War, to work at the Nersisyan School he founded. It is relevant to recall the zeal with which Nerses Ashtaraketsi formed Armenian volunteer regiments to aid the Russian troops. For this reason, the distinguished French specialist in Armenian Studies Frédéric Macler, in his book *Autour de l'Arménie* (Around Armenia), called him a "Garibaldi dressed in a cassock" ("les exploits de ce Garibaldi en soutane").<sup>7</sup>

In 1827, the school was renamed a seminary. The Lazarev Seminary operated exclusively on the complete financial support of the Lazarev family. This also holds the psychological significance that the Russian government was satisfied with this arrangement. Gradually becoming an institution of higher learning, it gained not only all-Russian but also pan-European fame. Over the decades, the Lazarev Institute was visited by Russian emperors, prominent cultural figures, and statesmen.

<sup>5</sup> Abovyan 2004: 47.

<sup>6</sup> Chapters from the History 2015: 10.

<sup>7</sup> Dolukhanyan 2011: 21.

The Lazarev Institute possessed a rich library, which, in addition to printed books, also housed ancient manuscript books in various languages. One of the oldest of these manuscripts was a magnificent, richly decorated Gospel written in 887, which is now kept at the Mashtots Matenadaran.<sup>8</sup>

Among the Russian classical writers who visited the seminary were A. S. Griboyedov, N. I. Gnedich, A. S. Pushkin, V. A. Zhukovsky, N. V. Gogol, and many others.

In 1829, with the permission of the Chief Director of the Lazarev Seminary, a printing house was opened there. It was in this printing house, in 1832, that the book "History of Armenia" by seminary graduate Sergei Glinka was published.<sup>9</sup> Since the Lazarev educational complex was called the Institute of Oriental Languages, the printing house had typefaces for the main Oriental languages, European languages, and even the Serbian language. This circumstance also elevated the authority of the institution.

Such prominent representatives of Russian literature and art as Ivan Turgenev, Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Ruben Simonov, and others received their primary education at the Lazarev Seminary. And it is no coincidence that Ivan Bunin, the first Russian writer to receive the Nobel Prize (1933), noted the special merit of his private tutor of noble origin—who graduated from the Lazarev Institute, perfectly mastered three languages, traveled extensively, and instilled a vivid imagination in his students—in his development as a writer. "And my educator was a very strange man—the son of a marshal of the nobility, who studied at the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages... He unexpectedly grew attached to all of us, and especially to me, and this attachment and his endless stories—he had seen a lot wandering the world and was quite well-read, mastered three languages—also kindled a passionate love for him in me".<sup>10</sup>

Many famous Armenian writers and representatives of the intelligentsia graduated from the Lazarev Institute. Distinguished Armenian Orientalists, linguists, and philologists taught there, one of whom was Stepanos Nazaryants. He graduated from the Nersisyan School in Tiflis and received his higher education at the University of Dorpat, earning a candidate's degree in philosophical sciences. In St. Petersburg, on the recommendation of the famous specialist in Armenian Studies Marie Brosset, Nazaryants entered the Oriental Department of the Professors' Institute. After graduating, he was appointed a teacher of the Armenian language at Kazan University. In 1849, he defended his doctoral dissertation dedicated to the Shahnameh epic of the great Persian poet Ferdowsi. Nazaryants wrote a number of works devoted to Persian poets. He mastered several Oriental languages, including Turkish. After transferring to the Lazarev Institute, Nazaryants taught Persian, Arabic, and Latin there. He prepared a course of lectures on Oriental literatures.

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<sup>8</sup> Chapters from the History 2015: 87.

<sup>9</sup> Lazaryan Seminary 2017: 8.

<sup>10</sup> Bunin 1988: 6.

In 1858, with the assistance of Mikayel Nalbandyan, Stepanos Nazaryants published the journal *Yusisapail* ("Northern Lights"), which played a significant role in the development of new Armenian literature. Armenian classical writers such as Raphael Patkanyan, Smbat Shahaziz, and others published their works on its pages.

To obtain permission to publish the journal "Northern Lights," Nazaryants wrote: "The children of Armenia, adopted by Russia, educated under her paternal care, enriched by the fruits of Russian enlightenment and science—the children of Armenia, understanding the sacredness of their relationship with Russia, how and by what means can they somehow repay the debt of gratitude to the Benefactress?"<sup>11</sup>

Nazaryants psychologically considered it necessary to convey this awareness and gratitude towards Russia to his compatriots through the Armenian-language journal.

Extensive literature has been created about the Lazarev Institute in Russian and Armenian. A particularly large amount has been written in Russian. We list some of these works:

1. Historical Sketch of the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages, Moscow, 1863.<sup>12</sup>
2. The Seventieth Anniversary of the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages (1815-1890), Moscow, 1891.<sup>13</sup>
3. The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Special Classes of the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages, Moscow, 1903.<sup>14</sup>
4. Materials for the History of the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages, Historical Survey, Moscow, 1914.<sup>15</sup>
5. A. P. Baziyants, The Lazarev Institute in the History of Russian Oriental Studies, Moscow, 1973.<sup>16</sup>
6. Chapters from the History of Moscow Oriental Studies, The Lazarev Institute, The Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, MGIMO, Moscow, 2015.<sup>17</sup>
7. History of the Lazaryan Family and the Lazaryan Seminary of Oriental Languages, written by Hovsep Tadevosyan, a graduate of the Lazaryan Seminary, Vienna, 1953.<sup>18</sup>
8. A. H. Ignatyan, Lazaryan Seminary, Yerevan, 1969.<sup>19</sup>
9. Lazaryan Seminary 200, Yerevan, 2017.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Chapters from the History 2015: 117.

<sup>12</sup> Historical Sketch 1863.

<sup>13</sup> The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary 1891.

<sup>14</sup> Thirtieth Anniversary 1903.

<sup>15</sup> Materials 1914.

<sup>16</sup> Baziyants 1973.

<sup>17</sup> Chapters from the History 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Tadevosyan 1953.

<sup>19</sup> Ignatyan 1969.

<sup>20</sup> Lazaryan Seminary 2017.

In the voluminous monograph dedicated to the Lazarev Seminary, published in Vienna in 1953, its graduate Hovsep Tadevosyan recounts warm memories and unique facts about this first-class educational institution. He particularly emphasizes the important books printed in the Lazarev Seminary's printing house and adds: "At that time, there was no similarly rich printing house in Moscow, equipped with all conveniences".<sup>21</sup> Among the important books printed there, he notes Stepanos Nazaryants's 1851 work, "A Word on Experimental Psychology".<sup>22</sup>

A graduate of the Lazarev Seminary, the Armenian classical poet Vahan Teryan lovingly recalls the psychological warmth with which the Lazarev Institute gifted him in his poem "Memories of the Lazarev Institute":

When comfortless thoughts oppress,  
And sadness settles in my heart,  
My native institute I recall,  
Like a prodigal son's paternal home.  
That bright life unfolds anew,  
When the fire raged in our thoughts,  
When blood was boiling and frothing,  
Fire was struck with every beat of the heart.  
And every thought was a dream,  
And every impulse was heated white-hot,  
And the distance called us out of the dark gloom  
To that for which there is no name, no name...<sup>23</sup>

The fame of the Lazarev Seminary spread among Armenians living in different countries. It reached the Armenian seminary in the Indian city of Calcutta, where a knowledge-thirsty youth—Mkrtich Emin—was studying. He later became a philologist, specialist in Armenian Studies, translator, and Orientalist, known not only in the Lazarev Seminary and Russia but also in Armenological circles across Europe.

In the spring of 1829, Emin, barely 14 years old and not knowing the Russian language, boarded a merchant ship and, after a journey lasting seven months, arrived in Moscow via Stockholm and Finland, where he entered the Lazarev Seminary. Thanks to his perseverance and diligence, he mastered Russian in a short time. The educational institution was called the Seminary of Oriental Languages, but other subjects were also taught there. Besides Russian, Emin studied French, German, Latin, Algebra, History, Geography, Drawing, Natural Science, Drafting, Theology, Logic, and the Armenian language.

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<sup>21</sup> Tadevosyan 1953: 322.

<sup>22</sup> Tadevosyan 1953: 316.

<sup>23</sup> Teryan 1961: 3.

In 1834, after graduating from the Lazarev Seminary, he entered the Philology Department of the Philosophy Faculty of the Imperial Moscow University, graduating in 1838. Emin's years of study coincided with the peak of Moscow University's development, and he became acquainted with many prominent representatives of the intelligentsia there.

From 1838, Emin began teaching at the Lazarev Seminary. From 1840 to 1860, he served as the inspector of the Lazarev Institute, and then as a professor until 1882.

Emin managed to organize his lessons psychologically so that students were not bored and could immediately grasp the material. The Armenian classical writer Raphael Patkanyan recounts this in his memoirs. Emin would enter the classroom five minutes before the lesson began and leave five minutes after it ended, yet the students were not at all tired by the lesson's length and did not grow weary of listening to him. Emin had a unique psychological secret known only to him that made the lesson very interesting. In pedagogical practice, it is customary to divide the lesson into two equal parts: the first part is a quiz on the previous topic, and the second is the presentation of the new one. Emin's lesson did not proceed this way. He allocated barely a quarter of an hour for quizzing the students, and the rest of the time he explained the topic, citing thousands of examples, subtle details, and interpretations. These stories were instantly "absorbed" by the students. They stimulated the students' imagination and became the subject of conversations and debates for days and weeks.

Emin loved Krylov's fables and presented them in his excellent translation. It is no coincidence that during his student years at Moscow University, while A. S. Pushkin was still alive (in 1834–1835), Emin translated the immortal writer's works "The Fountain of Bakhchisaray" and "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" into Armenian.<sup>24</sup>

Patkanyan emphasizes in his memoirs that Emin was alien to national vanity.

A major scholar, selflessly devoted to the Lazarev Seminary, Emin left a rich scientific legacy. He made a new translation into Russian of the work of the ancient historian Movses Khorenatsi, "History of Armenia," presented all the *sharakan* (Armenian chant—a form of melismatic monophonic hymn) of the Armenian Church to the Russian reader—with an appropriate preface and commentaries—and wrote an extremely interesting work in Russian dedicated to Russian literature on the lives of saints. He was the first in the Armenian reality to study the Armenian pagan religion.<sup>25</sup>

At the request of the famous French specialist in Armenian Studies Victor Langlois, he translated the works of 5<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian chroniclers— "The Life of Mashtots" by Archimandrite Koryun and "History of Armenia" by Faustus of Byzantium—into French, which were published in Paris in 1869, in the second volume of "Collection of Armenian Historians".<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Lazaryan Seminary 2017: 8.

<sup>25</sup> Emin 1864.

<sup>26</sup> Langlois 1867, 1869.

Emin wrote a textbook on literary criticism, published an anthology of literature which included the best examples of world and Russian literature in his translation, and wrote dictionaries and other works.

The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lazarev Seminary and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Emin's pedagogical activity were celebrated at the government level. The jubilee materials were published in Moscow in 1887, edited by Grigor Khalatyants.<sup>27</sup>

The numerous congratulations sent in connection with the jubilee eloquently testify to how many admirers the Moscow Lazarev Seminary had, and what wide-ranging authority it commanded in the world. Congratulations arrived from European and Russian centers for Armenian Studies — the University of Pisa, the Moscow Archaeological Society, Wiesbaden, Armenian students in Paris, St. Petersburg University, Professor Louis Leger (Paris), Strasbourg—the well-known specialist in Armenian Studies H. Hübschmann, the Universities of Vienna, Leuven, Strasbourg, the Mkhitarist Congregations of Venice and Vienna, educational institutions and spiritual leaders of all Armenian colonies, Catholicos Makar of All Armenians, Armenian periodicals, famous actor Petros Adamyan, and many others.<sup>28</sup>

One of Mkrtich Emin's important contributions is also the organization of the lavish publication of the Armenian songs of the famous medieval Armenian poet Sayat-Nova and weighty professional assistance to the book's author, Gevorg Akhverdyan. The book was published in Moscow in 1852.<sup>29</sup>

The Lazarev Institute and Mkrtich Emin were also featured in Valery Bryusov's wonderful collection "Poetry of Armenia," which was published in Moscow in 1916 and served as an exceptional psychological support for the Armenian people who lost their homeland and a million and a half human lives in 1915.<sup>30</sup>

## Conclusion

The psychological connection between the two Christian, peace-loving nations has a centuries-old history.

### 1. Interdisciplinary Significance

- Extensive literature has been written, especially in Russian and Armenian, about the historical and cultural manifestations of this connection.
- This literature concerns the close contacts between the two nations throughout various centuries.

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<sup>27</sup> Khalatyants 1887 (Ed.).

<sup>28</sup> Khalatyants 1887 (Ed.).

<sup>29</sup> Akhverdyan 1964: 138-316.

<sup>30</sup> Bryusov 1987 (Ed.): 43, 494, 495, 511.

## **2. Function of the Cultural Bridge**

- Armenians carried Armenian culture to Russia by presenting gifts to the Russian Tsars.
- A vivid testament to this is the luxurious Tsar's Throne, presented to Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, crafted with great love and mastery by skilled artisans from New Julfa.
- This throne is currently one of the important exhibits in the Moscow Kremlin Armory and demonstrates the long-standing friendship between the Armenian and Russian peoples to the world.

## **3. Individual and Creative Influence**

- The development of Armenian-Russian political and psychological ties was especially facilitated by Russian Emperor Peter the Great and Empress Catherine the Great.
- Thanks to the foresight of Catherine the Great, the Lazarevs became Russian nobles and greatly benefited Russia in various fields—industry, trade, and international relations.

## **4. Intercultural Significance**

- From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially after the accession of Eastern Armenia and Artsakh to Russia, progressive schools of a new type opened in Armenia.
- The initiator of the opening of these schools was the founder of new Armenian literature, Khachatur Abovyan, who received his higher education in Dorpat with the financial support of the Russian government.
- Schools opened in Armenia where the Russian language was a mandatory subject.
- The works of Russian literary classics were enthusiastically translated into Armenian, contributing to the spiritual development of Armenia.

## **5. Linguistic and Stylistic Elements**

- The publication of the journal "Northern Lights" (Yusisapail) in Moscow in 1858 played a major role in the spiritual enrichment of the Armenian people.
- Stepanos Nazaryants and Mikayel Nalbandyan contributed to the development of the modern Armenian language and the introduction of new themes in literature.

## **6. Continued Cultural Impact**

- The opening of the Lazarev Seminary made a great contribution to the development of Armenian-Russian psychological ties, becoming the foundation of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies and subsequently MGIMO, an institution with great international authority.



- The Lazarev Seminary further deepened the educational, scientific, and psychological ties of the Armenian and Russian peoples.
- Famous Russian writers, art critics, and representatives of the intelligentsia studied at the Lazarev Seminary.
- The Russian government highly valued the outstanding scholars of the Lazarev Institute, such as Mkrtich Emin, who was also highly praised in Europe.

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# ECONOMICS

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## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: DEMOCRATIC RELATIONSHIPS AND LEADERS

Yuri Suvaryan\*

**Abstract**

In the system of modern democratic processes, elections of supreme state authorities and local self-government bodies are of the utmost importance, which essentially determine the future of the state and the purposeful fulfillment of its mission, as leadership at the macro- and micro-levels is a determining factor of the effectiveness of governance. The fundamental task of leadership in the system of public administration consists in the selection of such leaders who possess the known qualities of not a formal but a real leader. In order to participate in democratic processes with knowledge of the facts, it is necessary to have basic civilizational and political maturity, to be able to understand the intricacies of democratic elections, to believe not in words, but in deeds, the path taken and the results of the activities of the candidates participating in the elections, to distinguish populism from real achievements, so that true leaders win. Complex issues of strategic development of the country, budgetary regulation of financial flows, ensuring macroeconomic stability and security of the state, etc. are solved in the state legislative and executive authorities. e. This means that, unlike in business, where the choice of an effective leader is determined by personal interests in obtaining high incomes, in the system of public administration there are multifaceted interests that are not of a personal, but of a state, public nature. Therefore, for the selection of democratic and transformational leaders as leaders and representatives in state authorities and local self-government, it is very important to establish legislatively certain criteria for evaluating such qualities of future leaders as the style of working with subordinates, initiative, the ability to implement innovations, the ability to make managerial decisions in various situations and taking into account the high needs of people.

**Keywords:** democracy, transformation, leadership, power, maturity.

**Introduction**

The transformations of the global economy, politics, science, and culture have occurred and continue to occur uninterruptedly as a result of the development of human civilization and scientific and technological progress. Based on these leading factors,

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the volume and diversification of the structure of needs and demand for various goods and services in the broadest sense are steadily increasing, which, in turn, stimulate new transformational processes.

The dynamism of transformations encompasses all aspects of human activity and determines the level of its effectiveness. The latter largely depends on the content and methodology of public administration, which includes the systems of state and local self-government, as well as the institutions of civil society (socio-political organizations and parties).

### **Statement of the Problem**

One of the historical manifestations of global transformations is the replacement of the monarchical form of state with the republican (democratic) form, where the supreme governing bodies and the leadership of local self-government bodies are elected through democratic constitutional mechanisms. This process began in the world at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continued throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Studies prove that the level of civilizational development and political maturity of a country's population are of important synergistic significance for the democratic election of government bodies. This includes a deep understanding of the necessity of statehood and of targeted, effective state functions to ensure adequate welfare, internal, and external security for the population.

At the same time, it is known that leadership at the macro and micro levels is the defining factor in management effectiveness. It is no secret that success is achieved by the country, or organization, that is managed by a leader possessing the known qualities of a genuine, not just a formal, leader. When considering the problems of global inequality, D. Acemoglu and J.A. Robinson note that "traditional economists ignored politics, but it is the understanding of how the political system works that is the key to explaining global economic inequality... We argue that the path to prosperity lies through solving basic political problems" (Acemoglu, Robinson 2016, 97–98). It is well-known that solving these problems is the mandate of elected supreme governing bodies. The question arises: in modern conditions, is it possible to elect leaders within the system of public administration who predominantly possess the qualities of genuine leaders?

Historical and logical analysis across countries indicates that there is no unambiguous answer to this question. This is especially true for newly created and relatively weak countries in terms of economic and scientific-technological development.

Let us consider this problem in more detail and present possible directions for its solution for scientific discussion.

### **Important Prerequisites for a Correct Democratic Choice in Turbulent Times**

As is known, the necessity of the state, as a universal legitimate organ of legal authority, was substantiated by European thinkers, proponents of the natural law theory [T. Hobbes (1588–1679), J. Locke (1632–1704), J.-J. Rousseau (1712–1798), P. Holbach (1723–1780), and others] by stating that “man in his nature is an evil being, in society there is a war of all against all, and to limit its manifestations, the state is necessary”<sup>1</sup>. / In the opinion of J.-J. Rousseau, “Insatiable ambition, the passion to increase the relative size of one’s fortune, on the one hand, and the opposition of interests, on the other, everywhere—a hidden desire to profit at the expense of others.” All these calamities are “the first effect of property and the inseparable consequence of nascent inequality”.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the aforementioned negative tendencies in human behavior are also characteristic of individual states. The passionate desire for a greater sphere of influence, more territory, and wealth is the driving force in the politics and practice of certain contemporary states. In place of hard military power, their arsenal includes methods of influence using the so-called “soft power” through various non-governmental organizations, which are generously financed by these countries. Such actions lead to turbulent times, especially for relatively weak, politically unstable countries.

It is generally known that the UN and specialized supranational organizations were created to regulate international conflict situations and solve problems in the areas of international trade, healthcare, protection of cultural heritage, etc. However, these structures did not become an obstacle to the color revolutions in some post-Soviet republics. Practice shows that such campaigns most often occur during general elections or in the post-election period.

According to Western thinkers, there are also problems in the sphere of domestic democratic processes, which are due to the fact that “what was once an active civil society is suffering a regression not so much because of technology as because of excessive state encroachments”.<sup>3</sup> “We the people,” Ferguson continues, “live in a complex institutional matrix which includes government, the market, the law, and civil society.” Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these institutions worked in concert, which accounted for the successes of Western countries. Today, the work of these institutions has failed, and to return to the fundamental principles of a truly free society, it is necessary to start acting as before.<sup>4</sup>

Historical and logical analysis allows us to conclude that the sustainable, progressive political and economic development of a country largely depends on the level of civilizational and political maturity of society. In modern conditions, this society forms the bodies of state power and local self-government through democratic choice,

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<sup>1</sup> Chirkin 2001: 23.

<sup>2</sup> Marchenko 2001 (Ed.): 67.

<sup>3</sup> Ferguson 2000: 160-161.

<sup>4</sup> Ferguson 2000: 160-161.

thereby determining the future of the state and the effectiveness of its mission and state functions.<sup>5</sup>

Representatives of many nations have made a tangible contribution to the development of world civilization, the results of which are utilized by the masses, thereby increasing the civilizational literacy of people.

Political science, as a part of civilization, is also developed by scholars. However, without at least rudimentary knowledge of political science and the significance of statehood, it is difficult to participate in elections for the supreme bodies of power. Therefore, it is essential to have basic political literacy and a minimal understanding of economic issues. Modern people successfully use the achievements of information technology, and to participate competently in democratic processes, they must delve into the nuances of democratic elections.

### **Effectiveness of Leadership in the System of Public Administration**

Many management methods and principles originated and were formed in the world of business, but in the early twentieth century, they gradually began to be introduced into the system of public administration. Specifically, this refers to strategic management and methods for choosing strategic programs, the system for controlling the execution of planned tasks, and the application of effective forms of employee motivation. (Former U.S. President W. Wilson believed that “the field of administration is the field of business” and that to ensure effectiveness in government activity, one must look for “models of administrative management in the private sector,” as leading a government perfectly aligns with managing an organization’s activities and considers efficiency its primary goal<sup>6</sup>).

Leadership problems were also considered a subject of scientific discussion, using organizations as examples. Experience shows that the scale of tasks or organizations is not fundamentally important for managerial activity; the main thing is to master the management methodology and possess managerial qualities. From this perspective, leadership methods are also applied in the system of public administration. However, there are still unresolved issues in this area, which lie in the sphere of selecting leaders.

In scientific literature, the concept of leadership is characterized as “the ability to influence individuals and groups to motivate them to work toward the achievement of goals”.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, power differs from leadership in that “power is the ability to influence people’s behavior”.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, an organization or country will be in a more advantageous position if the manager is simultaneously its leader.

According to scholarly research, the main traits characteristic of leaders are the following: 1. Proponents of the personal theory of leadership or the Great Man theory

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<sup>5</sup> Suvaryan 2023: 74-102.

<sup>6</sup> Denhart 2006: 63-71.

<sup>7</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 464.

<sup>8</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 464.

emphasize important personal qualities such as level of intelligence and knowledge, impressive appearance, honesty, common sense, initiative, social and economic education, and a high degree of self-confidence.<sup>9</sup> 2. Representatives of the behavioral approach to leadership believe that the effectiveness of leadership is determined not by the manager's personal qualities, but rather by their behavior toward subordinates. Based on this, D. McGregor identifies four leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, task-oriented, and people-oriented. The first is focused on Maslow's primary needs (physiological, security, and safety), while the second is focused on the secondary, higher-level needs (self-actualization, esteem, belonging).<sup>10</sup>

Likert, who researched leadership issues, examines two variations of the autocratic style: exploitative-authoritarian and benevolent-authoritarian. In his opinion, the democratic style can be specified as consultative-democratic and, in a more progressive form, as participative.<sup>11</sup>

3. Representatives of the situational approach to leadership attach crucial importance to situational factors for leadership effectiveness<sup>12</sup>. For example, Fiedler's Contingency Model includes three situational factors:

- Leader-Member Relations (the attractiveness of the leader's personality in the eyes of subordinates, their loyalty to the leader).
- Task Structure (the clarity of its formulation).
- Position Power (the amount of legitimate authority).

Overall, it is evident that leadership effectiveness in all management contexts depends on the leader's personal qualities, their behavior toward subordinates—which is determined by the leader's mindset and intelligence—as well as their ability to accurately orient themselves in various situations.

The scientific literature also describes transformational leaders and Level 5 leadership.

Transformational leaders<sup>13</sup> and charismatic leaders are distinguished by their ability to implement innovations and effect changes.

Level 5 Leadership progresses from a Capable Individual (Level I), a Contributing Team Member (Level II), a Competent Manager (Level III), an Effective Leader (Level IV), and finally to a Level 5 Leader, who is humble and professional, and who builds an organization capable of remaining truly great for a long period.

The fundamental task of leadership in the system of public administration is to select a manager who corresponds to the aforementioned qualities of a true, not just formal, leader. In the business sphere, this task is solved based on the interests of investors who seek high returns. The engagement of team members stimulates the

<sup>9</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 488.

<sup>10</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 491-495.

<sup>11</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 495.

<sup>12</sup> Meskon et al. 2000: 501.

<sup>13</sup> Daft 2006: 596.



selection of an effective manager. For instance, the general meeting of an open joint-stock company elects a board of directors and an executive director who are focused on the prosperity of the organization—the growth of sales and profit.

In the sphere of public administration, there are multifaceted interests. The most important among them are strengthening statehood, the country's defense capability, developing the economy, science, and culture, and improving the well-being of the people. This means that the interests are state and public in nature, not personal. Consequently, there is an objective necessity to adequately regulate democratic processes through reasonable restrictive criteria, thereby facilitating the resolution of important public and state issues.

Now let us examine the main current laws of the Russian Federation (RF) and the Republic of Armenia (RA) from the perspective of ensuring the required criteria for heads of state and other elected officials as leaders, and of securing criteria for effective leadership.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation details the functions of the head of state, the President of the RF, the State Duma, the Federation Council, and local self-government bodies. Article 81.2 states that "A citizen of the Russian Federation who is not younger than 35 years of age and has permanently resided in the Russian Federation for at least 10 years may be elected President of the Russian Federation".<sup>14</sup> According to Article 97.1, "A citizen of the Russian Federation who has reached the age of 21 years and has the right to participate in elections may be elected a Deputy of the State Duma".<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, "Deputies of the State Duma shall perform their duties on a professional, full-time basis."

The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia also provides criteria for the election of the President of the Republic and deputies to the republican parliament. According to Article 124, "Anyone who has reached the age of 40, who has been a citizen only of the Republic of Armenia for the preceding 6 years, has permanently resided in the Republic of Armenia for the preceding 6 years, has the right to vote, and has a command of the Armenian language may be elected President of the Republic".<sup>16</sup> A Deputy of the National Assembly (Article 48.2) may be elected by anyone who has reached the age of 25, has been a citizen only of the Republic of Armenia for the preceding 4 years, has permanently resided in the Republic of Armenia for the preceding 4 years, has the right to vote, and has a command of the Armenian language. Article 148.1 of the Constitution of the RA affirms that a member of the government must meet the requirements set for members of parliament.

In the parliaments of modern states, complex issues of the country's strategic development, problems of budgetary regulation, ensuring macroeconomic stabilization, and overall, creating the legislative framework for all spheres of political, socio-

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<sup>14</sup> Constitution - Russia 2006: 21.

<sup>15</sup> Constitution - Russia 2006: 25.

<sup>16</sup> Constitution - Armenia 2019: 53.

economic life, and state security, are decided. Therefore, deputies of a professional, full-time parliament should be highly qualified specialists predominantly in the fields of physics/technology, law, economics, and education, with more than ten years of active work experience in state institutions and large private production and technology enterprises. These requirements are also most important for representatives and employees of the executive branch. In an era of rapid scientific and technological progress and artificial intelligence, a high educational level for officials at all levels of the state's legislative and executive power is an objective necessity. And successful work experience in the aforementioned organizations will allow for the assessment of leadership qualities such as working style with subordinates, initiative, and the ability to make managerial decisions in various situations and taking into account the high needs of subordinates. These managerial qualities are the main signs of a democratic and transformational leader. Therefore, the criterion of successful work experience in state and large private enterprises is an important condition for selecting potential leaders.

In some countries, democratic elections for government bodies are influenced by the so-called "deep state," which then has the opportunity to influence managerial decisions in its own interests, which differ from state interests. This violates the principles and goals of democracy, making it unlikely that hopes can be placed on effective leadership.

### **Conclusion**

Summarizing the above, it should be emphasized that the objective and correct selection of supreme power and local leaders requires:

- An appropriate civilizational and political science level among the population and, on that basis, the ability of people to distinguish populism from real achievements, and a potential leader from an ordinary official.
- Constitutional and legislative establishment of clear criteria for the election of future true (not formal) leaders.

### **Gratitude**

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# ARTS

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## KOMITAS IN THE LIFE AND ACTIVITIES OF THOMAS HARTMANN

Anushavan Zakaryan\*

**Abstract**

During the most tragic period of his life, in the days of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, Komitas (1869–1935) – the pioneer of Armenian music – got a mental disorder in exile and was in the psychiatric hospital of Paris. The advanced representatives of the Armenian intelligentsia undertook the care of the composer, helping as far as possible to bring him back to life. Russian composer Th. Hartmann and the “Society after Komitas” based in Tiflis also provided certain support in this regard.

Besides Hovhannes Tumanyan, Yeghishe Tadevosyan, Spiridon Mikaelyan, Russian poet Sergey Gorodetsky, other representatives of the Armenian and Russian intelligentsia living in Tiflis, one of the inspirers and initiators of the creation of the Society was Russian composer (of German origin), musicologist and conductor Thomas Hartmann (1885–1956). By coincidence, having arrived in Tiflis at the beginning of February 1919, he took an active part in the musical and public life of the city, established friendly and creative ties with the representatives of the Armenian intelligentsia. The result of this was that soon in the issues of the newspaper “Zakavkazskoe Slovo” on February 28 and March 1, 1919, his voluminous, deep and valuable article “Komitas Vardapet” from the series “Folk Song and Its Gatherers” was published which, in fact, is one of the first serious studies about Komitas.

On March 29, a lecture concert was held dedicated to the oeuvre of Komitas, where Th. Hartmann made a substantive report on the life and activities of Komitas. From that day on, the efforts of the broad circles of the Tiflis intelligentsia launched, aimed at the care of the sick composer, publishing and preserving his creative heritage.

Thus, in early May 1919, the “Society after Komitas” was founded in Tiflis, where Armenian, Russian, Georgian composers, performers, writers and painters of Tiflis were engaged.

**Keywords:** Thomas Hartmann, S. Gorodetsky, Hovhannes Tumanyan, Komitas, Tiflis, “Society after Komitas”, concert, lectures, Yeghishe Tadevosyan, Arshak Chopanyan, G. Levonyan, M. Babayan.

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The famous Russian poet, publicist, translator, public figure, and sincere friend of the Armenian people, Sergey Gorodetsky<sup>1</sup>, addressed folk songs in a review written in 1917, putting forth a vital demand that remains in force to this day: “Every song, every legend of every people is sacred to us, because a song created by the people is a secret inaccessible to individual creative work. These treasures can be collected in only one way: by recording them, so that not a single word, not a single note is distorted. Every variation is precious. And it is in this form that works of folk art must be preserved”.<sup>2</sup>

During his days in Yerevan, in late April 1919, having heard Armenian folk songs, S. Gorodetsky recalled the necessity of saving these treasures from oblivion, emphasizing the significance of the work accomplished by the great musicologist Komitas. In the final sketch of his series “Journey to Erivan,” titled “II. No. 35,” he wrote that these songs, which sound with different rhymes and variations in the mouths of the national population of various parts of Armenia, need to be collected in one place, as they show “how many treasures there are in Armenian folk songs. Now, when public interest is inflamed in the person and work of Komitas, it is time to continue his work on a serious foundation. We must take advantage of the refugees gathered in the centers from different regions, listen to their songs, and record them. ... We must hope that the supposed arrival of the Komitas researcher, composer T. Hartmann, in Erivan with a lecture and a display of Komitas’s materials will attract public attention and the foundation of the great work will be laid immediately (emphasis ours – A. Z.)”.<sup>3</sup>

The emphasized words, in all probability, refer to the maturing necessity of establishing the “Komitas Society,” which was realized in Tbilisi in early May 1919. The famous Russian (of German descent) composer, conductor, and pianist Thomas Hartmann (1885–1956) made a definite contribution to this work. Due to circumstances, he arrived in Tbilisi in early February 1919, where he lived and worked until 1921, teaching at the local conservatory.

Having settled in Tbilisi, T. Hartmann was the most active participant in the city’s musical and public life. The cultural life of Tbilisi, saturated with unique local color, immediately captivated him, and Hartmann established intimate and creative ties with many of its representatives. The following fact is particularly noteworthy: on February 26, 1919, the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the “Guild of Poets”<sup>4</sup> founded by S. Gorodetsky took place, dedicated to the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of Hovhannes Tumanyan. As reported by the newspaper “Zakavkazskoe Slovo”, in addition to the members of the Guild, the celebrant, T. Hartmann, the famous Russian composer and inspector of the Tbilisi Conservatory N. Cherepnin, and others also participated in the session. After the welcoming remarks of

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<sup>1</sup> S. Gorodetsky lived and worked in Western Armenia and Transcaucasia, in Tbilisi and Baku, during 1916–1921. See Zakaryan 2010; Zakaryan 2016 for details.

<sup>2</sup> Safrazbekyan 1980: 90.

<sup>3</sup> “Kavkazskoe Slovo” 18. V. 1919.

<sup>4</sup> See Zakaryan 2011 for details about the “Guild of Poets.”

the Guild's chairman S. Gorodetsky and the reading of poems addressed to the Armenian poet (by Al. Kulebyakin, N. Bel-Kon-Lyubomirskaya), the resolution of the "Guild of Poets" was announced, according to which Tumanyan was elected as a member of the Guild. Subsequently, "The composer Thomas Hartmann (who, by the way, often participated in the gatherings of the "Guild of Poets" as a guest – A. Z.), recalling the Armenian custom of starting every celebration with a new song, played a beautiful etude in honor of the celebrant. Alexander Cherepnin (N. Cherepnin's son – A. Z.) performed his new works... All the poets read their poems".<sup>5</sup> Hovh. Tumanyan expressed his gratitude, speaking about the "kinship and brotherhood of all the priests of art." He then "invited the poets of the Guild in corpore (in their full composition – A. Z.) to his place for the next session."

From this report, it becomes clear that by those days, Hartmann had already established a close relationship with Hovh. Tumanyan and discussed Armenian folk song art, and thus the renowned musicologist and composer Komitas (1869–1935). It is also known that the Russian composer was close to Komitas's friends: Yeghishe Tadevosyan, Spiridon Melikyan, Prof. Zavriyan, and others. The result of this was the very quick publication in the aforementioned newspaper of Hartmann's profound and extensive article, "Vardapet Komitas,"<sup>6</sup> a part of his series "Folk Song and Its Collectors," in which he was among the first to highly appreciate Komitas's contribution.

It should be noted that the threads of all this lead back to the person of Tumanyan and his cultural activities, intersecting with the name of Gorodetsky, as Hartmann was one of the friends of the Russian poet (who conducted aesthetics courses there) from the Tbilisi Conservatory and frequently participated in the gatherings of the "Guild of Poets" he headed. Furthermore, the composer's aforementioned article was published in the newspaper "Zakavkazskoe Slovo", whose "Art and Literature" section was managed by S. Gorodetsky.

Incidentally, it is possible that Gorodetsky's article about Komitas, the collector of "the wisdom of Armenian folk music,"<sup>7</sup> was written under the influence of T. Hartmann's article.

Be that as it may, in the first part of the article titled "Vardapet Komitas," the Russian composer, after speaking about Komitas's desperate mental state, then wrote: "Although Komitas had great success in the West, his name is almost unknown to the great majority of our society, even to music specialists. Unfortunately, his concerts did

<sup>5</sup> "Zakavkazskoe Slovo" 28. II. 1919.

<sup>6</sup> "Zakavkazskoe Slovo" 28. II. 1919; 1. III. 1919. We have republished the article: Zakaryan 2019: 252–286.

<sup>7</sup> During the days of Komitas's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, S. Gorodetsky wrote in a letter addressed to Hovh. Tumanyan's daughter, Nvard (September 27, 1949): "30 years ago in Tbilisi I wrote about him (Komitas – A. Z.) – I wish I could find that article in my archive now. Now I know more about Komitas than I did then. However, that first living impression of my acquaintance with him at that time will help me participate in your national holiday in Moscow" (Gorodetsky 1980: 293). The emphasized lines indicate that S. Gorodetsky personally knew Komitas and met him. Unfortunately, we have no other information about this.

not take place either in Petrograd or Moscow. His last collections were published shortly before the war, and at that time, artistic issues were forgotten by many. All these circumstances lead me to believe that there are many in our developed society who are unfamiliar with Komitas's work or perhaps have only heard his name." The author then presents a detailed account of Komitas's life and work, having previously noted that: "I received all information kindly from his friends and those who respect his memory."

The second part of the article is dedicated to the analysis of Komitas's works, where Hartmann examines his compositions at the level of contemporary Komitas studies, revealing their lasting aesthetic value, noting the composer's high talent, and his invaluable contribution to the history of Armenian music. "He (Komitas – A. Z.) was the first to pay serious attention to the folk songs of Armenia. He was the first to sense the cultural and ethnographic significance of these songs for his nation. He was the first to understand that the future of Armenian music as an independent entity must be built on the firm foundation of folk song. He was the first to point out that the national songs—which were already moving from the cities to the villages—have a European origin and their tunes have no connection to genuine Armenian song. He was the first to shout confidently and loudly to the Armenians, 'Here are your true songs; they were created by the people to whom you belong, and you must love them' (his own words)," T. Hartmann writes, and adds, "Komitas's entire life is proof of how they must be loved. What a wonderful feat—to record three thousand songs, those songs sung in the unknown, remote corners of Armenia... What unspeakable difficulties Komitas faced, traveling through those mountainous regions like a poor wanderer. No ethnographically endowed assembly came to his aid. He was winged only by his boundless love for the work. All of that was not enough for him. A tremendous, difficult problem was placed before him: to create a new harmonic and contrapuntal style consonant with the spirit of Oriental music. That was to bring a new word into music in the future. He solved that difficult problem and chose the path that had to be applied in that case. He did not take the rules of the European-West as his example, but found [his] style in his fruitful material... If we examine Komitas's harmonic arrangements, we will see, in addition to the subtlety, brilliance, and charm of that harmony... an astonishing originality that naturally springs from the essence of the song... The characteristic, established style of arrangement that Komitas created not only has significance in the field of folk song but should also serve as an example for the arrangements of Oriental music. I believe that in the future this will gain wider scope and musical forms will broaden. Komitas should be considered the spiritual father of this style."

It is worth noting, by the way, that it is evident from the article that T. Hartmann is also well-acquainted with the intricacies of the Armenian people's history, particularly the enormous role of the Armenian Church in the life of the people.

...It is interesting that, according to a press report, "On March 29, a concert-evening dedicated to the work of Komitas is being organized," where composer T. Hartmann is scheduled to speak as a lecturer. In the concert portion, most of Komitas's



songs published in the press will be performed, as well as excerpts from his unfinished opera “Anoush”. Performers: Olga Hartmann (Thomas Hartmann’s wife – A. Z.), Ter-Arakelyan, and others. All proceeds from the concert will be given as financial assistance to Komitas, who, after enduring the horrors of the Armenian massacres, is now located in Constantinople in a clinic for nervous disorders”.<sup>8</sup>

In short, from the days of the publication of T. Hartmann’s article titled “Vardapet Komitas” and his subsequent lecture about the musicologist, efforts began among a wide range of the Armenian intelligentsia in Tbilisi to alleviate the condition of Komitas, who was being treated in Paris for the nervous mental illness he acquired in exile during the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

And so, we repeat, in early May 1919, the “Komitas Society”<sup>9</sup> was founded in Tbilisi. A press release stated: “Recently in Tiflis a circle was organized to honor the famous Father Komitas, composer of Armenian folk songs. The aim of the circle is to create the Komitas Society, which will take upon itself the care and support of Komitas’s health, who is currently in a hospital for nervous diseases in Paris and, according to doctors’ statements, gives hope for recovery... 2) to preserve and disseminate his published and unpublished works, which are of immense importance for the development of the musical creativity of the Armenian people. To this end, the newly established circle intends to organize a concert on May 18<sup>th</sup> (it took place on May 21<sup>st</sup> – A. Z.) in the hall of the ‘Artistic Society’. At the head of the Society’s founders stands Prof. T. A. Hartmann (emphasis ours – A. Z.), who has repeatedly noted in his articles the great talent of Komitas and his merit, which must be appreciated by our Armenian intelligentsia”.<sup>10</sup>

Through the efforts of the Society, which included Armenian, Russian, and Georgian composers, performers, writers, and artists, an evening-concert dedicated to Komitas took place on May 21<sup>st</sup>—a memorable day in the history of Armenian song art—in the packed hall of the “Artistic Society” theatre, beginning the propaganda of his works and the collection of financial aid. At the start of the concert, literary critic M. Matenjyan and T. Hartmann delivered introductory speeches. The first spoke about Komitas’s life, and the second about his musical talent and the significance of his works. In his speech, emphasizing the high genius of the Armenian composer, Hartmann specifically clarified: “... listening to the Armenian songs arranged by Komitas, you hear genuine Armenian folk songs, you are dealing with true folk creativity, and you can be convinced that Komitas would not allow himself to change any sound, any harmony. ... Komitas’s arrangement confirms that it is truly difficult to imagine that this or that song could be harmonized any other way. The same goes for the choral works, where

<sup>8</sup> “Kavkazskoe Slovo”, 20. III. 1919.

<sup>9</sup> Hovhannisyan, Zakaryan 1984: 59–61; Zakaryan 2019.

<sup>10</sup> “Kavkazskoe Slovo”, 9. V. 1919. See also Ashkhatavor 21. V. 1919. Incidentally, the “Komitas” Society was operating in Constantinople at the same time for the very same purpose (“Ashkhatavor”, 21. V. 1919).

Komitas has... an inexhaustible supply of not random, but conscious and deliberate techniques".<sup>11</sup>

Analyzing in depth the Komitasian style of Armenian folk songs, Hartmann continued: there are a number of original melodies in his choral works that are woven into the whole, and that they are not only beautiful but also, by their nature, are completely presented in the spirit of Armenian song, and it is often difficult to distinguish the folk melody from the one created by the composer. "It is not just an arrangement, but a creation of style. This is where the lasting significance of Komitas's work lies, not only for Armenian but also for Western music. His choral songs are exemplary."

In his speech, Hartmann also drew the following noteworthy parallel: "The famous Russian theorist Taneyev personally told me that he had come to the conclusion that Russian folk songs should be arranged in a contrapuntal style. The genius Komitas, by the power of premonition, applied this style and with such perfection that hardly any of his Western artistic counterparts could realize it. In his 'arrangements' (I put it in quotes intentionally), it would be more correct to say, in his precious choral works, the folk melody is preserved untouchable, both from the point of view of meter and melody. He was a fanatic on this issue. Who could better protect the soul of the folk song than he?"

In his speech, besides the analysis, there were words of appreciation for Komitas from his contemporaries. Thus, Hartmann said: "I remember P. Cherepnin's admiration upon examining his work, his exclamation: 'How happy Maurice Ravel (the great French composer – A. Z.) would be to hear these works!'" Then, continuing, he emphasized that "... the attitude of the greatest representatives of the French musical world toward Komitas" is invaluable: "the most zealous musical ethnographer," a master who presented "genuine Armenian song" to the West, a brilliant arranger of Armenian folk songs, but "first and foremost... a composer." These were the opinions of Claude Debussy, Romain Rolland, and Louis Laloy about him after listening to Komitas's songs at the World Music Congress in Paris in 1914.<sup>12</sup>

"Prof. Hartmann, speaking about Komitas's role in the field of Armenian music, concluded that his 'Anoush,' when it one day appears on European stages, will do a far greater work for the Armenian Cause than diplomatic efforts"<sup>13</sup>, we read in the press report.

The introductory speeches were followed by a concert of Komitas's works, performed by singers Vahan Ter-Arakelyan, Armenak Ter-Abrahamyan, Melik-Beglaryan, and others. The choir led by Spiridon Melikyan also performed. The performances of "Antuni," "Ay Sarer," "Gna, Gna," "Keler, Tsoler," "Hov Arek," "Yeri, Yeri," "Garun A," "Habrban," and other Komitasian works were received with great

<sup>11</sup> "Kavkazskoe Slovo", 24. V. 1919.

<sup>12</sup> See T. Hartmann's speech at the end of this article. Cf. "Thomas Hartmann and Komitas vardapet 1935: 74–80; Gasparyan 1960: 54–61.

<sup>13</sup> "Ashkhatavor", 24. V. 1919.

enthusiasm.<sup>14</sup> From the press, we learn that the success of the concert was immense<sup>15</sup>, exceeding all expectations; it was repeated on May 29, June 8, and 14, at the public's request...

The "Komitas Society" also organized concerts in Yerevan and Batumi. Thus, in mid-June, they came to Yerevan to organize musical evenings for the purpose of materially assisting the "meritorious music master Vardapet Komitas".<sup>16</sup> A little later, in early July, Hartmann came to Yerevan with his singer wife, Olga, for concerts. Two concerts were planned: one of European music, and the other of Komitas's works.<sup>17</sup> Press reports reveal that at the beginning of the concert dedicated to Komitas, the Russian musicologist addressed the Armenian composer's biography and work and emphasized the national and world significance and value of the great benefactor's works. It is noteworthy that Olga Hartmann performed Komitas's songs in the original Armenian at this concert.

Incidentally, the educator, musicologist, singer, and close friend of Komitas, Margarit Babayan, provides interesting information about the concerts organized in the aforementioned cities: "These concerts were repeated in Yerevan and Batumi under the patronage of P. Khatisyan (Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia – A. Z.) and the Armenian Consul in Batumi. Because it was impossible to take Spiridon Melikyan's wonderful choir to Yerevan and Batumi, Mrs. Hartmann, who is a singer with an extremely beautiful soprano voice, learned Vardapet Komitas's songs in Armenian, astonishing and delighting the audience."

Thus, in the reality of Eastern Armenia, the universal recognition and appreciation of Komitas's invaluable contribution was, in fact, established.<sup>18</sup>

It must be noted, however, that the societal, cultural, and moral support for Komitas was greater than the financial aid. Expressing the intelligentsia's concern over the fate of the great composer, the famous artist Yeghishe Tadevosyan, one of his close friends, wrote about it in a letter to Arshak Chopanyan in Paris during those very days: "I would like to hear your opinion about Komitas's health; I know you are taking care of him there (referring to the "Committee of Friends of Vardapet Komitas" operating in Paris – A. Z.), and we here also founded a society in his name, but the currency exchange rate has dropped immensely... our contribution turns out to be a very insignificant thing after putting in a great effort. May God grant him complete health".<sup>19</sup>

The renowned literary and art critic Garegin Levonyan wrote in his memoirs about the "Komitas Society": "The mental recovery of our beloved musicologist's (Komitas's – A. Z.) condition became hopeless, but his healthy physical body required food and care.

<sup>14</sup> "Ashkhatavor", 1. VI. 1919.

<sup>15</sup> "Kavkazskoe Slovo", 23; 24. V. 1919.

<sup>16</sup> "Hayastani Ashkhatavor", 14. VI. 1919.

<sup>17</sup> "Ashkhatank", 8. VII. 1919.

<sup>18</sup> See also Saakyan 2017: 85 regarding T. Hartmann's evaluations of the value of Komitas's work.

<sup>19</sup> Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature and Art, A. Chopanyan Fund, 2191.

To assist the Armenian circles in Paris with this work, the ‘Komitas’ Society was organized in Tbilisi in 1920 (in early May 1919 – A. Z.), with a tight program, aiming to send a certain amount of money annually through the collection of membership fees. The president or one of the board members of the Society was the artist Yeghishe Tadevosyan, Komitas’s old friend... What the Society practically did or when its existence ceased is unknown to me; after moving from Tbilisi to Armenia, I was no longer able to follow that matter”.<sup>20</sup>

Interesting information about the activities of the “Komitas Society” is found in the extensive memoirs of Komitas’s student, Aghavni Mesropyan. According to her, every Saturday and Sunday evening during 1920–1921, at the house of Hagop Anagjyan and Margarit Zargaryan at 22 Veliyaminskaya Street in Tbilisi, who were Komitas’s compatriots—they were Zok (the composer’s ancestors were from the village of Tsghna in the Goghtan province of historical Armenia, Zok)—the composer’s friends gathered to tell a memory or an episode about him. Most of them were artists, musicians, writers, and actors. The memoirist first mentions Tumanyan’s name among the active participants of these gatherings. Besides him, those evenings were attended by D. Demirchyan, Vardapet Tirayr, B. Arghutyan-Yerkaynabazuk, Ye. Tadevosyan, G. Levonyan, G. Sharbatyan, Hovh. Abelyan, S. Khachatryan, T. Alikhanyan, S. Oganezashvili, R. Melikyan, D. Ghazaryan, St. Lisitsyan, H. Galajyan, V. Ter-Arakelyan, Sh. Khanzadyan, M. Tumanyan, and others. According to A. Mesropyan, it was through the efforts of this very group that the “Komitas” Union was established in Tbilisi in 1920 (as mentioned above, it was founded in early May 1919), whose goal was to support Komitas’s recovery and assist in the publication of his works through membership fees and funds raised through performances and gatherings. This Union, whose president was the artist Ye. Tadevosyan, often organized commemorative evenings dedicated to Komitas. In 1921, the House of Armenian Art (Hayartun) was founded in Tbilisi, with painting, music, and literature departments. Hovh. Tumanyan was elected as its president. The “Komitas” Union joined the music department of Hayartun, which was headed by R. Melikyan, and subsequently merged with it.<sup>21</sup>

Undoubtedly, T. Hartmann made a tremendous contribution to the study of Komitas’s person and work and the founding of the “Komitas Society” in Tbilisi. And all of this is among the memorable pages in the history of Armenian musical culture.

<sup>20</sup> Levonyan 1959: 135-136. Incidentally, this year of 1920 for the creation of the society is also mistakenly noted in Gasparyan 1960 (ed.): 44, 322.

<sup>21</sup> Gasparyan 1960 (ed.): 321–323. See also Hovhannisyan 2012: 128–129.

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*Translated from Russian by Gevorg Harutyunyan*

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# BOOK REVIEWS

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**Ashot Piliposyan, Hasmik Simonyan, Lianna Gevorgyan,  
Hayk Navasardyan,  
*Metsamor: A Five-Thousand-Year-Old Settlement in Ancient Armenia,*  
2024, “Antares”, 180 p.**

In 2024, upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia and by the decision of the Scientific Council of the “Service for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Museums-Reserves and the Historical Environment”, the work “Metsamor: A Five-Thousand-Year-Old Settlement in Ancient Armenia” by Ashot Piliposyan, Hasmik Simonyan, Lianna Gevorgyan and Hayk Navasardyan was published. The scientific editor of the work is one of the authors, Professor Ashot Piliposyan. The authors emphasize in advance that this work on the ancient, multifaceted archaeological site of Metsamor is a brief summary of almost 60 years of fieldwork, and excavations and research are ongoing (page 78). The work consists of an introduction, 10 sub-chapters (although the authors does not divide the work into chapters), a conclusion, references, tables and the list of tables. In addition to the general tables, which total 70 pages (pages 101-171), the work is replete with maps and numerous photographs.

In the Introduction (pages 5-10), the complete history of the Metsamor excavations is presented. The first excavations (1965-2005) were carried out by the archaeologist Emma Khanzadyan (1922-2007) and the geologist Koryun Mkrtchyan (1928-1993). Since 2013, an Armenian-Polish international archaeological expedition has been working in Metsamor, co-led by Ashot Piliposyan and Krzysztof Jakubiak (Poland).

In the work, the archaeological history of the Metsamor monument begins from the Chalcolithic period (Metsamor in the Chalcolithic Period, pages 11-13). Authors note, that the earliest layer of the archaeological site (6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> mill. BC) dates back to the Chalcolithic period, when a settlement was established on three volcanic hills near the sources of the Metsamor River. As the authors correctly note, Metsamor is one of the most regularly studied ancient sites of the 5<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> mill. BC of the Armenian Highlands (and, rightly so, of the entire Ancient Near East). The monument includes a Bronze-Iron Age settlement (a citadel, an industrial complex, urban quarters and a separate platform for astronomical observations) and a large necropolis.

The area is more than 250 hectares. This area contains three volcanic cones: the largest, Mets Blur (Big Hill), rises 27-28 m above the adjacent plain; the second, Pokr Blur (Small Hill), rises 8-10 m; and the third, Karmir Karer (Red Stones), rises 2-3 m in relative height (pages 5-7). It is noted that the Metsamor hill in the Chalcolithic period, was part of the group of contemporary settlements built in this region, which spread in the fertile water basins of the Kura and Araxes rivers and their tributaries (especially the Metsamor) and in the adjacent territories, forming a continuous and viable system of early agricultural and cattle-breeding settlements (Mashtotsblur, Terteridzor, Kghzyakblur, Etchmiadzin, Mokhrabur, Teghut, Aknashen, Aratashen, etc.).

The study of the archaeological material of this period found in Metsamor shows that it has common parallels in the contemporary monuments of the Transcaucasus (Nakhijevan Kyul tepe, Shulaverisgora: the second horizon, Imirisgora: from the first to the fifth horizon, Alikemektepesi, etc.), and can refer to the period, including the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> mill. BC to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> mill. BC. (pages 11-13). In the next sub-chapter (The Early Bronze Age Period in the Metsamor Area, pages 14-18), the structure of the Metsamor settlement is described, according to which: the settlement consisted mainly of round or oval dwellings, built close together and, in some areas, side by side, sometimes with rectangular outbuildings. The dwellings had a low stone base and a semi-oval top, made of raw bricks that rose and gradually narrowed, ending in a round **yerdik**, an opening in the roof for light and air. It appears that the entire weight of the structure was supported by the log, placed in the centre of the dwelling, which ended in a horizontal wooden crossbeam, supporting the roof.

Like other early agricultural settlements of the Kura-Araxes culture in the Ararat Valley, Metsamor probably had circular clay hearths, placed in the centre of the dwellings (page 15). It is interesting that Stamp seals also occupy an important place among the Early Bronze Age finds from Metsamor during this period. Moreover, as a result of the comparison of the excavated material, the authors have concluded that these are the earliest types of seals; they were widespread in the Ancient Near East (Amuk Valley, Jericho, Çatal Hüyük, Hacilar, Tell Arpachiyah, Tell Halaf, Ubaid, Jarmo, Tell Brak, Suza, Jafarabad, Hakalan etc.) in the 7<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> mill. BC and were used up to and including the Late Antiquity (page 17). It is also concluded in the chapter that as in the entire Armenian Highlands, in the same way in Metsamor, the Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes early agricultural archaeological realities survived for about a millennium, from the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> mill. BC to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC, after which, quickly enough, during about the 24<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> cc. BC, under the influence of many factors (including ecological, social, economic, ethnic and others), they left the historical arena (page 18).

In the next chapter, (The Middle Bronze Age in the Metsamor Area, pages 19-22), the cultural changes of the archaeological sites in the Armenian Highland are described, without taking into consideration the consequences and results of the climate's impact on the environment. This is a circumstance that has already found its place in domestic scholarly works for quite a long time. The utilization of these works<sup>1</sup> in this study would greatly contribute to the clear elucidation and final conclusion of the phenomena described below.

So, authors note that in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> mill. BC, unprecedented and diverse processes began and rapidly spread throughout the Near East (including the Armenian Highlands), significantly changing the ethnic, political, economic, commercial, and socio-cultural panorama of the region. In these conditions, after the decline of the

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Grekyan, Bobokhyan 2022; Kosyan, Grekyan 2024.



Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes culture, the semi-nomadic pastoralism of the Middle Bronze Age post-Kura-Araxes culture spread over the central, northern, southern and eastern parts of the Armenian Highlands, which is so far known only from burial complexes (settlements are missing). This led the researchers to believe that from around the 23<sup>rd</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> /18<sup>th</sup> cc. BC, the ethnic bearers of the Middle Bronze Age post-Kura-Araxes culture regularly moved through the riverine areas and water basins of the Armenian Highlands in search of new pastures for their cattle. They lived in temporary tent-shaped dwellings (the traces of which have not survived), and along the way (perhaps periodically) built and abandoned their own tribal burial structures according to the needs of the nomadic lifestyle. These ethnic bearers are known in literature as the bearers of the Bedeni-Berkaber and Trialeti-Vanadzor Middle Bronze Age cultures. And then at this stage, it is difficult to say with certainty whether the carriers of the above cultures passed through the territory of Metsamor or not. In any case, the artefacts typical of these cultures do not seem to have been recorded in the archaeological layers of the citadel and the urban quarters of Metsamor, as well as in the burial complexes.

Therefore, it can be assumed that after a thousand years of Kura-Araxes culture, a significant part of Metsamor was temporarily deserted for a certain period of time (perhaps, from the 23<sup>rd</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> cc. BC). The picture changed significantly in the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC, when the bearers of the so-called Sevan-Artsakhian, Karmirberdian and Van-Urmian Middle Bronze Age cultural groups began to settle in the central and eastern regions of the Armenian Highlands (page 19). And there is noted that the above-mentioned means that around the 18<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> cc. BC, on average every 50-60 years, the Middle Bronze Age population of Metsamor carried out renovations and reconstructions in the territory of the settlement. It seems that this was the time when the first ancient wall of irregular masonry was built to separate the settlement from the outside world, gradually turning it into a fortress (page 20).

The presence of prominent manifestations of the appropriation and effective organization of residential space, hall-like structures, a developed economy, as well as the reconstruction of details of the burial ritual, allowed the authors to conclude that the Middle Bronze Age settlement of Metsamor was already regulated and had social stratification (page 22). The following conclusion of the authors is quite interesting, according to which: The fifty years of excavations at Metsamor show that the members of this society and their descendants never left the territory they inhabited in Metsamor. Instead, they reinforced their fortified settlement, developed the economy and trade, and advanced various crafts, including pottery, stonework, leatherwork, woodwork, and especially metalwork. As a result, they extended the boundaries of the fortress and, together with other societies of the Armenian Highlands, promoted intertribal, economic, trade, construction and socio-cultural developments that are now recognised in literature as realities of the Late Bronze Age (page 22).

The next sub-chapter is the most extensive, covering about 20 pages (Metsamor in the Late Bronze Age Processes, pages 23-41). In this chapter, the authors attempt to correlate the archaeological context with the political history of the Near East during the 17<sup>th</sup> –14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. In the case of the latter, it is necessary to note that the authors' conjectural interpretation never steps outside the bounds of that same conjecture. It is mentioned that in the 17<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> cc. BC, under the conditions of rapprochement and gradual convergence of the Sevan-Artsakhian, Karmirberdian and Van-Urmian Middle Bronze Age cultural groups established in the Armenian Highlands, and from the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. BC, a qualitatively new and highly universal culture began to be perceptible, which spread throughout almost the entire Armenian Highlands during the 15<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> cc. BC and received the conventional name "Lchashen-Metsamor" in literature in the 1990s (page 23).

The presence of tin, which emerged as a result of the excavations, is of considerable interest, "On the hill, it is found in the form of black, grey or brown shapeless particles, concretions and hollow grains. The content of copper, zinc, lead and especially tin in the production slag of Metsamor bronze objects is close to or more than 1%, which means that they are not natural formations, but were added to the alloy during the production process" (pages 24-26).

In this regard, the authors mention the assumption of Geologist K. Mkrtchyan, according to which: known occurrences of tin, associated with metamorphic shales in several parts of the Armenian Highlands, indicate the possibility of tin deposits in the central and eastern regions of the Highlands, which could have satisfied the demand for this metal in the Metsamor area (page 24). They simultaneously note that: It appears that the early state formations of the Armenian Highlands in the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC used two known transit trade for tin: the eastern (from the Iranian plateau and the Persian Gulf) and the western (Mediterranean) routes (page 25).

Without dwelling on the authors' seemingly baseless and unfounded assumptions about Metsamor's involvement in this or that event of Near Eastern political life (even the discovery of The frog-shaped sardonyx pendant weight from Kassite Babylonia or Egyptian scarabs found there, and the claim that the owner of Metsamor had to prove his loyalty to the anti-Hittite alliance (pages 30-33)), and moving forward, we note that the authors conclude the chapter with the following finding for that chapter: All this allows us to conclude that Metsamor experienced a long period of growth and prosperity in the 15<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> cc. BC, during which the local rulers regularly renovated and expanded the settlement, built sanctuaries, established metal smelting workshops, and business relations with the mighty powers of the Near East, participated in the various military-political, trade-economic and socio-cultural processes, taking place in the region, and as a result of all this, built up and strengthened their subordinate territories. It is not excluded that at this time, they led the early Etiuni confederation, later mentioned in the cuneiform texts of the Van (Urartu) kingdom (page 23).

The next chapter is titled Metsamor in the Early Iron Age Processes (pages 42-51), and the general description of the chapter is as follows: A number of Late Bronze Age sites (Lchashen, Artik, Nerkin Getashen, Karashamb, etc.) began to lose their former role in conditions of gradual decline of domestic and production capacities, and gradually became empty. At the same time, other settlements, located near busy trade routes and providing the necessary resources for economic activity, began to expand, replenishing the population of declining settlements and growing stronger. A similar fate befell Metsamor. In the area to the east of the citadel, excavations, carried out by the Armenian-Polish archaeological expedition in 2013-2022 (co-directors: A. Piliposyan and K. Jakubiak), revealed the formation of residential quarters that gradually began in the 14<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cc. BC and reached considerable size in the 12<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> cc. BC. This means that at the end of the Late Bronze Age, the first processes of urbanization began in the ancient site, which, according to the archaeological data obtained, were completed in the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BC, turning Metsamor into a city with administrative, religious, economic and industrial quarters and a large population. One of the first and most important initiatives of the Armenian-Polish expedition was the creation of a new general plan and topographic map of the ancient site and the division of the area to be investigated into twenty-five equal archaeological sectors; in 2018, geomagnetic aero scanning of the Metsamor necropolis was carried out. Excavations were concentrated mainly in the urban area, extending north-east from the citadel, and are still being carried out mainly in the squares of sectors VIII, IX, XIII and XIV. Remains of material culture from different archaeological periods have been documented here. These include artefacts from the Medieval, Late Antique (Late Roman), Achaemenid, Post-Urartian, Urartian, widespread Iron Age, Early Iron Age, Late, Middle and Early Bronze Age (pages 43-44). It is assumed that starting from the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, the areas adjacent to the Metsamor citadel were intensively replenished with new structures, creating a fairly dense network of urban districts. It can be concluded that at this stage, urban development processes in Metsamor of the Early Iron Age were gradually completed, and the local Late Bronze Age fortress had already turned into a real city in the 11<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, with all the necessary subdivisions characteristic of it (administrative, cult, industrial, economic, domestic, defensive, etc.) (page 51).

In the chapters Metsamor as Part of the Kingdom of Van (Urartu) (pages 52-59), Metsamor in Post- Urartian Period (6<sup>th</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> cc. BC) (pages 60-62) it is noted, that from the first quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, the city-fortress of Metsamor was incorporated into the Kingdom of Van (Urartu). This process was not smooth. Most likely, the troops of Argishti I (786-764 BC) invaded Metsamor, burned down the citadel and the town quarters, killed part of the population and deported the rest. The long-term presence of the Urartians in Metsamor is evidenced by the reconstructions, made in the citadel (especially the new defensive wall and the adjacent economic buildings). Particularly noteworthy is the structure, built outside the citadel, with two parallel rows of tufa columns, which specialists believe may have served as an inn and/or a stable. It can be

assumed that Metsamor, located between the towns of Erebuni and Argishtikhinili, played an important role with them in the various ventures of the rulers of the Kingdom of Van (Urartu) in the northern and eastern regions of the 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> cc. BC. During the decline of the Kingdom of Van (Urartu) at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC or the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the settlement was brutally attacked and burned by some forces (possibly the Median tribes or the mercenary Scythians, allies of the Armenian dynasty of the Yervandids who had seized power).

Here it is extremely important to record that the authors, although it is outside their field of research, nevertheless disregarded the modern scientific approaches for the dating and succession of Urartian kings (page 52), as well as for the so-called Yervanduni (Orontid) Kingdom of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (page 60), and structured their interpretations parallel to the stage of scientific development of the previous century<sup>2</sup>.

In the chapters Metsamor in the Antique Period (pages 63-66) and Metsamor in the Middle Ages and Later (pages 67-70), it is mentioned that Antique and Medieval Metsamor is not well illuminated due to the scarcity of sources. Moreover: Excavations, carried out by the Armenian-Polish international archaeological expedition in the urban quarters of Metsamor in 2013-2024, show that some of the destroyed and abandoned parts of the settlement were used as burial grounds in the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> cc. AD. And specifically during the excavations from 2020-2024: A Late Antique burial was also found in the necropolis (page 65). This allows us to conclude that there was a Late Antique settlement in part of the citadel and urban area of Metsamor, whose inhabitants carried out burials in different parts of its unused territory when necessary. A silver coin of the Roman Emperor Tiberius (14-37 AD) was found in the partially destroyed clay tomb, while the work states that it is a coin of Emperor Vespasianus (70-79 AD) (pages 65-66; page 164, Table LXIII,3). Regarding Medieval Metsamor, it is noted that the materials found indicate that Metsamor was inhabited in the Early Middle Ages (4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> cc.) and that life here continued uninterruptedly until the Late Middle Ages (15<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> cc.). And it is stated that at present, the Metsamor archaeological site is part of the administrative territory of the Taronik community of the Vagharshapat subdistrict of the Armavir region of the Republic of Armenia. According to the 2011 census, the population of Taronik was 1,892 people, some of whose ancestors migrated here in 1915-1920 from Van, Bitlis, Alashkert and Mush in 1915-1920 after the Armenian Genocide. The chapter "Metsamor" Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reserve (pages 71-73) presents the history of the museum-reserve, and the Conclusion (pages 74-78) summarizes the entire work.

Summarizing the work, let us point out a number of conspicuous shortcomings. Thus, the title page of the work lists the names of four specialists as authors, while every odd page of the work only has "Ashot Piliposyan" written on it, when it should have been "Ashot Piliposyan et al." or "Piliposyan et al.". The map on page 6 (Ancient

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<sup>2</sup> See, respectively: Grekyan 2015; Grekyan 2023; Tsakanyan 2018.

Near East and Eastern Mediterranean in 15<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> cc. BCE) is highly incomprehensible; it is extremely general and amateurish and not suited for such high-level work. The map of Urartu on page 43 is also general. It is not only general but also has clear demarcation and is undated. Pages 101-171 constitute the tables and figures of the book, which could have been left unpaginated. The bibliography is also neither systematic nor uniform.

It follows from the above mentioned that, despite all its positive aspects, the monograph by A. Piliposyan and others is not without its weaknesses and shortcomings. Nevertheless, it should be appreciated as a definite contribution to the study of the history and culture not only of Metsamor but of the entire Armenian Highland.

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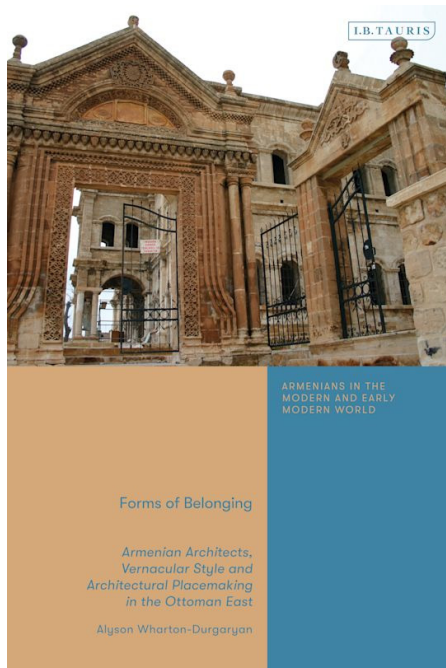
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## NEW BOOKS

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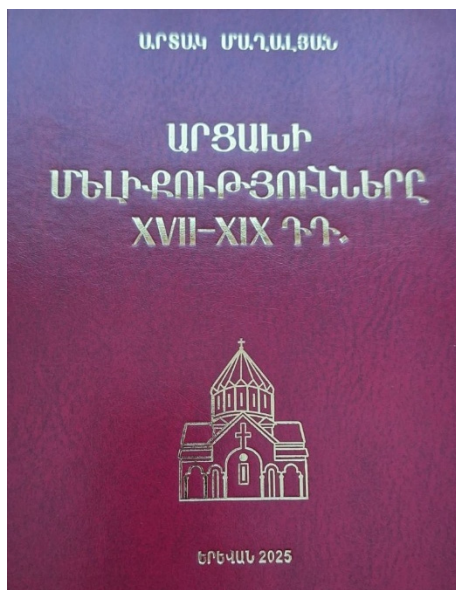
## **FORMS OF BELONGING Armenian Architects, Vernacular Style and Architectural Placemaking in the Ottoman East**

By **Alyson Wharton-Durgaryan**

*I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2025, 256 p. + 60 bw illus.*

Contrary to the historical record, which views the architecture of the eastern Ottoman cities as unchanging remnants of a medieval and proto-Turkish golden age, this richly illustrated book highlights the wide-ranging transformations that Mardin, Diyarbakir, Urfa, Antep, Bitlis and Erzurum, saw at the hands of Armenian architects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Case studies reflect the agency of Armenian

architects in constructing these buildings- whether churches, mansions, government offices, schools, or commercial structures. Each chapter looks to one of these cities and the participation of Armenians in shaping these places, not just through architecture but through city institutions, patronage, and benevolence. It argues that Armenians used the urban environment, and a uniquely Armenian reinvention of vernacular architecture, which reflected their religious, educational, intellectual, and political networks, to partake in the revival of these cities in an era marked by reforms to the Ottoman polity, political culture, and local governance. This was a show of popular belonging, and pride in local traditions, but it was also, merged with symbols of Ottoman authority, a reflection of the formation of Ottoman local elites, which included these Armenians - thus representing complex localization and Ottomanization processes at work. This book shows that there was not 'one' Armenian culture or identity, but many competing visions across Ottoman cities.



## **THE MELIKDOMS OF ARTSAKH, 17<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

By **Artak Maghalyan**

*Yerevan: Matenadaran Publishing House, 2025, 400 p. + 2 inserts*

The monograph is devoted to one of the most important periods in Armenian history—the history of the melikdoms of Artsakh. Based on newly discovered archival materials, epigraphic evidence, and historiographical literature, the study examines issues related to the rights and duties of the meliks of

Artsakh and presents the history of the melikdoms. The book demonstrates the



continuity of Armenian authority in Artsakh up to the incorporation of the region into Russia. The volume is intended for historians, Orientalists, and a broad readership.



### **THE ARMENIAN WOMAN, MINORITARIAN AGENCY, AND THE MAKING OF IRANIAN MODERNITY, 1860–1979**

By **Houri Berberian and Talinn Grigor**  
*Stanford University Press, 2025, 418 p.*

With this book, Houri Berberian and Talinn Grigor offer the first history of Armenian women in modern Iran. Foregrounding the work of Armenian women's organizations, the authors trace minoritarian politics and the shifting relationships among doubly minoritized Armenian female subjects, Iran's central nodes of power, and the Irano-Armenian patriarchal institutions of church and political parties. Engaging broader considerations around modernization, nationalism, and feminism, this book makes a conceptually rich contribution to how we think about the history of women and minoritized peoples. Berberian and Grigor read archival, textual, visual, and oral history sources together and against one another to challenge conventional notions of "the archive" and transform silences and absences into audible and visual presences. Understanding minoritarian politics as formulated by women through their various forms of public and intellectual activism, this book provides a groundbreaking intervention in Iran's history of modernization, Armenian diasporic history, and Iranian and Armenian feminist historiography.



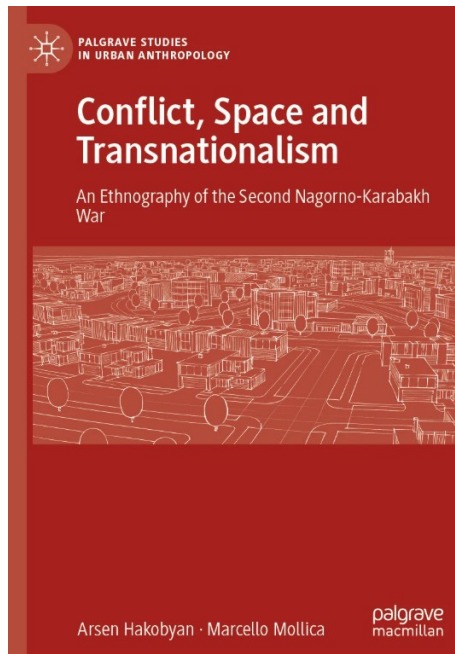
### **COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**

By **Harutyun Marutyan**  
*I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2025, 296 p.*

Commemorated annually on 24 April, Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day is an important part of national identity in both Armenia and the diaspora. This book is a historical and anthropological account of how the genocide is commemorated by Armenians and its evolving significance over time. Beginning with the first demonstrations by survivors in Allied-occupied Constantinople in 1919, to the Stalinist ban on commemoration and the Khrushchev thaw and beyond, the book charts how the politics of the



genocide and its official and popular memory fluctuated in Soviet Armenia and the diaspora. The book also provides a detailed account of the rituals involved in the annual march to the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan and other memory sites, analysing the ways that the collective memory of this foundational event is embodied and continues to reflect and shape Armenian identity today.



## **CONFLICT, SPACE AND TRANSNATIONALISM**

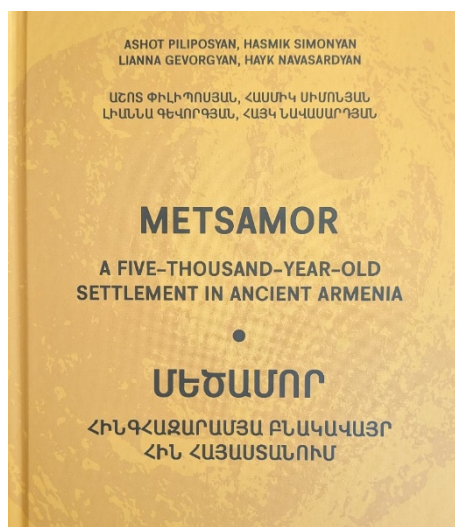
An Ethnography of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War

By **Arsen Hakobyan and Marcello Mollica**

*Palgrave Macmillan, 2025, 299 p.*

This book looks at the way the 2020 Second Nagorno Karabakh War allowed urban spectacular transformation in war actors' attitudes towards space and transnationalism. It concentrates on some specific events, including pre- and wartime life in the Nagorno Karabakh political capital Stepanakert and compelling historical and cultural heritage issues in the cultural capital Shushi and its meaning for the Armenian population worldwide. Attention is placed both on

wartime social and urban changes and to the destruction, or attempted destruction, of Armenians cultural heritage during the conflict and in post-war Azerbaijani occupation. The first part of the book reconstructs the historic and religious context of Nagorno Karabakh, linking it with the regional geo-political dimension; meanwhile, the case studies analysed in the second part of the book will help understand spatial meanings (e.g., towns, cultural centres, monasteries) and the symbolic value of urban heritage while also discussing some conflict markers in the context of theories of transnationalism and diaspora studies.



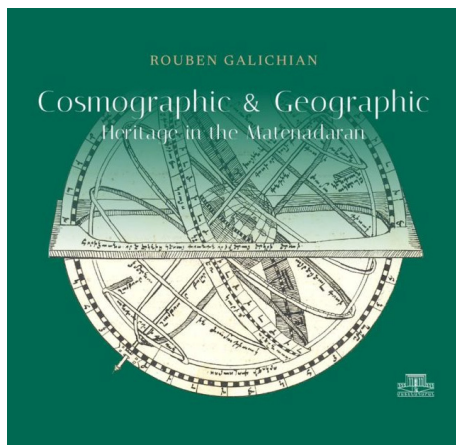
## **METSAMOR: A Five-Thousand-Year-Old Settlement in Ancient Armenia**

By **Ashot Piliposyan, Hasmik Simonyan, Lianna Gevorgyan, Hayk Navasardyan**

*Service for the Protection of Historical Environment and Cultural Museum-Reservations, SNCO, Yerevan, 2024, 180 p.*

This book is dedicated to the results of 60 years of archaeological excavations at the ancient site of Metsamor, located in the Ararat Valley, in the centre of

the Republic of Armenia. Research continues to this day in the citadel, the urban quarter and the necropolis of the monument. The large number of valuable finds that have been discovered prove that the ancient site was founded in the Chalcolithic period, on the border between the 5th and 4th millennium BC, and existed without significant interruption for more than six thousand years, until the Late Middle Ages. The presented archaeological materials and their parallels play an important role in revealing and interpreting the diverse historical and cultural processes of the early period of the Ancient Near East. The book is published within the framework of the grant provided by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia.

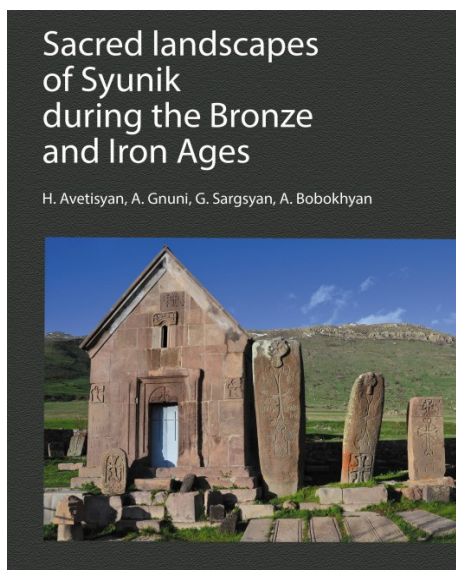


### **COSMOGRAPHIC & GEOGRAPHIC HERITAGE IN THE MATENADARAN**

By **Rouben Galichian**

*Yerevan, Matenadaran 2025, 160 p.*

The album has been prepared for the public at large, with special attention and basic information provided for scholars interested in the related subjects who would like to have some basic information about the wealth of medieval and old sources regarding geography, cartography as well as astronomy and astrology kept in the archives and manuscripts of the Matenadaran. For researchers this album could be an introductory source for the type and sort of information in the Matenadaran which is available to the public, which could be useful for further and wider studies and researches. To be filed under the following categories: Geography, cartography, maps, atlases, astronomy, astrology, history, religion and Armenian manuscripts.



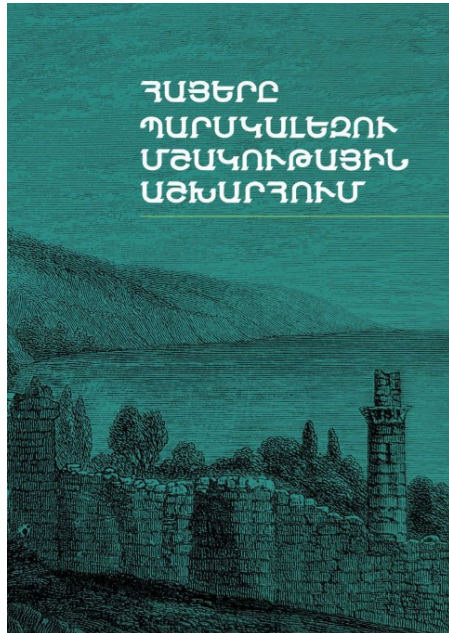
### **SACRED LANDSCAPES OF SYUNIK DURING THE BRONZE AND IRON AGES**

By **H. Avetisyan, A. Gnuni, G. Sargsyan, A. Bobokhyan**

*IAE Publication, Yerevan, 2025, 221 p.*

Sacred places have played a significant role throughout human history. Often, social life was formed and developed around them. The present work examines the sacred places of historical Syunik within the broader context of the Armenian Highland, aiming to identify the specific features that have shaped the sacred history of this region. Accordingly, the authors discuss theoretical issues,

address the natural-historical environment and the history of research, attempt to classify the sacred places of Syunik, and explore the peculiarities of their topography. The book is intended for archaeologists, ethnographers, cultural historians, art historians, as well as for a wider audience of readers.



## ARMENIANS IN THE PERSIANATE WORLD

A Collection of Materials (in Armenian)

Edited by **Hasmik Kirakosyan**

*Yerevan, Matenadaran, 2025, 168 p.*

The collection examines the Persian lexical material found in late-medieval bilingual Persian–Armenian and Armenian–Persian manuscript dictionaries; the circumstances under which mixed (mulamma‘) Armenian–Persian–Turkish poetry emerged in 16th–17th-century Armenian poetry within the multicultural Near Eastern milieu; the bridging role of 19th-century Constantinopolitan Armenians and the Iranian intellectuals based in Constantinople in fostering cultural rapprochement between East and West; the teaching of Persian in Armenian schools, the compilation of relevant textbooks, and the introduction of new instructional methods; the use of expressive means of classical Persian poetry in the folk song tradition of the Julfa Armenians who had resettled in India; the establishment of a press for Arabic-script literature in India; and the pedagogical commonalities observed in Armenian and Iranian folk tales. It is intended for philologists, orientalists, students of humanities faculties, and readers interested in the topic.