

“The Turkish rule over the Armenian land destroyed the Armenian national culture, at the same time, and for that reason, it also weakened the universal human organism, because it made one of its creative organs inactive and backward. Here is a circumstance that should be seriously taken into consideration every time the issue of the national struggle is raised. If the outcome of the struggle between nations is determined solely by the superiority of physical strength, the victory can be and often is a loss for the entire civilization in general, therefore, also for the winner himself.”

Hovhannes Qajaznuni

**THE INTELLIGENCE-ESPIONAGE AND POLITICAL-DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES
OF THE REPRESENTATION OF KEMALIST TURKEY IN THE REPUBLIC OF
ARMENIA IN 1920-1922**

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Abstract

Armenia has always been in the domain of the geopolitical interests of Turkey and Russia (Tsarist and Bolshevik). Both tried to make an influence on the geopolitical situation in the Republic of Armenia, being constantly informed about the ongoing processes through their secret services. The destructive espionage-conspiratorial activities of Turkish-Muslim spies, in general, Turkey, in the Republic of Armenia, mainly refer to the period between 1914 and 1920. A small part of far-sighted and moderate Bolsheviks soon realized that Turkey has not changed and there is nothing Bolshevik-revolutionary about them, that Kemalist Turkey is just the worthy heir of the Young Turks, which is engaged in the continuation of pan-Turkic plans. One of the best examples of this is the espionage activities carried out by Turkey in 1918-1920. And this time their goal was to destroy Soviet Armenia, continuing the destructive actions undertaken since the declaration of the First Republic, involving Azerbaijani spies as well. Most of the Armenian Bolsheviks did not understand this and believed that Kemalist Turkey was an ally of Soviet Russia and a stronghold for the spread of communism in the countries of the East, which had allegedly declared war on

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international imperialism, which had wrapped the Treaty of Sèvres around Turkey's neck, against which allegedly "the Turkish worker had rebelled." It was, of course, the greatest fraud and deception, which in practice benefited both Kemalist Turkey and Bolshevik Russia.

Keywords: Armenia, Turkey, intelligence-espionage, spy, diplomatic representative, consul, Armenian SSR Emergency Committee.

In general, the corrosive intelligence-espionage activities of Turkish-Muslim spies in the Republic of Armenia are covered to a certain extent, but it mainly refers to the period 1914-1920.¹ As for their activities in the period after 1920, at the beginning of the existence of the Soviet power, we are almost completely unaware of that.

Armenia has always been in the domain of the geopolitical interests of Turkey and Russia (Tsarist and Bolshevik). Both tried to make an influence on the geopolitical situation in the Republic of Armenia, being constantly informed about the ongoing processes through their secret services. As a result, according to the ambiguous conclusion of A. Andersen, a specialist of Caucasian studies from the University of Victoria, British Columbia (Canada), in the early 1920s, particularly at the San Remo Conference of the Great Powers (April 18-26, 1920), that is, already at the end of April, the leaders of the Entente European powers, in their turn, made it clear to the three republics that they "washed their hands" and that they should not expect serious support from any of the Allies. Whether it was a mere coincidence or not, on April 26-27, Soviet Russian troops crossed the border of Azerbaijan, and the next day, April 28, 1920 the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan fell. Months later, Soviet military aggression also targeted Armenia and Georgia, causing them to cease to exist as independent states.²

As early as June 14, 1920, the military representative of the RSFSR in Georgia, General P. Sitin³ refers to their activities in the Transcaucasia, one of the main objectives of which was to be informed about Turkey, the Transcaucasia and Armenia, the protection of their interests and, if necessary, countering the Turkish special

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² Andrew Andersen 1918-1921: The Struggle of Georgian Diplomacy for the De-Jure Recognition of Georgia and the Consolidation of Georgia's Borders, P. 11. See: <https://bit.ly/49BV8JW>.

³ Pavel P. Sitin (18.07.1870-22.08.1938) - Major General of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the RSFSR, in 1918 - commander of the southern front of the Russian SFSR, and already on June 3, 1920 after the adoption of the law on the establishment of the Institute of Military Representatives by the Government of the RSFSR, P. Sitin became the military representative of the RSFSR, that is, the military attaché in Georgia (1920-1921). Ganin 2014b: 132; Ganin 2009: 353, 445, 662.

services. According to him, the work carried out by them had the following directions. The whole work could be divided into three parts.

1. Collecting information about Crimea, Asia Minor (Mustafa Kemal Pasha), Armenia and Persia.⁴ P. Sitin considered the study of new steps taken by the Entente against Russia as one of the next priority problems, as well as the discovery of Mustafa Kemal's true intentions against the Russian state in connection with the possible advance of Turkish troops to the borders of the Caucasus Mountains.⁵

2. Monitoring the situation around the armed forces of Armenia.⁶ The government of the RSFSR emphasized the strengthening of their positions in the Caucasus, and in this regard, in matters related to Armenia, P. Sitin emphasized the need to take further steps in that direction, posing the task of creating intelligence cells in Constantinople. General P. Sitin also mentioned the important fact that he sent an investigation group to the area of operations controlled by K. Karabekir Pasha and Armenia. P. Sitin also emphasized the fact that they planned to create a strong core in Constantinople in the near future, through which a permanent connection between Tiflis and Constantinople would be ensured, which, according to the military attaché, would enable monitoring the events taking place in Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Syria and Mesopotamia. According to the report of P. Sitin, the military attaché of the RSFSR in Tiflis, an external observation of the Armenian mission was established, from which the necessary information was obtained in order to achieve these investigative goals and obtain the necessary information.⁷

In this context, special services and investigative bodies of the First Republic and Soviet Armenia had serious problems. The only difference was that the formation of the security system of Soviet Armenia and the subsequent processes were constantly controlled by the relevant bodies of the RSFSR.

At the first stage of Sovietization, diplomatic-consular representations of the Republic of Georgia, Soviet Russia, Persia and Kemalist Turkey operated in the Republic of Armenia. The existing Persian and Turkish representations were active in the capital city of Yerevan.

It is known that after the declaration of an armistice between the Republic of Armenia and Turkey in November 1920, the representation of the command of the Eastern Front of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was established in Yerevan, which had functions endowed with political powers.

Back on December 3, 1920, in a letter addressed to the RA government, the commander of the Turkish Eastern Front, Kyazım Karabekir Pasha, reported: "Captain Behaeddin was appointed as liaison officer of the Eastern Army General Command in

⁴ Ganin 2014a: 209.

⁵ Ganin 2014a: 209; Hambardzumyan 2021: 119-132.

⁶ Ganin 2014a: 221-222.

⁷ Ganin 2014a: 221.

Yerevan for the pursuit of several points of the treaty between Turkey and Armenia”.⁸ In essence, he received broad powers to take steps to enforce the terms of the no longer legally valid treaty (December 2-3, 1920) by signing the Treaty of Alexandropol.

It is evident that Behaeddin was appointed as a mere liaison officer, but not content with that, the latter reserved for himself the powers of a diplomatic representative. Based on all that, the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian SSR immediately started clarifying this very important issue. On January 3, 1921, in a letter addressed to Behaeddin, Foreign People’s Commissar Alexander Bekzadyan (brother of Tigran Bekzadyan, who worked during the First Republic - V.V.) raised a question about his powers. Noting that, apart from the mandate to monitor the implementation of some points of the agreement signed in Alexandropol with the former allied government, the Soviet government of the RA was not aware of any other authority or function of Behaeddin, the Foreign Affairs Commissariat directly demanded to be informed about the nature of his mission and the scope of his activities.⁹ On January 25, 1921, on the basis of the request of the People’s Foreign Affairs Commissariat of the Armenian SSR, Behaeddin presented the mandate given by K. Karabekir, according to which until the arrival of the authorized representative of the government of the Turkish National Assembly, Behaeddin would be the representative of the main command of the Eastern Front in the Armenian SSR.¹⁰

Finally, in April 1921, a Turkish consulate was established in Alexandropol, with which the Armenian government maintained relations through the Foreign Affairs Commissariat. In the documents, it was called “Representation of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in Armenia”. From the very first days of their establishment, the Turkish representations in Armenia were mainly engaged in espionage, conspiratorial and subversive activities and acted as an expression of the interests of Muslims living in Soviet Armenia, further expanding the scope of their activities.

According to the facts provided by A. Virabyan, the Soviet state initially had good relations with Kemalist Turkey; active trade was going on between the countries. The main trade routes passed through Armenia: the Margara bridge (Armavir Province of the Armenian-Turkish border) and the Kars-Gyumri (Alexandropol, after the establishment of Soviet power, they began to call it Leninakan) railway. The railway reached Erzurum; later the Turks stretched it all the way to Ankara. From the end of the 1920s, relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey became largely the monopoly of the central government, and the Turkish consulate in Yerevan gradually lost its meaning and importance. As a result, it was decided to leave one representation of Turkey in Transcaucasia - a consulate in Tbilisi, where it operated until 1937.

The Turkish consulate in Yerevan was located in the center of the city, near the current Russian Drama Theater named after Stanislavsky. However, the building was

⁸ NAA, fund 114, inv. 1, list 6, sheets 1, 5, 87.

⁹ NAA, fund 114, inv. 2, list 7, sheet 22.

¹⁰ NAA, fund 113, inv. 3, list 11, sheets 3-4.

not preserved. As for the diplomatic representation in Gyumri, ironically, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) office is located in that building today.¹¹

Captain Behaeddin was the plenipotentiary representative of Turkey in Soviet Armenia, on whose mandate it was written: "For the pursuit of several points of the treaty between Turkey and Armenia (Treaty of Alexandropol - V. V.), appoint Captain Behaeddin as an officer of the Eastern Army".¹² It continued to function even after the establishment of the Soviet regime, until September 1923, when it was reorganized into a consulate. As of February 7, 1922, the Turkish representation in Yerevan had 11 employees, including 6 soldiers (representation guards), a driver and his assistant. All employees of the Turkish consular representation were Turkish citizens, except for the driver.¹³

The Turkish consular service was also active in Alexandropol, which began operating there after the forced withdrawal of Turkish troops. Here, too, the Turkish consulate engaged in espionage-subversive activities. The Soviet intelligence agencies in Transcaucasia were interested in revealing the activities of the Turkish consulate and Turkey in general. In particular, the work of the Soviet military-political representations, special services and military attachés in the center of the Transcaucasian region, in Tiflis, was particularly important, from where they obtained important information about the military-political plans of Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, and the North Caucasus.

The intentions of the Turkish side, including the known and unknown steps of the Turkish representation, also taking into consideration the fact that Turkey was looking for and had friends in Transcaucasia, in the form of Soviet Russia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, becomes obvious. And in Georgia at that time, according to P. Sitin, there were people in the political and military spheres who were inclined to an alliance against Russia¹⁴, whose actions were ultimately directed against Armenia as well.

It is important to note that the Turkish consular representation carried out activities of the most disrespectful and provocative nature, especially during the February 1921 anti-Soviet uprising led by the ARF. That political moment is absolutely important, because at that same time Soviet-Turkish negotiations were going on in Moscow, in which the questions, related to Armenia, occupied an important place among the discussed issues, and there was the issue of the Armenian SSR's participation in that conference. It becomes obvious from the combination of a number of facts that the creation of a chaotic situation in Armenia was completely beneficial to Turkey and its special services.

The representation of Kemalist Turkey in Yerevan and its leader Behaeddin carried out particularly dynamic activities during the days of the February 1921 anti-Soviet uprising. Behaeddin congratulates the "Committee for the Salvation of the

¹¹ See <https://bit.ly/4gAXgE8>

¹² NAA, fund 114, inv. 1, list 6, sheet 87.

¹³ Yesayan 1967: 400.

¹⁴ Yesayan A. 1967, 222.

Motherland” and provides for large-scale anti-Soviet actions. On March 18, 1921, Simon Vratsyan, the chairman of the “Committee for the Salvation of the Motherland” addressed Behaeddin, requesting the return of Armenian prisoners of war from Turkish captivity, arms and ammunition, and other military assistance.¹⁵ Because of these and other shameful applications, Vratsyan rightly received severe criticism. The appeal of Behaeddin on March 22, 1921, to the Armenian demonstrators gathered in front of his apartment is noteworthy. “I am deeply moved by your warm words. We, the peoples of the East, have been in constant wars with each other, which have always been taken advantage of by foreigners. I hope that from now on, becoming friends, we will live peacefully and be useful to each other”.¹⁶ Behaeddin’s provocative and unfit for a diplomat actions were not ignored by local authorities, and in April 1921, immediately after the February civil wars, they declared him “persona non grata”. On the grounds of unconcealed interference in the internal affairs of Soviet Armenia and direct cooperation with the leaders of the anti-Soviet rebellion, the Revolutionary Committee of the Republic of Armenia on May 12, 1921, guided by the decision of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist (workers) Party, demanded the Turkish authorities to recall its diplomatic representative Behaeddin¹⁷, and the latter left Yerevan.

At the same time, really pursuing this issue of fundamental importance, the leadership of the Armenian SSR addressed a request to Boris Legrand, the plenipotentiary representative of Soviet Russia in the Soviet republics of Transcaucasia, who in response to this request, on May 17, 1921, in a telegram addressed to the Foreign People’s Commissariat of the Armenian SSR A. Mravyan, gave the following guiding conclusion of his leadership: “Your decision about Behaeddin is absolutely correct”.¹⁸ And already during the Kars Conference (September 26 - October 13, 1921), Behaeddin, taking advantage of the opportunity, delivered a provocative letter on September 27 to A. Mravyan, in which he welcomed the Foreign People’s Commissariat of the Armenian SSR that arrived in Kars “to realize the ideal of the union of the two peoples” and pointed out in an ambiguous and provocative manner: “You wanted to dishonor me in the eyes of my revolutionary nation, and I will prove to history that I am a loyal revolutionary. Time and events will prove to you that you were wrong.” However, it is absolutely important to state the fact that referring to that poisonous and provocative allusion of Behaeddin, the ex-representative who was expelled from Yerevan, A. Mravyan left his precise and appropriate resolution without hesitation: “Leave without an answer”¹⁹, which is already a strong characteristic in terms of completing the portrait of A. Mravyan.

¹⁵ NAA, fund 114, inv. 2, list 23, sheets 505-506.

¹⁶ Azat Hayastan, 1921, N 28.

¹⁷ Yesayan A. A. 1967, 61.

¹⁸ NAA, fund 114, inv. 2, list 45, sheet 43.

¹⁹ NAA, fund 113, inv. 3, list 23, sheets 26-27.

Turkey, taking advantage of its presence in the territory of Armenia, carried out conspiratorial and destabilizing activities through the consular service and the spying network that was around it, against which the secret intelligence bodies of both Soviet Armenia and Russia took certain countermeasures in 1920-1922. In particular, Russia, of course, acting secretly, created its own spying network in Armenia, with which the Armenian Soviet special services probably coordinated their actions. Military representative of the RSFSR in Tiflis, General P. Sitin noted that already in December 1920-early 1921, they had their own intelligence network in and around Transcaucasia, according to which Pogorelov and Litvinov were sent to Armenia, Tairov and Chuikov to the Armenian mission, and Markov, Vasiliev, Nordman, Yumatov, Khomyakov to Tiflis, Przhebitisky, Kosiv, Redlich, Zabelsky, Remezov, Wolman, Kostev, Semyon, Kartsev, Sarychev, Bakhradze to Akhaltskha, Grigoriev to Akhalkalak, Dolin to Constantinople, Zhuravlyov, Levchenko, Ivanov to the French representation in Tiflis, and Petrovich to the English representation, etc.²⁰ The main objective of the special intelligence services included in that extensive network became the acquisition of operational information about the steps taken by Turkey, Azerbaijan, the Entente and other countries in the region, in which an important place was also allocated to Soviet Armenia and the Turkish-Azerbaijani corrosive espionage operations undertaken against it.

As during the period of the Young Turks, as well as with the establishment of the Soviet rule, Turkey's policy towards the Republic of Armenia remained unchanged, and they, taking advantage of the favorable situation created for them, made every effort to impose their demands on Armenia as early as mid-December 1920, demanding from the Armenian National Committee not to interfere with the transfer of a significant amount of horses and munitions to Iğdır, at the same time obtaining nutrition for the Turkish army without any obstacles.²¹ The Foreign Trade Commissariat of Soviet Armenia tried to oppose it. Al. Bekzadyan, who presented a complaint to the Caucasus Bureau of the Russian Communist (workers) Party's Central Committee on behalf of the Armenian National Committee, in which he considered the implementation of the contract signed by the allied government with the Turkish command to be impermissible and unreasonable, requested that S. Orjonikidze express his certain attitude in this regard.²² It did not give special results. The arguments presented by Al. Bekzadyan do not pass. And despite the fact that Bekzadyan even demanded that Behaeddin be replaced by another person²³, the issue again entered a deadlock, and after that, more favorable conditions for anti-Armenian activities were created for the representative of Turkey, which was due to the fact that Moscow and Ankara were still in sufficiently friendly relations.

²⁰ Ganin 2014a: 223.

²¹ NAA, fund 114, inv. 1, list 6, sheet 20.

²² NAA, fund 114, inv. 1, list 6, sheets 32-34.

²³ NAA, fund 114, inv. 1, list 6, sheet 31.

This is also confirmed by the information of the Emergency Committee of the Armenian SSR on September 17, 1921, which confirms Turkey's intentions towards the Republic of Armenia. From the summary of the Emergency Committee, first of all, the fact that at that time the protection of the Armenian SSR border with Turkey was very weak and the border checkpoints were not visible, and in many cases they were located at a considerable distance from each other, and secondly, many Turks breached the Armenian SSR border and penetrated into Azerbaijan²⁴, which was facilitated by the Turkish diplomatic representation in Armenia. And already from the summary of the Emergency Committee of the Armenian SSR on November 15, 1921, it becomes clear that Turkey had a reliable ally and supporter in its anti-Armenian activities in the form of the Musavatists, who, having their base in Turkey, planned to carry out intended underground operations in the Caucasus²⁵, and certainly first of all in Soviet Armenia against the Armenian people and their peaceful life.

And so, the main hub of Turkey's provocative-espionage and conspiratorial activity towards Armenia was the Turkish representation in Yerevan. The espionage-conspiratorial practices of the Turkish representation were manifested in the fact that, not infrequently, Turkish officials and Turkish citizens, when crossing the border, moving in the territory of Soviet Armenia, transporting various goods and other cargo, violated diplomatic norms and the laws of the Armenian SSR, which often led to conflict situations. Thus, the sovereign rights of the Republic of Armenia were violated, especially when the Turkish representation reserved the right to take the Muslim population living in the territory of Armenia under its auspices, including creating a spy-detective agency network among them, the ultimate goal of which was to undermine the foundations of our statehood. In other words, the Turkish consular services in Armenia, disguised under the name of diplomatic immunity, carried out anti-Armenian activities in those days.

The fact that the Turkish consular representation in Alexandropol claimed to use the right of code-telegrams and secret envelopes was also a reason for the emergence of conflict situations between Turkey and Soviet Armenia, which was just to hide the espionage-research activities carried out by it. Naturally, the RA government, aware of all this, rejected the two-sided demand of the Turkish side. The People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian SSR, in its application to the Turkish Grand National Assembly's government representation in Yerevan, reminded the Turkish consulate in Alexandropol about the need to respect the principles of the decree on "Consular Representations".²⁶

As a result of all this, the Turkish consular representation operating in Armenia frequently violated the laws, the officials made encroachments against the security of Armenia, which forced the Armenian authorities to take harsh methods against the

²⁴ Virabyan, Kirimyan 2017, N 125, 130.

²⁵ Virabyan and Kirimyan 2017: 143.

²⁶ Yesayan 1967: 402.

Turkish representation. In particular, it was decided to apply blocking actions for the illegal interference in the internal affairs of Soviet Armenia, which was expressed in the fact that the Turkish delegation, taking an anti-Soviet stance, attempted to incite anti-Soviet sentiments and civil war. All these circumstances forced the representative of the Turkish government in Yerevan, Behaeddin, to be declared *persona non grata* by the Government of Soviet Armenia and the Council of People's Commissariat, and he was released from his position as a consul.

With the efforts of the special services of the RA, the Emergency Committee of the Armenian SSR, it became obvious that the representatives of the Turkish consulate, relying on the spying network created by them, engaged in espionage-conspiratorial activities. According to the Emergency Committee of Armenia, decision of the Presidium of the People's Commissariat of the Republic of October 7, 1921, Bashir Gumbat-oğlu, an employee of the Turkish representation, was accused of robbery and espionage, on the basis of which he was expelled from the Republic of Armenia.²⁷

The representative of the Turkish Commander-in-Chief of the 11th Army in Alexandropol stood out for his espionage activities against the Soviet government. In this regard, in a letter addressed to M. Velikanov, the head of the Russian military group stationed in Armenia, on June 6, 1921, the Foreign People's Commissariat of the Armenian SSR stated: "Captain Teffik, the representative of the Turkish commander-in-chief attached to the 11th army in Alexandropol, occupies the building of the station of Alexandropol with all his staff, although a building was allocated for him in the city.

Despite numerous demands from the railroad, city and military authorities, Captain Teffik refuses to vacate the station building. His persistence makes one think that he does not want to leave that point, as a perfectly suitable point for espionage, because he watches the movement of troops, food, etc. In addition, having the right to have a bodyguard of 12 people, he actually has several hundred men (undercover deserters), who are allegedly hiding from the Turkish authorities in the city and in the villages of the province of Alexandropol".²⁸

As a result of the examination of a number of documents, it is also revealed that during this extremely vital period, despite the agreements reached in Moscow and Kars in 1921, Turkish spies carried out quite large-scale activities in the territory of Soviet Armenia, not only grossly violating the rights of the Armenian Soviet state, but also trying to adapt their planned geopolitical goals. In particular, from the extremely limited data of the archives, it becomes known not only about their espionage-subversive activities, but also about the illegal transfer of weapons and ammunition from the territory of the Republic of Armenia to Turkey, widely using the opportunities of the Turkish representation in Yerevan, the circumstance of diplomatic immunity and other factors.

²⁷ Yesayan 1967: 403.

²⁸ NAA, fund 114, inv. 4, list 21, sheet 45.

Thus, there are interesting facts about the Turkish espionage-subversive activities in Armenia in the March 1922 newsletter of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian SSR. In it, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs provides facts about the espionage and investigative activities of the Turkish representative in Yerevan, Mukhiddin Bey.²⁹ From this document, we learn about the events around the Alexandropol border crossing, the search of trains and their passengers by Turkish, and the results of the search were evidence of espionage-smuggling activities carried out by the Turks. However, the facts also showed that the Turkish representation, shamelessly denying the existing facts, even reserves the right to present a complaint-memorandum. This is evidenced by the statement of protest of Mukhiddin, the representative of Turkey in Yerevan, addressed to the Foreign Affairs Commissariat of the USSR, where he even indulged in a number of completely unacceptable and indecent expressions.³⁰ From the thorough investigation of the intelligence officers of the Armenian SSR Emergency Committee, it was definitely stated that the Turkish representation was engaged in large-scale armory trade and sent weapons to Iğdir under the guise of official business trips and through commissioners. The document mentioned the important fact that people on business trips always crossed the Armenian-Turkish border and left for Turkey armed, but returned unarmed. The state security authorities also confirmed the important fact that secret spies were regular visitors to the Turkish mission in Yerevan, including people recruited from local Armenian Muslims, who constantly provided the Turkish side with information about the internal situation of Armenia and Yerevan. It also appeared that a Turk was arrested while buying illegal weapons on those same days. In connection with the fact, the Turkish representative office made a complaint and demanded his release, as if nothing had happened, but the Armenian side expressed its disagreement in this regard.³¹

From the investigation conducted by the Armenian SSR authorities, it was found that the deputy of the Turkish representative in Yerevan, Khalil Arif Bey, who was one of the local Muslims, in addition to his direct duties, engaged in espionage-destructive activities against Armenia, being the head of the agency network of the Turkish representation. Khalil Arif Bey personally managed the functions of obtaining information about Yerevan and its surroundings and personally presented reports about it to the consul. And despite the fact that Khalil Arif Bey had his own apartment in Yerevan, he always spent the night in the office of the Turkish representation, using it as a meeting place for the unhindered reception of various suspicious "guests", and in particular secret spies, often receiving local Muslims at night, who were passing him the information about the situation in Armenia. On March 20, after the arrest of Ramiz Osman Oğli, who was arrested during the illegal purchase of Mauser and Browning

²⁹ NAA, fund 112, inv. 3, list 71, sheets 2-3.

³⁰ NAA, fund 112, inv. 3, list 71, sheets 2-3.

³¹ NAA, fund 112, inv. 3, list 71, sheet 4.

pistols, it became known that he was just one of the spies recruited by the secret spying network. It was reported about the confession made by him.³²

Despite the agreements reached in Moscow and Kars, the Turkish side frequently violated the sovereign rights of the Armenian SSR by encroaching on the security of Armenia and widely using its spying network in Armenia. Due to the complications caused by the difficult relations of the RSFSR with Turkey and certain hidden internal contradictions and the fact that they were politically constrained, the Emergency Committee departments of Armenia were vigilant and not indifferent to Turkish aspirations.

It is also known from other sources that the Turkish mission in Yerevan often received all kinds of support from Iğdır. It was also found out about the movement of the suspicious convoy, which was secretly brought to Yerevan accompanied by 4-5 Turks. Only after that, the latter transported the weapons purchased through the mission to Iğdır without the appropriate permission from the Foreign Affairs Commissariat of the Armenian SSR.³³

From the investigation, it became known about many new facts that Turks or the messengers of the Turkish mission sent to Iğdır for service purposes were going there with a significant number of weapons, but they returned completely empty. It was found out from reliable sources that the weapons were bought from people of different nationalities, among whom were Tatars, Russians, as well as Armenians. Omar Lufti Bey, who replaced Behaeddin and Mukhiddin Bey in February 1922, also did not show loyalty to the authorities of the Armenian SSR and were not inclined to any legal activities, openly seeking to act as defenders of the Turkish citizens living in Soviet Armenia and the Muslim population in general, to take under their jurisdiction the settlement of problems related to all Muslims living in Armenia, which the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian SSR tried to actively oppose.

And former consul Lufti Bey personally managed the process of acquiring weapons by his subordinates, always maintaining caution. The Armenian special services relied only on concrete facts in their actions to avoid the danger of political complications and diplomatic tensions. Thus, it was found out by them that the servant of former consul Omar Lufti bought a "Mauser" pistol with 10 bullets for two golden liras. The report of the Emergency Committee also stated that they were unable to identify the seller of the weapon. And the driver of the Turkish mission sold his own "Mauser" pistol during his trip to Iğdır for 15 banknotes, and after returning to Yerevan, he bought a new "Browning" pistol.³⁴

On February 27, 1922, according to the list of permanent employees and escorts of the Turkish delegation submitted to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian SSR, it had the following positions: representative, senior secretary, his

³² NAA, fund 112, inv. 3, list 71, sheet 4.

³³ NAA, fund 112, inv. 3, list 71, sheet 4.

³⁴ NAA, fund 112, inv. 3, list 71, sheets 1, 4.

deputy, translator, driver, driver's assistant, and a guard consisting of 5 people. Apart from the translator, who is of Armenian origin and a citizen of the Armenian SSR, the other employees of the representative office, who were also Turkish citizens, were armed.³⁵

During the entire period of their activity, the employees of the Turkish representative office in Yerevan were also engaged in the illegal transportation of weapons from Soviet Armenia to Turkey through smuggling, which is particularly confirmed by the information prepared by the Emergency Committee on March 22, 1922, about the employees of the Turkish representative office who were going to Iğdir armed, and from there returned unarmed, making the purchases of weapons under the direct auspices of the representation. According to the information of the Emergency Committee of the Armenian SSR, the former representative Omar Lutfi Bey personally managed the purchase of weapons, along with it, he collected intelligence information about the situation of Soviet Armenia, along with information about food supply.³⁶

In general, the relations of the Armenian SSR authorities with the Turkish mission in Yerevan were tense. The Armenian SSR Emergency Committee for Combating Corruption, Fraud, and Abuse, in connection with the illegal sale of arms by the Turkish mission, was appealing both to the Foreign Affairs Commissariat of the Armenian SSR and to the Moscow authorities. Thus, Rusanov, the Chairman of the Transcaucasian Emergency Committee, in his telegram of May 22, 1922, addressed to the Chairman of the Emergency Committee of the Armenian SSR Sh. Amirkhanyan³⁷ and the Foreign People's Commissariat, refers to the new order and instructions given by Kemal Atatürk to the consular services on how to act in Transcaucasia, and in particular in Soviet Armenia. Apparently, in an attempt to counter the counter-intelligence countermeasures of the Soviet authorities, Rusanov also mentioned Kemal's directive, according to which he was strictly ordered to find out the possible facts of the espionage activities allegedly carried out by the Soviet consular institutions in Turkey under the threat of death. On behalf of the Transcaucasian Emergency Committee, Rusanov warned the competent authorities of the Armenian SSR to avoid serious diplomatic incidents and possible undesirable complications; one should act carefully and carefully. He ordered them to refrain from giving discreditable and dubious assignments to our consular services and through them to their employees. The sub-departmental institutions were ordered to deal independently with the Soviet consular services in Turkey. However, at the same time, in order not to block the functions in general and to ensure the continuity of the performed works, it was ordered that in case of urgent problems with the consular

³⁵ NAA, fund 114, inv. 2, list 62, sheets 126-127.

³⁶ NAA, fund 113, inv. 3, list 71, sheet 4.

³⁷ Shavarsh M. Amirkhanyan (15.11.1894-26.08.1959) – Armenian revolutionary, party figure and statesman. He was an active participant and one of the leaders of the 1920 May uprising. From January 1921, he was the chairman of the Emergency Committee of Soviet Armenia and headed it until May 1924. Agulyan *et al.* 1965: 12-14; Sargsyan 2005: 219.

services of Russia, it should be done only with the permission and authority of the Transcaucasian Emergency Committee. It was required to approve this order upon receipt.³⁸ It is obvious that every seemingly small detail of the intelligence work was absolutely important, because Armenia was in an extremely complicated and tense geopolitical environment in the presence of Turkish spies. Already in July 1922, after the dissolution of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of Soviet Armenia, relations with the Turkish diplomatic mission in Yerevan and the consulate in Alexandropol were carried out through the People's Commissariat of the Armenian SSR and the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

And already on August 9, 1922, in the secret report submitted to the Emergency Committee of the Armenian SSR³⁹, Deputy Chairman of the Emergency Committee Mosinov informed that the list of Turkish citizens includes employees of the Turkish mission in Yerevan, Hajibeklinski and Khadil Mamed Oğli, who, according to the available information, are natives of Yerevan⁴⁰, accusing them of espionage.

On August 22, 1922, the Chairman of the Emergency Committee of the Armenian SSR, Sh. Amirkhanyan provided information about a number of persons of Muslim origin suspected of espionage to the Department of Foreign Affairs of Council of People's Commissars. According to it, a certain Khalil Fei Zulabekov, who was in Yerevan before the war, and during the 1917 revolution, was in Ganja, where he entered the military school attached to the Musavat army, but left it incomplete and returned to Yerevan. From the letter presented by Amirkhanyan, it became clear about his activities during the days of February 1921 events. At that time, Khalil and his father, Ali Bey, who owned a trading office, established contacts with Turkish spies. According to other facts, Arif Hajibeklinski, who later became a Turkish citizen, established contacts with the secretary of the Turkish mission and in those days handed over a number of communist Muslims who were hiding in the Turkish representation to the allies. It was also revealed that his two brothers were also involved in his espionage activities, one of whom, Kagom, was in military service in Turkey, and the other brother was the representative of Azerbaijan in Kars.⁴¹

According to A. Virabyan, the Turkish diplomatic representation in Yerevan operated until 1927. The first ambassador was Ali Mehmet. Later, he was replaced by

³⁸ NAA, fund 112, inv. 3, list 71, sheet 14.

³⁹ Armenian SSR Emergency Committee - On December 6, 1920, according to the decree of the Armenian National Committee, the Armenian SSR Emergency Committee was established, which from June 1921 became the Armenian SSR Emergency Commission fighting against counter-revolution, fraud, abuse and espionage. On June 27, 1922, the Central Committee of the Armenian SSR approved its Charter, one of the main goals of which was not only the fight against counter-revolutionary and official crimes, but also the fight against all manifestations of espionage (informational, political, military, economic), the protection of railways and borders (Manukyan 2002: 83-84).

⁴⁰NAA, fund 112, inv. 3, list 71, sheet 18.

⁴¹NAA, fund 113, inv. 3, list 71, sheet 21.

others, mostly military figures.⁴² In the autumn of 1922, the Turkish consulate in Alexandropol was headed by Hakkı Bey, who had 8 employees⁴³; throughout their activities in Soviet Armenia they never stopped destructive and intelligence-conspiratorial actions against the Armenian statehood, seeking to undermine its foundations. According to A. Virabyan, the employees of the Turkish consulate in Yerevan were mainly Azerbaijanis who fell under the Stalinist repression of the 1930s. Initially, they were recruited by Soviet intelligence, but later the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs accused them of playing a double game. As a result, former officers of special services were also punished by them.⁴⁴

Thus, as we can see, the intelligence data obtained by the special services of the Republic of Armenia documents the Azeri-Turkish machinations against Armenia reveal the intention of Turkey and Azerbaijan to violate its territorial integrity and undermine the security of the Republic of Armenia with espionage-destructive activities. However, this did not happen, because all the provocative espionage and conspiratorial steps against the Armenian SSR were prevented by the special services and authorities of Armenia.

At the same time, one more important conclusion should be made. Governments change and it seems that the policies change, too. From that point of view, the conference of the peoples of the East held on September 1-7, 1920, was launched, where a call was made to destroy "imperialist Armenia", which was allegedly preparing to attack "revolutionary" Turkey and Soviet Azerbaijan in alliance with Georgia and Persia. The problem was posed in such a way that if it was not possible to establish contact with Kemalist Turkey within the shortest period of time, and if Bolshevik Russia did not provide it with real military and political assistance, the Turkish nationalist movement would be suppressed, which would lead to the suppression of the revolutionary movement in the East. In other words, they had to attack Armenia together with the "Turkish revolutionary troops".

However, historical facts clearly show that it was completely different in the case of Turkey. The ARF was a convenient target for the Turkish nationalist Kemalists to give a false tone to their hostile policy towards Soviet Armenia, practically sticking to the letter and spirit of the Alexandropol Treaty signed with the former government. Based on that substantive term and essentially being the infamous heir of the Young Turks, M. Kemal's government continued its political relations with Soviet Russia up to and including the signing of the 1921 Soviet-Turkish Treaty. It seems that after December 2, 1920, Turkey, disguised as a Bolshevik, a country proclaiming communist slogans and befriending Bolshevik Russia, had to adopt completely new friendly approaches towards Soviet Armenia, which was blindly believed by the majority of Armenian Bolsheviks, and that also played an important role in the infamous fall of Kars at the end of October. At that time, the Turkish soldier wore a red army uniform, which allegedly inspired some of

⁴² See <https://bit.ly/4gAXgE8>

⁴³ NAA, fund 114, inv. 2, list 159, sheet 98.

⁴⁴ See <https://bit.ly/4gAXgE8>

the demoralized soldiers during the anti-state riots of May 1920 that they were Bolsheviks and that there was no need to fight against them, which at that crucial moment of the Turkish-Armenian war overwhelmed the Armenians with a defeatist mood. And although a small part of the most far-sighted and moderate Bolsheviks soon felt that Turkey not only has not changed and there is nothing Bolshevik-revolutionary about them, that Kemalist Turkey is just the worthy heir of the Young Turks, and continues pan-Turkic plans, this did not save the situation. One of the best examples of this is the espionage activities carried out by Turkey in 1918-1920, this time with the goal of destroying Soviet Armenia, continuing the destructive-conspiratorial actions undertaken since the declaration of the First Republic, involving Azerbaijani spies as well. Most of the Armenian Bolsheviks did not understand this and believed that Kemalist Turkey was an ally of Soviet Russia and a stronghold for the spread of communism in the countries of the East, which had allegedly declared war on international imperialism, which had wrapped the Treaty of Sèvres around Turkey's neck, against which allegedly "the Turkish worker had rebelled." It was, of course, the greatest fraud and deception, which in practice benefited both Kemalist Turkey and Bolshevik Russia.

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