

ADOPTION OF THE PROGRAM-DECLARATION OF TRANSCAUCASIAN SEIM AND ITS LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES (FEBRUARY–MARCH)

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Abstract

The article deals with the first legislative activities conducted by the Transcaucasian Seim in February – March, 1918. Main topics of the sessions were the law of elections, composition of the Seim, the attitude towards Bolshevik Russia, peace treaty with Turkey, territorial-national division of Transcaucasia etc. Georgian Mensheviks and the Muslim party of Musavat had joined their efforts in seceding from Russia, while the Armenian Revolutionary Dashaktsutyun (ARF) actually was left isolated and saw itself in the political camp of mostly Russian socialist and state-oriented SR-s and Cadets, in this aspect giving up party principles in favor of national interests. If the tactics of Georgian Mensheviks and Musavatists was mostly aggressive, ARF held cautious, wait-and-see attitude which basically is connected with the Turkish invasion and defenseless Western Armenia.

Keywords – *Transcaucasian Seim, Constituent Assembly, ARF, Mensheviks*

At 13⁰⁰, February 10, 1918, in the royal theatre of Tiflis started the first session of Transcaucasian Seim. The session begins with the speech of N.Chkheidze.

Claiming the Seim as being the “Most precious goods of the Russian revolution”, he reminds that it should not deviate from the circles of All-Russian democracy, try to reach the slogans of the revolution that is Constituent Assembly, democratic peace, and the principle of self-determination of nations. He concluded his speech by the next words: “Your task is difficult citizens-members of the Seim, in the past it used to be said god bless you, and I shall say revolution bless you. Long live Russian revolution, long live Transcaucasian Seim”.¹

Despite difficult situation in the region, the absence of communication, anyway the Transcaucasian central elective commission, after it had generalized the results of elections, compiled the number of deputies from each party. That same commission thrice reducing the meter accepted for the Constituent Assembly and taking into account the declaration of some parties regarding the joining of the remaining, established the total number of deputies of Transcaucasian Seim by parties. It should be mentioned also the circumstance as to which parties had agreed in case of the remaining and which one had benefited: a) Social-democratic Mensheviks had joined with Turkish Social-democratic “Hummet”; “Hummet” gained one vote, b) Armenian Peoples’ Party (APP) had joined the Russian cadets; the latter appeared as benefactor, c) Turkish federalists (“Musavat”) joined the Turkish socialist block; the former gained one vote.

¹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918; Ashkhatavor, February 14, 1918, n.19.

General picture

	Received number of votes	Deputies	
		Constituent assembly	Transcaucasian Seim
1. Social-democratic Mensheviks	661.934	11	32
2. Russia's peoples Liberation party	25.673	-	1
3. Socialist-revolutionaries	117.522	1	5
4. Armenian Revolutionary Dashnaktsutyun	558.400	9	27
5. Social-democratic Bolsheviks	93.581	1	4
6. Georgian socialist-federalists	22.754	-	1
7. Armenian Peoples' Party	15.180	-	0
8. Georgian national democrats	25.733	-	1
9. Russian national socialists	570	-	0
10. Turkish socialist-federalists and nonparty Turks, "Musavat"	615.816	10	30
11. Turkish social-democrats, "Hummet"	84.748	1	4
12. Block of Turkish socialists	159.770	2	7
13. Muslims of Western Transcaucasia	71	-	0
14. Russian Muslims	66.504	1	3
15. Jewish Sionist party	7.018	-	0

Total` 2.455.274 36 115²

In regard to the composition of representatives of the Seim made comments Social-democratic Menshevik G.Gharajyan (Arkomed). He stated that "There does not exist any legislative institution which could take over legislative functions with such limited number of representatives as that of Transcaucasian Seim ... have legislative body of 100-110 members for 7 millions of population, it's not good for anything".³ He concludes that Armenian Revolutionary Dashnaktsutyun (ARF) could join the left wing while after the exit of Socialist-revolutionaries (SR) the proportion in the Seim was changed to the benefit of Musavat. As a social-democrat, Arkomed summarized: "it is evident that the militant and reactionary nationalism threatens the significance of the Seim and even its existence as a democratic legislative institution".⁴

² Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Seventh session, February 19: 5. See Horizon, March 3, 1918, n.45. One deputy of the Seim was elected from 20.681 voters.

³ Payqar, February 23, 1918, n.39.

⁴ Ibid.

In his study “Political life of Transcaucasia in 1918” G.Gharajyan finds that “The Seim had come into being as an example of political decentralization which could play political role in the country in the case of favorable conditions in the best sense of the word...”.⁵

In the second, February 13 session of the Seim were discussed issues of its chairman, report of the government, mandatory commission etc. All fractions and the first among them ARF suggested the candidacy of N.Chkheidze which was accepted by ovations. After a durative speech the latter presented the application of Commissary regarding the suspension of commissars’ executive functions.⁶

In his report-analysis the newly elected socialist-menshevik chairman expressed his concerns by the fact that all main reasons of post-October difficulties were results of the reality that the region’s “authority was Soviet, revolutionary one”.⁷ The axis of his speech comprised the problem of the peace and the position of Transcaucasia’s new government, which we shall discuss below.

In this session were discussed also events in Yelizavetpol and Shamkhor, that of Alexandrian garden, the behavior of Bolsheviks and the strategy of Commissary and the Seim in regard to St.Shahumyan. National-democrat G.Ghvazava asked whether in the context of Commissary’s resignation and the establishment of the Seim the Workers and soldiers deputies’ council is going to resign, which caused negative reaction in the hall.⁸ Although N.Chkheidze withdraw this question form the agenda, but it became clear that already in the very first session of the Seim again dominated the problem of political authority. It is impossible to ignore that even in the report of N.Chkheidze this suggestion was cleverly put forward by a socialist-menshevik, and G.Ghvazava only played the role of accompanying person. In contrast to Commissary, which however was regarded as a socialist organization, it was made an attempt to completely hand over the power in the region to Georgian Mensheviks, in this case to the nationalistic force which had initiated the second authority. The expression of this attempt was that in the February 13 session the issue of new negotiations with Turkey even had been moved into geopolitical field.

In his second speech G.Ghvazava raised the question of Seim’s competency and authority in the negotiations with Turkey, pursuing other goals. He reminded: “is this government of state, legislative-constitutional one or not?,” which was followed by an underlying demand, that is: “Transcaucasia should be withdrawn from Russia which exists on behalf of Lenin and his companions”.⁹

G.Ghvazava mentioned: “Here the citizen Gegechkori apologizes for actions conducted towards Bolsheviks. There is no need to apologize, on the contrary, it’s high

⁵ Gharajyan 1919: 19; also Arkomed 1923: 11.

⁶ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Second session, February 13: 1-10.

⁷ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Second session, February 13: 2.

⁸ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Second session, February 13: 11.

⁹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Second session, February 13: 11-12.

time for Transcaucasia to secede from the Bolshevik country; democratic Russia currently is not a unified political power. Would you agree with me or not, but you could not negotiate with Turkey while comprising a part of Russia. I say this being a jurist; from the point of view of international law, you have no right to negotiate on behalf of Transcaucasia, the Seim should announce that Transcaucasia is independent from Petrograd and Moscow".¹⁰

N.Zhordania submitted his view on the relationship of the new power with the former government and transitional period, and suggested an imperative proposal. By his opinion, "Seim should deal with the problem of new government's formation and it could be realized through uncovering of its political image, when all fractions would provide their programs, which will reveal ruling majority and that same majority should form new government".¹¹

Let us stress the circumstance that during the discussion and definition of these important problems, at the second session of the Seim, the fraction of ARF held passive position, not a single speech, what makes us think that by this ARF expressed its consent to these fundamental topics. In this regard it seems groundless that in April 1918, first during the independence of Transcaucasia then in May, at the period of the declaration of Republics, the Armenian national party was caught by surprise and the political elite of the region's Armenian population was unaware and not ready to deal with these challenges.

With the establishment of Seim had begun crucial phase of the history of the region where Georgian Mensheviks and nationalistic forces acted more confidently.

The third session of the Seim was held in February 15.¹²

The main topic was presentation of declarations. On the basis of the principle of fractions' majority the next parties were given opportunity for speech - N.Zhordania (Georgian social-democratic Mensheviks), G.Aghaev (Musavat), H.Qajaznuni (ARF), I.Lortkipanidze (social-revolutionaries), I.Haidarov (Muslim socialist block), M.Mehtiev (Muslim party), G.Laskhishvili (Georgian federalists), Yu.Semenov (party of peoples' liberty), and G.Ghvazava (Georgian national democrats).¹³

N.Zhordania. Speaking on behalf of the Georgian and Menshevik Muslim "Hummet", he was hopeful that declarations and announcements could form basis for the future activities of regional authorities.

First of all in the speech of N.Zhordania was apparent the tendency that in February 1918 was completely neglected the Bolshevik coup and the existence of Soviet power, and that while saying "the current revolution" the leader of regional Mensheviks meant February revolution. And from this standpoint was presented the program of Menshevik fraction. He mentions: "We think that the current revolution does

¹⁰ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Second session, February 13: 11-12.

¹¹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Second session, February 13: 10-11.

¹² Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Second session, February 13: 1.

¹³ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, Second session, February 13: 11-12.

not go beyond the frames of commodity economy and that this revolution does not blow to the foundations of bourgeois society. And this opinion does not follow from our desire, on the contrary, our desire is that this revolution might destroy the entire bourgeois society and we could reach the kingdom of socialism ... if you want to deepen the revolution in the direction which lacks foundation, we could get not revolution but reaction - regress. We have great example, the historical example is evident (he means the Bolshevik coup - V.M.).¹⁴

He suggests the All-Russian, united-democratic scales to reach "Ultimate goal" - socialism, and since that bond has been broken with the Bolshevik coup and the Council of Peoples' Commissars handed over Russia to the economic and political yoke of German imperialists', that bond became more shaky. Hence the conclusion of N.Zhordania: "now the main goal of our Seim should be the making of our young region, Transcaucasia organized Transcaucasian Republic in the legal sense. We could not wait to do this together with Russia, so while at the beginning we assume that Seim should have only legislative credentials, now we think that Seim should organize all components of our social and political life".¹⁵ N.Zhordania regards the general warranty to reach it with the problem of peace treaty with Turkey, but not like that as it was the one signed by Bolsheviks. "We are not going to sign such treaty, - says N.Zhordania, - and we think that it is better to die on the front rather than being disgraced and give ourselves to the curse of generations".¹⁶

With skillful demagoguery N.Zhordania succeeded in alienating step by step the national, socialist, and anti-Bolshevik forces of Transcaucasia from Russia.

As to the program-conceptual topics, it is worth to mention that the speech of N.Zhordania pursued one ultimate goal, a threefold unity, that is to justify by means of the repetition of workers, agrarian, and national problems all existing bonds with the Bolshevik Russia. The speech in general was not new, and this regard some contradictions could be mentioned.

Thus, accepting that the attitude of Transcaucasian industrial workers, even that of "Menshevik" were Bolshevik-oriented, a question arises how the Menshevik leader was going to "truthfully" solve the workers' problems in that same Bolshevik environment, or did he imagine the industrial development of Transcaucasia without Russia when he insisted again the thesis "either rules the capital and the worker is exploited, or rules the worker and in that case there is no capital".¹⁷ He accepts that the unification of the interests of industry and working class is a difficult task but at the same time mentions that the policy of Mensheviks in regard to the workers has to follow that way.¹⁸

¹⁴ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 2-3; also Zhordania 1919: 64.

¹⁵ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 3-4.

¹⁶ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 4.

¹⁷ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 5.

¹⁸ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 5.

Stressing the dual character of national problem in Transcaucasia, that is the relation of the region to the center and interrelations of Transcaucasian nations N.Zhordania underlines as success that “the first form is withdrawn from the agenda”.¹⁹ N.Zhordania’s logic in regard to the first problem was the next: if revolution (he meant February revolution – V.M.) gives autonomy to nations and peoples, then this autonomy either way should have national form.

He thought that in Transcaucasia are many peoples, partly mixed, so how should be given autonomy to any nation so as not to disturb each other. How could this problem be resolved”. N.Zhordania considered equal rights for any of them as the only basis. “If some party or nation, - mentions he, - would raise before us imperial demands, imperial demands could raise also small nations, if we could have imperial demands, we shall say that indeed we would not have national peace”.²⁰ Taking further thought N.Zhordania mentions that if the nation desires to be self-governed, it has territorial claims, and since in Transcaucasia “almost every nation” could not receive that territory completely, and always would be extant the possibility of regressive reaction of national minority towards national majority, for that reason national problem could not be resolved.²¹ Then N.Zhordania gives mostly Georgian but not Menshevik variant to the solution of the problem: “We are forced to carve out in Transcaucasia limited national-territorial units, so that one nation, for example, Armenian, Georgian, or Tatar, would be disintegrated into several autonomous units and that nation would live in numerous own national cantons. If we take Eastern Transcaucasia, then we can see that here this is how it should be done, since it is impossible to find such total territorial unit which included only one nation and does not include numerous other nations”.²²

Speaking in modern terms, it goes without saying that N.Zhordania completely rejected the principle of historical right and, understandably, suggested a solution in the interests of Georgian nations’ imperialism.

Here also exists a significant contradiction. Focusing on Eastern Transcaucasia, the Georgian politician takes under his wing North-western Transcaucasia where lived more multi-layered national composition, which, naturally, did not proceed from the interests of Georgians who comprise minority here. Further, he was trying to manipulate with Armenian-Tatar confrontation.

It should be mentioned N.Zhordania’s political foresight. Only some months later and mostly at the expense of neighboring nations’ territories would be formed “imperialistic” Georgia and Azerbaijan which became the crown of anti-Armenian process after February 1917.

Another part of his program was the problem of national armed forces; it was aimed at the fulfillment of his far-reaching goals. He did not hide his negative attitude

¹⁹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 5.

²⁰ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 6.

²¹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 6.

²² Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 6-7.

towards “the so-called national armed forces”. This could be explained by the fact that Armenian military formations were the most combat-ready ones among these forces, which, as is well-known, were supported by the Provisional government and anti-Bolshevik governments, particularly from the Russian general A. Denikin. Obviously self-serving sounds N. Zhordania’s attitude: “There exist numerous headquarters, numerous masters, while the authorities does not possess with power in order to own some military unit, it should plead and some national council might have mercy and provide armed force. This is not authority but the name of authority. All armed forces of the country, all national armed forces should be directly subordinated to the Seim and bodies established by the Seim”.²³

Again we encounter a contradiction. During the February revolution N. Zhordania acts as an advocate of national armed forces, but now suddenly rejects their necessity, and even asks attendants what means national armed force while in any other country they do not exist. One of those who during the events at Shamkhor and Yelizavetpol had stolen Russian arms and ammunition together with Tatars in order to equip national armed forces now suggests to have joint army which should defend the peoples of the common territory. “That army should be not the army of one nation but, - says he, - a single territorial army, so we are trying to make the army territorial but not national”.²⁴

“Fair” N. Zhordania makes one reservation in favor of Muslims; they have their distinct customs, so they could have their own territory, kitchen, food. In the condition of the Turkish invasion he suggested democratic undertakings – elimination of regular army and transfer to militia.²⁵ In this regard a parallel with L. Trotski’s slogan “neither war, nor peace” should be in place.

It is clear that in the context of anti-Bolshevism and especially the failure of St. Shahumyan’s program could be suggested such concept which rests on the anti-Bolshevik strategy but not on the diverse interests of Transcaucasian peoples and nations. How did N. Zhordania imagine the possibility to confront the Turkish invasion with the unified Armenian, Georgian, and Tatar army, especially when the role of Georgian armed units in the re-conquest of Western Armenia, the handover of Kars and other shameful deeds were well known.

At the end N. Zhordania on behalf of the Menshevik fraction suggested Seim to accept this program and “form such an authority which could agree with this program, but also have opportunity and will bring it into life and thus save the country from anarchy and destruction”.²⁶

On behalf of “Musavat” and party-less Muslim democratic fractions held a speech G. Aghaev.

²³ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 5.

²⁴ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 5.

²⁵ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 5.

²⁶ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 10.

Labeling Seim as Constituent assembly, he focused especially on the problem of peace, actually suggesting a Bolshevik formula – democratic peace without annexation and contribution on the basis of self-determination of peoples.²⁷ The land had to be given to working people as personal property. In regard to national problems he mentions that “we will stop at nothing in reaching our national objectives”.

As to the definition of national minorities' rights G.Aghaev suggested the Seim to compose constitutions for every people which shall secure the principle of national-territorial autonomy, and also rights of national minorities. Speaking in favor of “Russia of free peoples” and unionist idea, he regards the realization of “national-territorial autonomy of Azerbaijan” as his fractions primary goal.²⁸ It is noteworthy that at the wake of events in Baku at March and Turkish invasion the deputy claiming on national autonomy of “Azerbaijan”, speaking on fundamental principles of foreign policy stresses the impermissibility of foreign interference in domestic affairs. He especially stresses that all-Transcaucasian problems should not be connected with the “creation of mechanical majority”, and Seim should solve them “taking into account the principle of actual proportion of national groups”, especially in the context of regional authorities' formation.²⁹ S.Vracyan observes that G.Aghaev raises the “demand of strict coalition” taking into account real proportion of national-ethnic groups. For him homogeneous-socialist government was unacceptable since “the reason is evident. Among Muslims begs and landowners comprise the ruling class”.³⁰

Demanding coalitional regional government G.Aghaev regarded immediate introduction of *zemstvos* as guarantee for its successful functioning, asked for special attitude towards establishing Muslim national armed units. Infinitely demagogical was his speech that “Transcaucasian Turks who did not awarded by imperial government to be among warriors defending honor and dignity of motherland, were treated likewise by the democratic government of Kerensky”.³¹ Exactly for this reason was needed Seim to Tatars, whose representative G.Aghaev advises to listen to “foreign forces”, i.e. state-oriented Russian military command, states of Entente, and Soviet power of Baku. Even after the events at Shamkhor and Yelizavetpol he defended at any cost Transcaucasian commissary and demanded new regional government to be free of external influences.³² In this regard once more and completely becomes clear the idea of Georgian Mensheviks and Tatar Musavatists to form “strong” government which fairly was directed against Armenians.

H.Qajaznuni. He regarded as negative for the region the termination of Constituent assembly. According to him, the regulation of national life is directly related

²⁷ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 10-12.

²⁸ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 12.

²⁹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 12-13.

³⁰ See Vracyan 1996: 77.

³¹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 13-14.

³² Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 14.

to the strong and united Russian democratic federal republic and the Transcaucasian Seim as its organizational center. It should be mentioned that, on the contrary to Georgian and Tatar deputies, he did not use the term "Armenia".³³

H.Qajaznuni assures, in regard to the Peace-treaty that it should lead to the creation of Turkish Armenia. He believes that the power should be unitary-socialist which might prevent also the "return to political opportunism and social stagnation". As "Greatest political problem he also distinguished territorial division of Transcaucasia, based on the principle of peoples autonomous cantons united in the framework of Transcaucasian federation".³⁴

Expressing his solidarity with all democratic forces he had stressed the question of ARF's membership in the international socialist family and was hopeful that "Transcaucasian Seim could become hearth of socialist thought and creation, center of Transcaucasian Socialist International".³⁵

Summarizing program speeches of representatives of the three main Transcaucasian nations some points could be stressed:

1. After the elimination of All-Russian Constituent assembly Transcaucasian socialists and especially Mensheviks and ARF understood that the distancing and separation of this region from Russia is inevitable, and that it is necessary to organize their own national life.

2. Transcaucasian Seim was regarded by Mensheviks and Musavat as a best mean for solving their national problems, they submitted demands which contain anti-Armenian context and look like they were coordinated beforehand.

3. Evidently, ARF still relies upon unitary All-Russian democratic family and his assistance by historical inertia.

We should state that exactly the Georgian and Tatar deputies demonstrated realistic evaluation of current situation.

The speech of H.Qajaznuni did not contain any sharp moments. The loss of the sense of reality was expressed in the fact that one of the ARF leaders was relying upon the support of socialist movement and European Socialist International, while N.Zhordania and G.Aghaev were trying to solve only national problems under the cover of socialism and democracy.

Maybe he was aware of the growing Georgian-Tatar alliance, but still by inertia could not resist the anti-Armenian Commissary – problem of administrative-territorial division, problem of *zemstvos*, riots in Yelizavetpol and Shamkhor atrocity; negotiations in Trapizon, events in Baku in March, and numerous challenges connected with Turkish invasion were coming up.

Anyway, let us follow other speeches.

³³ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 16.

³⁴ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 17.

³⁵ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 17.

Socialist-revolutionary Iv.Lortkipanidze. He states that after the elimination of Constituent assembly where his party comprised majority appeared in difficult situation. At the same time he states with sorrow that it is not desirable to solve the problems connected with the treaty which had to deal precisely Russia. His conclusion that social-revolutionaries would try to create joint Russian front along with other socialist parties, again was far from Transcaucasian realities. Iv.Lortkipanidze especially was concerned with the secret 4th paragraph of Brest-Litovsk treaty which was directed against the SR program of the socialization of land. There it was said that every citizen who shall declare of his German origin could use that land on his behalf, i.e. he became its owner. This means that other nations who shall find themselves under German rule could not socialize land.³⁶

The declaration of SR deputy that even the working class problem should be solved by Transcaucasian authorities based on the national-territorial principle was met with ovation. "National-territorial parliament should raise general problems of Transcaucasian regional government, - concludes he, - and we shall insist in that new government should try to create national-territorial authority".³⁷

The first point of SR declaration concerns the solution of land problem; socialization of land should be solved by Transcaucasian national-territorial Constituent assemblies established by the Seim. SR's vision of the treaty with Turkey was possible in the case if the Russian Republic's Constituent assembly would be recognized by neighboring countries.³⁸

Iv.Lortkipanidze supported the idea of homogeneous-socialist government which could secure the achievements of February revolution. The traditional weakness of SR party was national problem and it is strange that here they gave way significantly in favor of national government which could be explained by their anti-Bolshevik position, and the solution of national problem continue to remain "satisfaction of national needs of all peoples of Transcaucasia under the flag of socialist internationalism".³⁹

I.Haidarov. On behalf of Muslim socialist group he greets the Seim and spoke as supporter of democratic peace. The solution of national problem he tries to connect with its two components. By national-political part, every historical nation seeks to reach complete separation, creation of independent political unit, and the economic component forces every nation to establish such close relations with neighboring nations which could be able to secure the process of their economic development. Taking into account interrelationship of these two components, he suggested to form common Transcaucasian and, if possible, joint Caucasian Seim with common government and cultural-national autonomy for every nation.⁴⁰

³⁶ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 18-19.

³⁷ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 20.

³⁸ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 21.

³⁹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 22.

⁴⁰ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 23-24.

G.Laskhishvili. On behalf of Georgian socialist-federalist revolutionary party he expressed an opinion that the union of Transcaucasian free nations should be organized not from the top but from the bottom. First the peoples must be self-determined, create their national-territorial autonomies, and only after establish federative government and federative Seim. He says exactly the next: “Those who think that the current Transcaucasian Seim is an eternal and ready building of Transcaucasian peoples’ political co-existence we shall answer that it does not differ from any numerous revolutionary combinations which, like previous ones, is condemned to *destruction since there never exists unified Caucasus all the more Transcaucasia. What we call Caucasus or Transcaucasia is no more than geographical term.* On this space live different peoples with different cultures, lifestyle, social structure, so common legislation and governance is nothing more than aimless stagnation. I don’t want to say that Transcaucasian peoples lack common goals, no, they exist; it is the mighty economic-financial goal but the protection of this goal requires other type of Seim, other Council which was born and rests upon national-territorial units. *What we have now, it was reached in the curse of revolution when we completely distanced from Russia,* the creation of common Transcaucasian institution is connected with the solution of urgent problems.⁴¹ Among urgent problems are the peace with Turkey, those of authority, agrarian, national etc. Regarding the government he especially focused on “amazing jealousy” which is displayed by revolutionary bodies and the center regarding the defense of achievements of revolution. According to him, the new government should be completely free and accountable only to Seim. The socialist-federalist deputy connects the problem of self-determination of nations with the urgent solution of agrarian problem. “Member of the Seim, a new page of Caucasian peoples has been opened. Your names should appear on these pages. If you want these pages not to dunk in brotherly blood, apply all efforts to solve agrarian problem”.⁴² Like all socialists and Bolsheviks he connects the idea of national liberation with the liberation of peasantry, closing eyes on Muslim riots which were shaking the region and which rest upon national and even more on its wildest anti-Armenian manifestation – Pan-Turkism.

He regards the principle of nations’ resettlement on the basis of national separation, referendums, especially in provinces, then wide security of the rights of national minorities: “When the last barrier should be destroyed, I think that the time will come for National Constituent assembly to work out *democratic constitution of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia.* We don’t want to predict the future of our motherland, whether it would remain as confederation of Transcaucasian peoples forever or later could be incorporated into All-Russian federation, is connected with the course of further events”.⁴³

⁴¹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 28-29.

⁴² Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 30-31.

⁴³ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 31-32.

As we can see, in February 1918, during the third session of the Seim definitely figures the problem of the creation of independent national states. In their November 1917 national congress Georgian Mensheviks already had touched upon this question and now the separation from Russia perceives as a good time for the establishment of national sovereignty. To us, radically should be changed the current thesis of Armenian historiography that the independence process had begun after the surrender of Kars, the declaration of Transcaucasia and, moreover, in the context of heroic battles of May. We can state with confidence that the establishment of Seim, especially political vacuum which had come into existence after the elimination of the Constituent assembly was considered as a measure to step out of political isolation and crisis. In the condition of a threat to Sovietize Transcaucasia, the independence process was regarded as expected and at the same time saving haven. Mechanisms and methods for reaching it were still unknown, especially during the Turkish invasion and the upcoming treaty with Turkey. Let us add that the records of Transcaucasian Seim, except the discussion of some private matters by different authors*, are introduced for the first time, so they elucidate the problem in a new way.

Yu.Semenov. He was trying to consider Transcaucasia as part of international events and stresses the circumstance that “National centrifugal trends were the first manifestation of the decay of Russia’s social self-consciousness which destroyed the state-wide and nationwide idea of the revolution”.⁴⁴ He regards as the only active component of Transcaucasian new authority precisely national self-consciousness, national organizations, and councils. At the same time he reminds that Seim was came into existence by revolution and no matter how long it could benefit and use national principle, anyway it would declare the main principle of functioning of democracy and “escape falling into national desires”.⁴⁵ Indeed, he regarded as important also the coherent policy with Russia and in opposed the defeatist and separatist position of N.Zhordania, especially “the policy of separately jumping out of fire circle of the war”.⁴⁶

Thus, Yu.Semenov concludes that:

1. The establishment of Transcaucasian Seim is a natural exit from political situation which was a result of the Bolshevik party’s coup and seizure of power in Petrograd.
2. But the current form Transcaucasian Seim, along with All-Russian central government, should be replaced by other institution or institutions ratified by basic laws of Russia.
3. Granting Seim with state power, other institutions have no right to share power or perform monitoring functions.

* See Stavrovskij 1925 (Brest-Litovsk, Trapizon, Batum); Arkomed 1923 (Trapizon); Avetisyan 1997 (negotiations in Trapizon).

⁴⁴ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 33.

⁴⁵ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 34.

⁴⁶ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 35.

4. Since the life of Transcaucasia is going to proceed in the context of inter-ethnic policy, and also the necessity to organize unified armed forces, Seim should manage the regional policy so that the regional and state interests of Transcaucasian peoples were going to be coordinated.
5. Closest tasks of the Seim are:
 - a) To keep initiative in restoration and reunification of all parts of the Russian republic,
 - b) Establish regional executive authorities accountable before the Seim,
 - c) Secure the warranty and authority of independent court,
 - d) Establishment of order in the region and conditions for peaceful co-existence of Transcaucasian peoples,
 - e) Elimination of those preconditions which trigger inter-ethnic conflicts.⁴⁷

It is noteworthy that only the speech of Yu.Semenov did not meet ovations. The reason is that he contradicts to the Georgian-Menshevik line and directly opposed to the declaration of N.Zhordania, particularly in regard to secession from Russia.

On behalf of Georgian nationalists against Yu.Semenov and reincarnation of Russia spoke G.Ghvazava, the leader of Georgian national democratic parties' fraction. He did not accept "the so-called All-Russian democracy and Constituent assembly", regarding them false, unrealistic ideas.⁴⁸ He especially rejected the Constituent assembly saying that "we directly declare war against those peoples who were liberated from Russian imperialism – Finland, Crimea, Ukraine etc."⁴⁹

"Who will consist of Constituent assembly, to whom will belong majority, who will represent Georgia, again we will fall under imperialistic yoke".⁵⁰ G.Ghvazava stresses that this union should rest upon free relations and free treaty. Identifying Cadets with Bolsheviks he mentions that only now Cadets speak about self-determination of peoples and that their national program is well-known. "Aren't they who want to conquer Constantinople and strengthen imperialism; any speech about Constituent assembly is groundless, for us it is dangerous tale".⁵¹

This central problem became a topic for all further developments, the axis of the Caucasian front against Turkish invasion. This "dangerous tale" currently fits well with the Armenian interests, but the ARF fraction, under the influence of anti-Bolshevik and anti-Russian policy of the Commissary did not dare to pave way for his nearest national route and again appeared in dangerous isolation. The fraction desired to reach national independence, but at the same time did not dare to raise fundamental questions like Georgians and Tatars, and reject Russia. Relying upon the principle of self-determination of peoples declared by the February revolution, G.Ghvazava justly

⁴⁷ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 37-39.

⁴⁸ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 39.

⁴⁹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 40.

⁵⁰ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 40.

⁵¹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 40.

reminds that it was overlooked, was transformed into agenda and none of the parties managed to realize it. Bolsheviks who also accepted the idea of self-determination declared war to Ukraine and other peoples. But at the same time G.Ghvazava falsifies while speaking about all inter-ethnic massacres and riots happened in the region including that of Yelizavetpol, Shamkhor, and Muslim riots in Yerevan province and regards them as expressions of Bolshevism.⁵² What the leaders of Georgian Mensheviks haven't allowed themselves yet, spoke a national-democrat deputy who reminds the 1783 Russian-Georgian treaty and its consequences for Georgia, 1855 generalissimo Omar Pasha's obligation to secure Georgia's independence (he bypasses the fact that Transcaucasia is more than Georgia and the Seim was not Georgian government), article N.30 of Paris treatise by which England demands from Russia to withdraw from Georgia, the petition of Georgian people submitted to the 1907 Hague conference.

G.Ghvazava concludes that by legal situation Georgia had entered the international legal sphere and "for Armenians, Tatars and not only for Georgia it has great significance".⁵³ He thus identifies Georgian problems with the Armenian question, converting it into international diplomatic one, and unfortunately Armenian deputies did not oppose him asking only what means the orator when he says "Georgia" and how could he justify the existence of "Georgian question" in international diplomacy, which never existed.

In this context he "leaves aside the Russian Constituent assembly" and stresses the role of the Seim as the only legislative body in Transcaucasia and also was hopeful that national problems and conflicts of Transcaucasian peoples would be solved peacefully, through the Seim.

It remains obscure the statement of G.Ghvazava regarding the establishment of national councils; we are inclined to think that it was a manner to ignore the significant role of the Armenian national council in the region, especially the Armenian national corpus.⁵⁴

N. Ramishvili. On behalf of Georgian Mensheviks and Muslim-socialist "Hummet" this deputy, without discussion, submitted a joint declaration, the main theses of which were developed in the speech of N.Zhordania. Interestingly, was not discussed also the question of its voting and N.Chkheidze, the chairman, proceeded to other questions.⁵⁵

Thus, we can conclude that under the great pressure of Georgian Mensheviks and chairman N.Chkheidze the third session of Transcaucasian Seim accepted the program-declaration of Transcaucasian government.

In the editorial of "Horizon" S.Vracyan responded on this important session (entitled as "Let us wait and be patient"). The article was distinguished by uncertainty

⁵² Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 40-41.

⁵³ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 42.

⁵⁴ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 43.

⁵⁵ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, third session: 47-51.

and confusion. Although the author thinks that “to this moment the problem of the relationship between Russia and Transcaucasia which no more has practical significance remained obscure”,⁵⁶ or “actual face of some parties was not clarified”, but it seems that precisely during this session was fully expressed the tactics of parties, including that of ARF. It becomes clear that the latter was sure in the irrelevance of relationship between Russia and Transcaucasia. And as to how could explain its silence the ARF fraction in the case of independent republics or why did he accept the Georgian Menshevik inspired declaration of the Seim, we could not find any discussion on this topic in the archives of the party. It appears that after the elimination of Constituent assembly in Transcaucasian political arena reigns uncertain situation, but at the same time national parties were patient concerning the relations with Bolshevik Russia. Several meetings of the Seim were completely devoted to the Brest-Litovsk treaty, separate negotiations and possible peace with Turkey where the relation with Russia the Seim had defined by the majority of votes (except Russian Cadets). The handover of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum to Turks accelerated and even fostered the distancing from Russia and in elaborating own policy.

In the February 19 seventh session of the Seim A.Lomtatidze, the chairman of the Mandatory commission raised several topics which could be divided into three groups.⁵⁷

1. Does the commission of the Seim had right to discuss and revise the results of the elections of All-Russian Constituent assembly or simply limit itself with mechanical calculation. The commission unanimously adopted that it actually usurped that part of the corresponding point of election law, owning the right to implement elections in Transcaucasian electoral district.
2. In the January 22, 1918 session of the Transcaucasian members of the Constituent assembly was decided that since not all members of the All-Russian Constituent assembly could attend the work of the Seim, one member could be temporarily replaced by other member. Mandatory commission unanimously rejected such practice.
3. The question concerns representatives from the standing army. From Caucasian army were elected 6 deputies for All-Russian Constituent assembly - 1 Bolshevik and 5 SR-s who were regarded as representatives of Caucasian army. A.Lomtatidze spoke about the dilemma saying that if accepting the principle “no front, no army” then where is the reason to have such deputies in the Seim. In the course of discussion three different approaches had been expressed:
 - a) By the first, the rear and Caucasian front as well should have representatives since some detachments of the army were still in the front,
 - b) The second opinion was that army should not be represented since 50%-60% of the soldiers were citizens of Transcaucasia and during civilian elections the army also had participated. If they should be refused to have representatives in Seim,

⁵⁶ See Horizon, February 17, 1918, n.35.

⁵⁷ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session, February 19: 1-6.

then it would appear that a part of Transcaucasian electorate might be left without their representatives. They insisted also that the army defends Transcaucasia. Opponents of this opinion say that the army was mostly recruited from the population of Transcaucasia, Northern Caucasus, Don and other regions, so this could mean to make artificial representation. Those who were eager to have deputies elected from the army say that Russians were the majority of Caucasian army who were deprived of regional elections, which mean that a significant part of Transcaucasian population might appear left out of the Seim.

- c) According to the third group, army should have its deputies in Seim but such mandates could be given to those persons who are already members of the All-Russian Constituent assembly.⁵⁸

Discussions in the session show that even routine, sometimes procedural topics gradually were becoming subject to serious controversy.

For example, G.Ghvazava opposes those deputies who think that the missing members of the Seim could not be replaced by others. G.Ghvazava refers to the French revolution where the deputy could have been replaced by other. He was moked by V.Tevzaya: "he is going to turn our Seim into an organization which I could not imagine, where people constantly replace each other by their will".⁵⁹

The discussion became sharper after the speech of S.Vracyan. He mentioned that "there never existed such Seim as ours; does not 3/4 of our Seim consist of representatives appointed by parties but not elected".⁶⁰ By S.Vracyan, if the party had a right to send to the Seim deputies, then that same parties should have right to replace one member with another. He tries to justify this principle on the example of his party. Thus, if currently 5-6 very important members of the Constituent assembly are absent from Transcaucasia, should that party lose these places.

A.Lomtadze's answer was more sincere and revealed Seim's imperfection, in some aspects illegal character. "If the members of Seim, - mentions he, - sitting on this high place say that they were appointed by a party but not the people, they would do us disservice".⁶¹

M.Rustambekov from "Musavat" stated that even if the front existed anyway its representatives could not have right to send deputies to Seim, but only to the All-Russian Constituent assembly. Moreover, if now the front never exists from the legal point of view they are deprived of such right. Chemodanov from SR opposed him saying that "*if we would strictly follow legal principle, then we have to re-elect Seim, city autonomies etc. From the legal point of view Transcaucasian Seim does not represent Transcaucasian population, many people had left many were wrongly elected. I repeat that if we adopt formal approach we should have organized new elections (emphasis is ours - V.M.)*".⁶²

⁵⁸ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 3-4.

⁵⁹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 12.

⁶⁰ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 12-13.

⁶¹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 14.

⁶² Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 19, 21.

N.Tarkhanyan, the official representative of SR fraction moved from the question of army deputies into other topic. He opposed the approach that only Caucasian peoples should be represented in the Seim and also denies that allegedly Armenians or Muslims had voted by the principle of nationality. "I declare with confidence, - says he, - that Armenians in the front had voted in favor of SR and I think that ARF will not deny it. There was not any list of ARF in the front".⁶³

N.Tarkhanyan's conclusion was justified. Seim had received its authority in the meeting of deputies elected to the Transcaucasian Constituent assembly and the January 22 session of the front. "If, - he says, - in that meeting of deputies representatives of the front miss, only in that case it would be possible to legally leave aside the front and neglect it. If we want to get rid of the front deputies, then we shall release from duty also representatives of those parts of the army which had voted in the rear".⁶⁴ He concludes that the party regards the Seim as a part of All-Russian Constituent assembly, and it doesn't matter whether they were elected from Caucasian front or the rear. In legal sense the question could not be doubted. Its moral-political aspect demands the problem to be discussed not just within the framework of local interests, as it was, for example, in the case of political reconstruction of Transcaucasia. While Transcaucasia does not declare its independence it was considered as an ally of Russian Federative Republic, so the Russian democracy also had an interest in the solution of all problems. "After all, here we must realize decisions of the All-Russian Constituent assembly, - says N.Tarkhanyan, - moreover, Caucasian army which during three and half years defended Transcaucasia, do care how should be solved the problem of the treaty, is not clear the future of Transcaucasia and it is possible that we might apply to that democracy seeking its support. If you ignore representatives of the army and give such a solution to the issue, then SR fraction completely refuses to have representatives of the army and will not be responsible for the future peace".⁶⁵

N.Tarkhanyan's approach was opposed by Musavatist G.Rasul-zade* who said that if the front should be granted participation in the works of the Seim which never exists, then should be given representativity also to those who does not have their electorates.⁶⁶

Menshevik N.Ramishvili also had tried to make profit from this questioning and finds that if the army has already departed, then in Transcaucasia remain the population who voted for that army;⁶⁷ first of all he meant western Armenian refugees.

In favor of ARF spoke also M.Arzumanyan and A.Shakhhatunyan, who opposed national factor to SR and socialist approach. A.Shakhhatunyan insists that even during

⁶³ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 24-25.

⁶⁴ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 25.

⁶⁵ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 26-27.

* The founder of Musavat.

⁶⁶ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 29.

⁶⁷ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 31-32.

Tsarism the Russian military authorities had officially declared that 22% of Caucasian front comprised Armenians. "I don't know how many were Georgians, - says A.Shakhhatunyan, - but Armenians comprise 22% of standing army and these Armenians of the front has voted in favor of that list (SR - V.M.), by the decision of the ARF Caucasian congress".⁶⁸

Eventually, N.Ramishvili on behalf of the Menshevik fraction submitted a resolution: "From the front district are approved as deputies of the Seim those persons who are already members of Constituent assembly, the decrease of electoral meter is refused".⁶⁹

"Musavat" and the nonparty block declared their will not to vote.

The resolution was accepted by 40 votes against 33 abstained in the voting.

With extraordinary statement held speech SR I.Lortkipanidze: "I am honored to declare that after our friends from the front - Shengelaya, Jafarov, Lortkipanidze, Tarhanyan, Kartsivadze, Sundukyants, Zandukeli, and Gobechia are withdrawn, on behalf of Merkhalev, Levin, Chemodanov, Sakhno, and Yugatov, members of the Constituent assembly, that they renounce their membership in the Seim, and our fraction of the rear district leaves conference hall as a sign of complaint".⁷⁰

Thus, in the February 19 meeting were discussed several questions in the context of which was clearly manifested the most urgent problem - secession of Transcaucasia from Russia and its independence. The question of SR deputies representing Caucasian army contains the idea of unified Russian federative republic's preservation. Georgian socialist and national leaders, as well as Musavatists who were delighted with the destroyed and emptied Caucasian front, regarded that fact as the important warranty to secede from Russia.

We can conclude also that ARF silently accepts these fundamental problems but at the same time saw itself in the political camp of mostly Russian socialist and state-oriented SR-s and Cadets, in this aspect giving up party principles in favor of national interests. If the tactics of Georgian Mensheviks and Musavatists was mostly aggressive, that of the ARF could be determined as cautious, wait-and-see attitude which basically is connected with the Turkish invasion and defenseless Western Armenia. During these meetings ARF became convinced that the projects and tactics of social-revolutionaries, especially in the context of Brest-Litovsk, isolate this party from the main political developments, the latter loses its once actual and solid role. Deprived of their social support, mostly the military contingent of Caucasian army, the Transcaucasian SR party appeared in political isolation. ARF was concerned with the circumstance that their party could find itself trapped in the Georgian-Tatar claws. If immediately after Bolshevik coup and the rapprochement with this union in the Commissary and relations were built mostly at first sight favorable anti-Bolshevik wave, now inside the Seim ARF understood

⁶⁸ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 35-37.

⁶⁹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 37-38.

⁷⁰ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, seventh session: 39.

that anti-Bolshevism of Transcaucasian authorities has consecutive anti-Russian and separatist nature and that in the condition of Turkish invasion the party and Armenian population had appeared in isolation and alone against all.

In the 13th meeting of the Seim, February 28, A.Lomtadze, chairman of the Mandatory committee declared that the commission had approved the final list of fractions which is represented below:

1. Social-democrat Mensheviks - 1. N.Zhordania, 2. I.Tsereteli, 3. N.Chkheidze, 4. Ye. Gegechkori, 5. A.Zurabyov(yan), 6. N.Ramishvili, 7. I.Ramishvili, 8. A.Chkhenkeli, 9. M. Skobelev, 10. V.Jibladze, 11. G.Georgadze, 12. M.Smirnov, 13. G. Bekzadyan, 14. A. Lomtadze, 15. G.Ter-Ghazaryan, 16. G.Makharadze, 17. R.Arsenidze, 18. Ye. Bernstein, 19. V.Tevzaya, 20. A.Jibladze, 21. N.Khomeriki, 22. G.Eradze, 23. K. Andronikov, 24. D. Oniashvili, 25. S.Pirumov(yan), 26. G.Anjaparidze, 27. R.Chikhladze, 28. V.Gurjua, 29. G. Abashidze, 30. G.Gagloev, 31. L. Dadeshkeliani, 32. V.Akhmetelov.
2. Russia's peoples Liberation party – Cadets - 1. Yu. Semenov.
3. Socialist-revolutionaries - 1. V. Lunkevich, 2. L. Atabekyan, 3. I. Gobechia, 4. S. Sahakyan, 5. I. Lortkipanidze.
4. Armenian Revolutionary Dashnaksutyun 1. R.Zoryan, 2. M.Hovhannisyan (Varandyan), 3. H.Ohanjanyan, 4. K.Hambartsumyan, 5. Ya. (Hakob) Zavriev(yan) 6. A. Shahkhatunyan, 7. H.Qajaznuni, 8. S.Tigranyan, 9. K.Ghazazyan, 10. A.Chilingaryan, 11. S. Gruzinyan-Vracyan, 12. G.Khatsov(yan), 13. A.Nalchajyan, 14. G.Dzamoev(yan), 15. A.Khatsov(yan), 16. S.Khachatryan, 17. Kh. Karchikyan, 18. M.Harutyunyan, 19. H.Yaghjian, 20. Kh.Hamaspyur, 21. G.Cholokyan, 22. A.Sahakyan, 23. P.Levonyan, 24. G.Ter-Harutyunyan, 25. A.Qocharyants, 26. G.Mandalyan, 27. V.Ter-Gevorgyan.*
5. Georgian revolutionary social-federalists - 1. G.Laskhishvili.
6. Georgian National-democratic party - 1. G.Ghvazava.
7. Musavat and nonparty group of Transcaucasian central Muslim committee - 1. M. Jafarov, 2. A.Topchibashev, 3. G.Rasul-Zade, 4. N.Usub-bekov, 5. G.Aghaev, 6. Kh. Sultanov, 7. B.Mamedov-bekov, 8. M.Mahmadov, 9. Seidov-Mirgidayad, 10. A. Kardashev, 11. M. Rustam-bekov, 12. F. Khan-Khoisky, 13. Kh.Khas-Mamedov, 14. M. Hajinskij, 15. D. Melik-Yeganov, 16. M. Hajibaba-bekov, 17. G.Akhundzade, 18. M. Akhijanov, 19. Kh.Melik-Aslanov, 20. M. Behbutov, 21. M. Hajinskiy, 22. F. Qocharlinskiy, 23. A.Mahmud-bekov, 24. K. Mikailov, 25. I.Vekilov, 26. G. Shahtakhtinskiy, 27. A.Kulibekov, 28. I.Vekilov (2), 29. Yu.Efendi-zade, 30. M.Yusuf-zade.
8. "Hummet" group - 1. D.Akhundov, 2. I. Avilov, 3. A.Sheikkh-UI-Islamov, 4. S. Aghamalov.

* According to "Horizon", 12 deputies out of 27 comprise the list n.4, 8 – accredited from Central committee, and 7 from the mixed assembly (Horizon, February 13, 1918, n. 32).

9. Fraction of Muslim socialist block - 1. I.Haidarov, 2. A.Kantemirov, 3. A. Safikyurdskiy, 4. A.Pepinov, 5. V.Rizaev, 6. D.Hajinskiy, 7. M.Magaramov.
10. "Ittihad-Islam" Muslim fraction of Russia - 1. S.Ganiev, 2. M.Mehtiev, 3. Ye. Mamed -bekov.⁷¹

The total number of deputies was 111.

Besides the main composition, were submitted also other candidates who were nominated by Musavat and Transcaucasian central Muslim committee, 21 Turks in total, including Nariman Narimanbekov* under number 11, and Jevanshir Behbud-agma (12), from Socialist-revolutionaries – I.Lortkipanidze, G.Natadze, N.Tarkhanov(yan), G. Kharmandaryants, Shengelaya.

With principal disputes and opposition was met the topic of the Sionists and Armenian Peoples Party which desired to have one deputy each. They were refused taking into account the principle that Seim had established the number of votes for one deputy (20.661), while the Jewish Sionist party has about 8.000 and ARF about 19.000 votes.

Anyway, APP had announced that the whole nation is represented in the Seim by only one party (ARF), while other peoples – also by others. Mandatory commission refused this request saying that the majority of Armenian people support ARF.⁷²

To our opinion, ARF and Georgian Mensheviks had come into terms in this regard, and also prevails the main demand of the socialist wing in establishing homogeneous socialist government.

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⁷¹ Transcaucasian Seim 1918, thirteenth session, February 28: 4-6.

* Very soon he should become Bolshevik by the name Nariman Narimanov.

⁷² Transcaucasian Seim 1918, thirteenth session: 6.

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