



**Virabyan V. H., *Armenia and the Military-Political Representations of European Countries in Transcaucasia, 1917-1920. Yerevan: Vahe Mkrtchyan, 2024. - 410 pages + 2 inserts.***

In 2024, the “Vahe Mkrtchyan” publishing house, with the endorsement of the Chair of Armenian History at Kh. Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU), the Faculty of History and Social Sciences, and the ASPU Scientific Council, published the extensive and valuable monograph “**Armenia and the Military-Political Representations of European Countries in Transcaucasia (1917-1920)**” by **Vanik H. Virabyan**, Professor of the Chair of Armenian History at ASPU, Doctor of Historical Sciences. It was printed within the framework of the grant from the State Committee of Higher Education and Science, RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (grant number 217-6A102, “Armenia in the Context of Relations with Military-Political Representations of European Countries in Transcaucasia (1917-1920)”).

The work, intended for historians-internationalists, military historians, and the general reading public, presents the activities of European military-political representations in Transcaucasia from 1918 to 1920 during the years of the First Republic of Armenia, focusing on their role in the formation of statehood, territorial demarcation, and military development.

The Gospel truth that “he who seeks finds” is indeed profound. Regarding the elucidation of numerous key topics in the new and modern periods of Armenian history, including the Armenian Question and international diplomacy, it sometimes seems that everything has already been written and so meticulously studied by many esteemed Armenian and foreign authors in previous scientific phases that the issue has become completely exhausted in terms of documentary material, losing its historical significance. It seems clear that hardly any significant new discoveries are possible. However, recent studies on various aspects of the state life of the Republic of Armenia, the multifaceted internal and external processes undertaken by its authorities, the political forces that governed the country, and their individual leaders, which increasingly decisively reject former stereotypes, are gradually refuting this notion. It turns out that historical science is indeed inexhaustible, and perhaps there are many opportunities to re-examine “beaten” and “worn-out” topics from a new perspective and make fresh discoveries.

Vanik Virabyan has undertaken precisely such a work, and his quite successful research is written with scientific skill and at a high theoretical level. He approached the successful solution of the problem before him with great conscientiousness and responsibility, and he was able to uncover a number of important underlying layers and

“white pages” hidden within the military-political and diplomatic processes of the problematic 1918-1920 period of Armenian statehood, approaching the issue from a new perspective.

The research has contemporary relevance and urgency, which is determined by the specific scientific, practical, and applied significance of the work.

Vanik Virabyan’s entirely original and valuable monograph has an acceptable structure and a correctly proportional division, which serves to clarify the topic thoroughly.

The work consists of a preface, four sections, four chapters, 14 parts, conclusions in English and Russian, and a list of used literature. Notably, the book’s typesetting and design were carried out by the author himself.

The first section is titled **“The Stance of European Military-Political Missions on Interethnic Developments in Transcaucasia”** and consists of three parts.

The author, with the help of rich and diverse archival information, was able to first uncover the interethnic developments in Transcaucasia after the October Revolution of 1917 and the stance of the Entente powers on all of this. He presented the pro-Georgian strategy of Germany’s military-political mission in Transcaucasia and the Armenian-Georgian War of 1918. He then analyzed the consequences of the Armenian-Georgian territorial dispute and the results of the activities of European military-political missions in Transcaucasia.

The second section of the monograph is titled **“The Strategy of Great Britain’s Transcaucasian Military-Political Mission in Territorial Disputes and Issues of Military Assistance to Armenia: Failed Attempts of Support”** and consists of three parts. The author believes that this issue, in general, has not been addressed in historical scholarship. The revolutionary processes that erupted in Russia in 1917 led to the collapse of the Russian Empire, and the consequences of this and the unpredictable developments of historical-political processes led to the emergence of independent national states in Transcaucasia. In this chapter, V. Virabyan attempts to uncover and present the international status of the Republic of Armenia in the context of conflicts between the Volunteer Army of Southern Russia, Great Britain, and Azerbaijani intelligence and military-political services during 1918-1920.

He has given particular importance to the Armenian-Azerbaijani territorial conflict and the Karabakh-Zangezur issue, considering all of this, of course, within the overall framework of the activities of Great Britain’s military-political representation in Armenia and Transcaucasia. According to the author, however, a crucial reality is evident: that “the roots of the Karabakh-Artsakh capitulation in 1920 should be seen not only in the overt acquiescence and egocentric geopolitics of the Armenian Republic’s Entente-European allies but also as a result of the incapable policies of the political-military forces and governments that assumed governmental roles in different historical periods of the last 100 years, in which a decisive role was played by the pro-Azerbaijani-Turkish stance of the Russian Tsars, communist dictators, and modern rulers, who declared

themselves heirs of the former Russian states after the collapse of both Tsarist, Bolshevik, and USSR Russia, which also determined the fall and annexation of Artsakh to Azerbaijan” (pages 148-149).

In the chapter, no less priority was given to the suppression of the 1919 anti-Armenian rebellion of the Muslim population of the Republic of Armenia in Sotk and the restoration of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia, thanks to the favorable and opportune stance and personal disposition of the British military-political representative, Colonel Clive Temperley. The author concludes that the existing facts circulating about the Sotk-Zod events clearly attest to the insufficient reliability, fabrications, and serious factual inaccuracies in the works of Azerbaijani historians. Archival documents allow V. Virabyan to deeply understand what a fundamentally important problem the heroes of the glorious “Zod” operation solved by saving and preserving the ancient region of Sotk-Gegharkunik for Armenia, without which it would also be deprived of vital resources essential for its survival. A significant conclusion was reached: that, however, in the current historical period, it was again endangered 100 years later during the capitulatory war for the Republic of Armenia in 2020 and continues to pose a threat in the present historical process. The events of Zod-Sotk in 1919 also serve as a unique message to the Armenian people and future generations, demonstrating what the Armenian armed forces can be like and what they should do when defending their own borders and when the country’s vital military-political interests are threatened. This is despite the special emphasis placed on the Armenian people’s peaceful approach to resolving border-territorial issues, striving to resolve complex and disputed matters through negotiation and diplomatic means, and only resorting to military force after all other means are exhausted. In this regard, the author believes that it contains a “Haikian counsel” (pages 148-149).

In the third chapter, **“The Activities of Italian, French, and US Military-Political Missions in the Republic of Armenia,”** V. Virabyan successfully elucidated the details of the activities of the Italian military-political representation and the French military-political mission in Armenia and Transcaucasia during 1918-1920. The author also discussed the activities of the Allied Supreme Commissioner, American Colonel W. Haskell, the representative of the British mission, John Oliver Wardrop, and the British military-political representative, Colonel B. Stokes, during 1919-1920.

One of the most important issues addressed in the chapter is the question of the Allies supplying the Republic of Armenia with arms and ammunition, providing military assistance, and choosing the country’s foreign policy orientation within the general plans of the British military-political mission.

Finally, in the fourth section of the work, titled **“The Sunset of the Republic of Armenia and Allied Military-Political Missions: Desperate Hopes and Decline in the Soviet Version,”** the author, employing a unique approach, attempts to present the Russian-Armenian agreement of August 10, 1920, the Turkish-Armenian War of 1920,

and the fall of the Republic of Armenia in light of the stance and strategy of the military-political representations of European countries.

One of the most crucial components ensuring the scientific value and scholarly nature of V. Virabyan's monograph is the author's ability to uncover and comprehensively analyze the deep-seated factors, tendencies, and manifestations characterizing the general and specific regularities of the activities of European military-political representations in Transcaucasia, utilizing rich documentary material. The author has expanded and deepened the study of the issue, taking into account the problems of the new era and employing a comparative methodology to create a work that has made the history of the investigated problem important.

V. Virabyan examined the investigated problems using a methodological approach of historical-critical, comparative, and chronological analysis of convincing historical facts, primary sources, literature, and meticulous data. The study is rich in bold scientific conclusions, generalizations, and well-substantiated, convincing assessments, which sometimes contradict accepted scientific approaches. The author, stepping outside the boundaries of already known and established civilian perspectives on the discussed issue, relying on facts, presents the formation of Armenian statehood in 1918-1920 as merely a simultaneously unfolding internal conceptual idea and a significant historical-political reality.

In writing the work, the author collected, discovered, studied, systematized, and for the first time introduced into scientific circulation about 590 studies and other sources in Armenian, Russian, and English, ensuring the completeness of the monograph. This includes diverse archival documents from the National Archives of Armenia, newly discovered and published primary sources, monographs, memoirs, scientific and theoretical articles, periodical press materials, and electronic databases, which shed fresh light on the study of the topic and impart an even deeper and more scientific character to the work.

Another important merit of the monograph is that the author did not merely advocate for the policy adopted by European countries towards Armenia. With his critical approach, he skillfully separated and differentiated the material under study, drawing logical and correct conclusions. The author succeeded in maintaining the problem-oriented principle of the study, isolating and systematizing the main issues within the research, thereby forming a well-established work that presents a certain novelty.

We should add that, in parallel with this noteworthy monograph, Vanik Virabyan has published another valuable monograph in English<sup>1</sup>, dedicated to elucidating various aspects of the presented problem. This work also contains important conceptual

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<sup>1</sup> Virabyan V. H. Armenia in the Context of Relations with European Military-Political Representations in Transcaucasia [European military-political representations and the Republic of Armenia in 1917-1920], Yerevan, Vahe Mkrtchyan, 2024, 200 p. + 2 inserts.

evaluations and conclusions that stem from current challenges and are consistent with the deep trends of modern developments.

Summarizing the above, we can confidently state that the realization of the purpose adopted by this study, its relevance, the author's effective efforts to uncover historical truth, and most importantly, the scientific rigor of the work, provide grounds to note that Professor Vanik Virabyan's research fully complies with all scientific standards, has an imperative orientation, a high utility factor, and in terms of content orientation, fills a gap in historical scholarship. The monograph can indeed be useful for historians and individual researchers engaged in the history of the First Republic of Armenia, as well as within the framework of relevant university courses on Armenian history.

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