

**INTERETHNIC-TERRITORIAL CONFLICTS IN THE TRANSCAUCASUS,
BOLSHEVIK RUSSIA, KEMALIST TURKEY, EUROPEAN ALLIES AND THE FALL
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN DECEMBER, 1920¹**

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Abstract

At the time of the declaration of independence, the Republic of Armenia seemed to already have a reliable support from British side, expecting their diplomatic-military support. It can be said, however, that the Armenian side had really unjustified high hopes for the help expected from the victorious states to resolve the issue of the borders in its favor and its sovereignty in general. The allies instilled deceptive hopes in the friendly Armenian people, which conditioned the failures of the Republic of Armenia in foreign policy and orientation. Actually, the statements of the Allies were of a declarative character only. It will be clear from the historical analysis that the Allies came to the Caucasus not because of the love of the Caucasian peoples and left there not because of enmity. The prognosis was not justified and they left, leaving us at the most difficult moment, completely helpless and alone. The Allies did not show any desire to help Armenia solve the issue of the annexation of territories that formerly belong to the Russian Empire through military force, as a result of which the RA government tried to solve it independently, which led to the Turkish-Armenian war and the destruction of the first Armenian republic.

Keywords: Republic of Armenia, Kemalist Turkey, ethnic-territorial conflict, war, Soviet Russia, European Allies, Sèvres, capitulation, Treaty of Alexandropol

At the time of the declaration of independence, the Republic of Armenia seemed to already have a reliable support from British side, expecting their diplomatic-military support. It can be said, however, that the Armenian side had really unjustified high hopes for the help expected from the victorious states to resolve the issue of the

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borders in its favor and its sovereignty in general. The allies instilled deceptive hopes in the friendly Armenian people, which conditioned the failures of the Republic of Armenia in foreign policy and orientation. Actually, the statements of the Allies were of a declarative character only.

Nevertheless, the relations with the immediate neighbors of Azerbaijan and Georgia transformed from bad to worse, and the clashes of a war nature did not resolve the accumulated problems, the questions about the borders remained unresolved, but still hoping that the Paris Peace Assembly would resolve the disputes, in which the expectations were not met. In this regard, the expert conclusion of E. Andersen and G. Parkhuladze is rational in terms of the evaluation of historical and political realities, realistic assessments of historical facts, according to which the naivety of the political leadership of Armenia was expressed in the development of relations with the South Caucasian neighbors Georgia and Azerbaijan, in connection with the assumption of the leaders of Armenia that the territorial conflicts that arose will be resolved by the great powers in their favor as a reward for the Armenian efforts during the war, accordingly refusing to resolve them through negotiations with the neighbors.

As a result of such an approach, at the end of 1918, a military conflict between Armenia and Georgia took place, which caused significant damage to both, and a long “hybrid” war began between Armenia and Azerbaijan for the possession of the disputed territories - Karabakh, Zangezur and Nakhichevan, which was accompanied by the most brutal ethnic cleansing and was interrupted only by the fall of the two republics. According to the above-mentioned experts in Caucasian studies, during that war, the command of the British armed forces, which assumed the role of “an impartial and honest mediator”, actually sided with oil-rich Azerbaijan.

Only at the end of August 1920, not later than the fall of the First Armenian Republic, the victorious powers seemed to consider Armenia’s interests when signing the peace agreement of Sèvres on August 10, 1920 with Turkey. According to the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, Armenia was to be given a significant part of the territories of the former Ottoman Empire, but those terms remained on paper. In Turkey, that agreement was not recognized by either the Kemalists or the Sultanate government, and moreover, none of the victorious powers expressed a desire to help Armenia join those territories with the help of military force. As a result, the Armenian government tried to do this on its own, which led to a new Armenian-Turkish war and the complete defeat of the First Armenian Republic.

Continuing to suspect Ankara of collusion with the Entente, and planning to occupy all of Armenia and invade Azerbaijan, Moscow realized that the time had come for military intervention in order to Sovietize Armenia as soon as possible so that it would not be completely lost to the expanding Turkish military presence. On G. Ordzhonikidze's proposal, which was approved by J. Stalin, the Bolsheviks decided to drive a wedge between Turkey and Azerbaijan through war with the goal of depriving the latter of their immediate borders by creating an Armenian buffer.

During the events of May 1918, when the collapse of Transcaucasus became a reality, the Transcaucasian peoples were forced to declare their independence and find allies to implement it, which initially only Azerbaijan and Georgia had in the form of Turkey and Germany, and Armenia was forced to wait for the end of the war (the allied countries of the Entente), which were not in a hurry to arrive in the Transcaucasus.

Finally, at the end of 1918, the British military forces and the military and political representatives of Great Britain, France and other countries that arrived almost simultaneously, pushed Turkey and Germany out of Transcaucasus temporarily. It can be said that the Armenian side attached unjustified high hopes to the support expected from the victorious states in favor of Armenia to resolve the issue of border demarcation and the RA sovereignty, which essentially conditioned RA's slippages in foreign-political calculations and strategic orientation.

The military occupation of Transcaucasus by the British significantly, but not radically, changed the political course of the Republic of Armenia. The British did not like the pronounced pro-Russian political behavior of some of the Armenian political leaders; it was completely unacceptable for them. From time to time there was an aspiration towards Russia, because the allies could not prevent the genocide of the Armenian people, which was carried out throughout Transcaucasus, and in many cases the position of the British from ethnic, economic, military and other perspectives caused confusion among the Armenian government.

It almost happened again in the years of the Third Republic, and in particular in 2018-2020, when the RA government made drastic changes in its foreign-political strategy and calculations at the instigation of world powers and, appearing in the sphere of influence of the former Entente-European countries and the USA, faced uncertainty and an unclear position of Russia, found himself almost completely isolated and abandoned. As a result, starting in the 1990s, the government of the Republic of Armenia unwisely called the respective indivisible parts of the two states adjacent to Karabakh-Artsakh and Utik-Gardmank "occupied" for about 30 years in a row (to which the Armenian scientific community gave a lavish gift to Azerbaijan), engaged the country in the processes of globalization and the bloody Armenian-Azerbaijani military-political conflict, in which the UN, European countries, and especially Great Britain and its ally USA, which assumed the role of "impartial and honest mediators" in this war, provided Azerbaijan with the opportunity to retake most of Artsakh, making serious redraws of the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border in favor of Azerbaijan, providing significant strategic advantages for the latter.

Basically, based on this last circumstance, it can be argued that winning the war against Germany and Turkey as Allies in the First World War, but not being interested in the strengthening of Russia, and encouraging separatist sentiments in a country embroiled in a civil war in every possible way, as if it were an illusion to fight against the threat of Bolshevism, the Entente countries encouraged the separate existence of two and many "Russias" and a bloody struggle between them.

E. Andersen and G. Partskhaladze notice here as well: “The Armenian people, and first of all the Armenian political and military leaders, did not accept the terms of the Brest peace agreement and tried to hinder Turkish expansionism, relying on the active support of Western allies. As a result, hostilities continued, but since the Armenians received no real help, the result was the occupation of almost all of historical Armenia by the Turks and the continuation of the genocide with hundreds of thousands more killed and refugees. In fact, only the end of the World War and the capitulation of the Ottoman Empire on October 30, 1918 prevented the “final resolution of the Armenian Question” and the final disappearance of Armenians from their historical homeland.

After the end of the First World War, Armenia declared its independence in May 1918 and prepared to accept the “bright future” promised in 1914 by the victorious powers. Having practically no political experience, the leaders of the new Armenian state made excessive territorial claims to the (seemingly) defeated Turkey. At the Paris Peace Assembly, in which the map of the post-war world was being redrawn, the Armenian delegation voiced these demands, which included vast territories, and most of which could hardly be considered “properly Armenian”. Moreover, after the ethnic cleansing and *pogroms* during the war, there was almost no Armenian population in those areas².

After the declaration of independence on May 28, 1918, the Armenian political leaders, who assumed the role of the government of the National Council, reluctantly left the much more prosperous conditions of Tiflis and arrived in Yerevan more than three months later, in the difficult political situation created after the hasty, unplanned retreat of the Russian troops in Tiflis and the abandonment of the Caucasian front. That state had a short and difficult existence of about two and a half years, largely due to the very limited support of its own people and political leaders, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), as well as Great Britain and the United States.

The course of history has shown that Armenia, perhaps being located at the world’s most important crossroads, was able to survive as an independent state unit only when the surrounding powers were either not strong enough or not interested enough to have the motivation to dominate that Armenian corridor.

Having lost statehood since the 11th century and after an unprecedented turn in 1917, faced with the dilemma of declaring or not declaring its independent state, which was more ready for the Georgian and Turkish-Muslim political elite formed by the Beys, Khans and nobles, the romantic and inexperienced political figures that assumed the Armenian political leadership came to the conclusion that they cannot survive without foreign patronage or a benevolent power, regardless of which country it would be, the United States or Great Britain or France, and, as for Russia, it was directly excluded from our calculations at that time. Added to that is the fact that the countries interested in the collapse of the Russian Empire, particularly Great Britain, tried in every possible

² Andersen A., Partskhaladze G. 2020, A New Turn if The Karabakh Conflict in the Context of Armenian-Russian Relations. <https://bit.ly/3VNuw1U>, 25 P., Calgary, Canada.

way to involve the Armenians and their leaders, considered by them to be “more Russian than Russians”, in the realization of their imperial ambitions.

It became obvious that independent Armenia was unable to survive on its own in the conditions of the revived Turkey and Russia’s ambitious goals³. The actions, taken in Armenia, turned out to be largely insignificant and not effective, and the desires to find supporters were ineffective and unreliable. Turkish historian B. Gökay has written: “Therefore, it was a non-accidental rapprochement of the Turkish national movement with the Russian Bolsheviks, which first materialized in that region in the form of Turkish-Bolshevik cooperation with the establishment of Soviet control over the Caucasus. The partnership was like a business partnership, and then it came down to a commonality of principles. The Turks did not seek to advance to the part of Armenia historically occupied by the Russians, and the Russians did not advance further to Turkish Armenia.⁴”

The Armenian people and their leaders were unable to ensure their own security, instead submitting meekly to the political calculations of rival powers. The fate of Armenia, as it is today, in the 2020s, was largely dependent on the superpowers. Here, the choice of foreign-political priorities and the combination of ideological preferences, as well as the ideas and conceptual approaches of the leaders of the geopolitical environment and created around it became important factors for the fate of the Armenian state.

The Armenian political elite identified its goals and foreign-policy orientation with the geopolitical aspirations of the Western Allies, which for both Kemalist Turkey and Bolshevik Russia meant that they were the puppet pawns of the Western imperialists. The ARF, which was the ruling political party in the Republic of Armenia, was considered by Moscow and Ankara as an enemy of the international socialist revolution, Turkish nationalism, and the anti-colonial goals of the Bolsheviks and Kemalists. In this context it is necessary to come to the conclusion that ultimately the failure of independent Armenia’s goals was neither the fault of the leaders of Armenia, nor ultimately the fault of the oppositional Armenian political forces. It is the forces that plan the geopolitical course of events and implement it, in the role of which the Western countries acted at one pole, and at the other pole Turkey and Bolshevik Russia.

In the early 1920s, it became clear that the Soviet forces had emerged victorious in the confrontation against the White forces, openly financed and militarily supported by the Entente. In 1920, the Bolshevik forces rapidly moved towards the Caucasus with the clear intention of reconquering it. In this situation the RA leaders faced a new serious threat. It was obvious that Soviet Russia would not support a republic governed by a political force clinging to the Western powers and striving for unrelenting enmity against the Bolsheviks. Its western orientation became fatal, because it became obvious that the political leadership of Armenia was wrong in its calculations, as it did not even try to

³ Tsvetkova 2018.

⁴ Gökay 1996: 61, 68.

act faster in order to receive Soviet support. In addition, Armenia did not try to be more flexible and less provocative towards the Turkish nationalists. Ultimately the dominant factor in the decline of the Armenian statehood was its foreign policy⁵. Moreover, R. Hovhannisyan believes that, contrary to their constant “Westernization”, the ARF and the Armenian government remained abandoned by the West. The great powers had drawn Western Armenia just on paper: “The Western orientation of the ARF was not enough to receive support. On the other hand, the Soviet-Turkish cooperation would gradually expand with each week. Soviet gold and ammunition reached the Nationalist forces of Mustafa Kemal. It was in the interests of Soviet Russia and Nationalist Turkey to open the Caucasian gap between them (Zangezur-Syunik corridor, which has become a strategic goal for them today - V.V.). In this context, Armenia should be neutralized, or even taken over⁶”. As a result, strategically valuable time was wasted on groundless maneuvers and vague and empty expectations, and according to R. Hovhannisyan’s conclusion, the country was simply exhausted, there was no assistance. The cooperation of Bolshevik Russia and Turkey gave the Turks an opportunity to exterminate Armenia and impose oppressive conditions⁷. Although with more or less delay, at that time some political figures already had a not very firm, but gradually certain conviction in terms of the possible stability of Bolshevism and becoming a new real world power. It was gently noticed by Al. Khatisyan in his speech at the session of the RA Parliament on April 30, 1920 (N 86): “Nevertheless, one should not ignore that the Bolsheviks are the real power of Russia, this fact is pointed out particularly in Europe, where a breakthrough in the policy towards Russia is observed. The French parliament instructed the government to negotiate with Russia. Italy has the same point of view, you know America’s position, what was not possible in January, it is becoming possible, and the great powers are thinking or maybe they have started to negotiate with Russia on both economic and political issues”⁸.

The ruling political power of the RA simply lost the moment and did not understand that the political situation in the Transcaucasian region and around Armenia changed dramatically in 1920. The Turkish nationalist movement was experiencing a sharp rise in that historical period, Turkey was reviving under the rule of the Kemalists, and the communists recorded a victory in the Russian civil war, which was essentially provoked from outside, with the aim of finally exhausting Russia, crushing it, as it is today, and becoming the masters of the world. Caught in the grip of the advancing Turks and the Red Army in Azerbaijan, Armenia found itself in a split situation, undecided and not wanting to prioritize the issue of reaching an agreement with Russia, perhaps the only expedient at that moment, because the loyalty to the West was still firmly on the agenda. The West advised our government to immediately reach an agreement with the Turks.

⁵ Suny 1983: 32-33.

⁶ Suny 1983: 32-33.

⁷ Hovhannisyan 1993: 32- 33.

⁸ Haraj, 1920, May 15, N 9.1.

Even in this fluid state, the fate of Armenia was put on the agenda at the first conference of famous peoples of the East convened in Baku in early September 1920, where the Armenian Question was discussed, and remained as a deeply planned calculation of the Soviet policy towards Armenia during the following few years. The fate of Armenia was subordinated to the broader issue of the pseudo-agenda of the revolution in the Muslim world, as well as to the strategy of gaining allies among Turkish and Persian nationalists, as British colonel Cl. Stokes advised the defeated RA leader in October-November 1920⁹. It was even more clear that “Armenia was not in the area of interests of the Soviet state, the independence of Armenia and the issue of the physical existence of the Armenian people were subordinated to the revolutionary goals of Russia”, as it is today.

As the American-Armenian historian R. Suny says, in February - December of 1920, the limits of Western loyalty to the Armenian state became clear, and the alliance¹⁰ of the Kemalist Turkey and Soviet Russia took the Armenian Republic into its orbit. Starting with the London conference in February, Armenia gradually lost the “effective” and desirable support of the allies, and in April at San Remo, Britain, France and Italy made it clear that despite their sympathy and loyalty of the Armenian people, they would not use force to guarantee the existence of the Armenian republic. There were hopes that the United States would take that burden on itself, but the latter had already clearly given up this idea.

During that time, the Azerbaijanis, taking advantage of the open indulgence of the powers, took over Karabakh at the moment when Azerbaijan was bloodlessly sovietized by Kemal's advice and the Red Army entered Baku, which radically changed the balance of power in Transcaucasus. The presence of Soviet forces in the Caucasus encouraged the local Bolsheviks of Armenia and Georgia to start rebellions, but the ruling Mensheviks and the ARF, clearly following the instructions of the allies in Transcaucasus, and in particular the British and French military and political missions, brutally suppressed these movements, promising the latter to continue the fight to the end against Bolshevism, which had already become a serious factor in the Transcaucasus region. The May Uprising in Armenia led to the replacement of a far more moderate government by the ARF Bureau-dictatorship, which was essentially a one-party dictatorship.

The allied leaders who formed the government of Armenia also failed to form a combat-ready army, in which the Hayduk chiefs were in deep antagonism with the pro-regular army generals, as well as being unable to establish order within the borders of the republic in Zangibasar-Vedibasar, the anti-Armenian actions of the strong mass of Muslims in Sotk-Basargechar, Kars and other regions, which were sponsored and received considerable military support from Turkey. And even more, as a result of the subjugation of the Muslim regions, the Armenian army became weak and exhausted,

⁹ NAA, f. 200, inv. 1, list 440, sheets 47-48. Zohrabyan 1997: 227.

¹⁰ Suny 1983: 32-33.

which was also clearly stated by Dro. In the army-building policy, the government did not always find the right solutions, sometimes it simply lacked prudence and impartial analysis of specific situations, therefore, along with some positive developments, a number of phenomena were given reckless and hasty solutions, which somewhat damaged the formation of the security system of the republic, caused unnecessary obstacles in the state.

Already in the spring of 1919 in the military and political circles of the South of Russia, information was spread that the RA government had changed its attitude towards Russians in Armenia, and in particular state officials and officers, which at that time was highly undesirable and could play a negative role to worsen the military-political relations between the South of Russia and Armenia, to create problems for the Armenian diaspora. L. Yevangulyan, the RA Diplomatic Charge d'Affaires in Georgia, on May 30, 1919, informed the government and particularly the RA MFA: "The attitude of the Armenian government towards the Russians in general and in particular towards the Russian officials and officers who are in the public service in Armenia has changed significantly.

Russian peasants were not returned to their places, Russian officers were almost driven out of the army under the slogan of nationalization, Russian officials in all civil institutions were replaced by Armenians, that even in Yerevan a company has been formed, the purpose of which was to eradicate the Russian spirit in the country through nationalization¹¹. Yevangulyan warned that the news about the Russians reach the Volunteer Army led by Denikin somehow exaggerated, calling on the government to be aware, so that the latter does not ignore the important fact that there are thousands of Armenian refugees who have escaped the Turkish slaughter in the territories of Kuban and Terek, that all this cannot be allowed and we should not worsen the relations with the Volunteer Army, by which the situation of these emigrants will come closer to the final annihilation. We should maintain friendly relations both with the Russians living in Armenia and through them with the "Russia" that currently exist¹², which was practically ignored by the RA authorities and had undesirable consequences.

Of course, the circumstance of the Russian language at that moment did not significantly harm the affairs of the army, even if the officers' language and instructions were not yet in Armenian, to which a number of military and political figures had a morbid approach. On May 6, 1920 (N 7166-1439), the report of Military Minister Ruben Ter-Minasyan was sent to the government, which directly and unequivocally posed the problem of the widespread Armenianization of the army: "Implementing the issue of nationalization largely depends on having military regulations, manuals and a glossary of military terms. Currently, the commission attached to the General Staff has translated 7 rulebooks, now six are being translated and three rulebooks are still to be translated, and so on.

¹¹ NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, list 164, sheets 51-52, fund 275, inv. 5, list 114, sheets 74-75.

¹² Ibid.

The dictionary of military terms is compiled in parallel with the translation of statutes. In view of the fact that the printing of rule books has already started and due to the excessive cost of paper in our market, the printing of rule books may be delayed, I am interceding to release two thousand writing paper or five hundred newsprint papers”¹³.

It can be said that another decision of the government of May 30, 1920¹⁴, which was based on the report of the Minister of Labor on the one hand about the suspension from service of officials who did not know the state language, on the other hand, planned to implement Armenianization in all ministries, was not very relevant. In order to solve the issue of retaining the experts, it was necessary to provide them with translations, but more importance was given to the problem of the suspended officials, who were already forced to leave Armenia¹⁵ because of this situation. On the basis of Military Minister R. Ter-Minasyan’s Order N 1073 of June 26, 1920, which was derived from the laws of the RA Parliament of December 26, 1919 and the Council of Ministers of May 30, 1920, not later than August 1, clerical work and notarization in all headquarters, in military institutions and military units should be done in the Armenian language, except for the reporting of the economic part, with the exception of the artillery officers, the military court and the sanitary and economic institutions of the troops, which should temporarily continue to conduct business in the Russian language, since the majority of servicemen in those areas were Russians. Those Armenian officers who practically did not know the Armenian language had to definitely attend special courses¹⁶.

The political parties operating in the Armenian reality also showed a hasty, inconsistent and immature approach to the implementation of this decision. At the same time, the reality showed that it was not so easy to implement, or rather, it was impossible and not only because there were no typewriters with Armenian letters, but also because it was not possible for the Russian officials in such a short period of time and in the current war situation to learn language. The fact that even Armenian, but Russian-speaking officers of the Armenian army could solve the problem of mastering Armenian was ignored and not taken into consideration, for example, the brilliant military general Hovhannes Hakhverdyan, the hero of Sardarapat, Al. Shneur and many others. And yet, for the implementation of the nationalization work, an operational commission was created under the Military Headquarters, which started creating Armenianized versions based on examples of various writings, term orders, journals, letterheads, and seals. The translation commission of the General Staff carried out considerable work and translated into Armenian many writing forms, orders, examples of registers, rule books, etc. Administrative and writing statutes were drawn up in the

¹³ NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, list 118, part III, sheet 205.

¹⁴ Mirzoyan 1998 (ed.): 318.

¹⁵ Virabyan 2014 (ed.): 473.

¹⁶ NAA, fund 290, inv. 1, list 9, sheet 28.

Armenian language, and all their necessary forms and examples were translated from Russian into Armenian. The translation commission of the General Staff translated and Armenianized the form and terms of many writings, and the infantry rules, the instructions for constructing infantry trenches, a brief description of rifles and ammunition, the disciplinary code, etc., were printed in Armenian from the military code books. Considerable work was done in modernizing combat training, artillery manuals, manuals for handling rifles, machine guns and other types of weapons, instructions for digging trenches, manuals on discipline, garrison and internal service were translated and published, a dictionary of military terms, infantry training regulations, etc. were also compiled¹⁷.

Until June 1, 1920, there were 256 foreign and foreign-speaking officers in the Armenian troops, 81 of whom were released from service in the Armenian Army on the basis of the circular order N 1073 issued on July 1¹⁸. Moreover, seeking to weaken the influence of A. Denikin's Volunteer Army on the ongoing army-building processes in Armenia, and thus to have an army officer corps free from the dominance of Russian officers as much as possible, which was important from the point of view of the establishment of the RA state security system, because more than half of the officers of the Armenian Army were Russians¹⁹, on June 4, 1919 at the session of the Armenian Parliament, Al. Khatisyan unequivocally stated that by the decision of the RA government, the officers, officials and soldiers who are related to the Volunteer Army or who support their ideology are free to go to the South of Russia, and those who remain are obliged to recognize the supremacy of the RA government²⁰, and that is in the case when the Republic of Armenia was receiving weapons and ammunition, food support from that same Denikin, regardless of the strategy chosen by the RA government, the question arises, was the moment chosen correctly, especially since the RA was in a food crisis? However, it should be noted about an important circumstance that this anti-Russian, anti-Denikin position was more derived from the strategy of the Allied countries, in which there was no place for the Russian side. This also significantly influenced the behavior of the RA government, especially in the first half of the 1920, when the military and political leaders of the Republic of Armenia were almost delighted with the pro-Armenian activities of the Entente states, and did not have much hope for Russia, which was still immersed in civil strife, and the A. Denikin Volunteer Army, which was weakening day by day.

Nevertheless, in spite of this reality, a commission headed by Khatisyan was formed on the instructions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia to draft a bill on Armenianization²¹. However, the military units really could not deliver the list of officers to be released on time, and from that point of view, trying to avoid a situation

¹⁷ NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, list 119, sheet 189.

¹⁸ NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, list 119, sheet 190, list 142, sheet 189-190.

¹⁹ Petrosyan 2006: 190.

²⁰ Petrosyan 2006: 190.

²¹ Hayastani ashkhatavor, 1919, June 11, N 114.

that caused confusion, in order not to harm the military operations, the Ministry of Defense eventually sobered up a little and found it possible to temporarily suspend the execution of that order in the existing military units, until internal civil strife and the end of other conflicts. It was also explained by the fact that most of the Armenian officers had Russian military education, and some time was needed for their Armenianization, which was impossible in the harsh and exhausted reality of 1918-1920. The order was considered inappropriate, because it would have a destructive significance for the already difficult conditions of the Republic of Armenia, its military-political situation and the army-building processes going towards the formation of the security system in general, leaving a significant impact on the combat capability and personnel issues of the Armenian Army²².

As a result, the so-called nationalization policy played a completely negative role, in particular, the military figures, who were in the Ministry of Defense, demanded that all new state employees use Armenian, dismissing Russian officials and ordering that Armenian be used in courts²³. The liberal citizenship law of June 5, 1920, recognized all residents of the republic who were previously Russian or Turkish citizens as citizens of Armenia, and measures were taken to enable Armenians living abroad to apply for citizenship. But at the same time, the government took military action against the Muslim villages, pushing the Kurds and Turks out of the former Russian-Turkish border, which weakened the Armenian army²⁴.

Refusing to recognize the Armenian demands, the Kemalists disputed that border region, which the Ottoman Turks had lost to Tsarist Russia in 1878. It was even more unfortunate for Armenia that when the Armenian army tried to move towards the Muslim-populated Nakhichevan, the road was blocked by a fake red alliance of Soviet and Turkish troops. In July, the British garrison in Batumi, the last Allied force in Transcaucasus, retreated, leaving the Armenians alone against stronger enemies.

Armenian diplomatic efforts developed in two separate directions: one in the West, which led to the stillborn Treaty of Sevres, which created a large-scale Armenian state on paper with the borders drawn by Woodrow Wilson, the other in Moscow and Yerevan, with the equally futile efforts of representatives of Soviet Russia to gain protection from Turkish nationalists. In this regard, E. Andersen and G. Partskhaladze also have a remarkable observation that may be contested in some places: "Only at the end of August 1920, not later before the fall of the First Armenian Republic, the victorious powers took Armenia's interests into consideration when signing the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey (10. 08.1920). According to the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, a significant part of the territories of the former Ottoman Empire should have been given to Armenia, but these conditions remained on paper. In Turkey, that agreement was not recognized by either the Kemalists or the Sultanate government, and moreover, none of

²² NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, list 119, sheets 189-190.

²³ Virabyan 2019: 45-67.

²⁴ Virabyan 2009: 150, 178, 187-189.

the great powers expressed a desire to help Armenia join those territories with the help of military force. As a result, the Armenian government tried to do this on its own, which led to a new Armenian-Turkish war and the complete defeat of the First Armenian Republic”²⁵.

Armenians both in the republic and abroad united in 1920 around the support of an independent state. They shared the hope that at some point in the unforeseeable future, the small Caucasian unit would become the core of a larger, united Armenian state, which would include the lands of historical Armenia, the lands from which the Young Turks had wiped out the Armenians in 1915-1916. At the end of May 1920, President W. Wilson appealed to Congress for authorization to establish jurisdiction over Armenia, but the “irreconcilables” led by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge voted against his appeal in the Senate. In the conditions of the defeat of the Allies, the independent future of Armenia depended more and more on the development of a reliable relationship with Soviet Russia. But here too, everything was not clear. The Soviet leaders themselves were divided into two parts: moderates, such as the Commissar of Foreign Affairs Georgy Chicherin and others, who were more or less ready to establish peaceful interstate relations with Armenia and Georgia, and warmongers, such as Sergo Ordzhonikidze, who sought the revolutionary influence of the rest of the South Caucasian republics or military occupation.

In favor of the creation of an independent state, Chicherin tried to convince the Armenians to withdraw from the demands on Turkish Armenia. But the Armenians refused. Different approaches over Nakhichevan, Zangezur and Karabakh also were between Armenia and Soviet Russia. Even as negotiations between the two states continued, Red Army units moved into disputed areas and Soviet and Armenian troops clashed at Zangezur. Soviet delegate Boris Legrand negotiated for an early cessation of hostilities, and in the agreement of August 10, he recognized “the independence and full self-determination of the Republic of Armenia”²⁶.

On that same day, on the other side of Europe, the Armenian delegation signed the Treaty of Sèvres, linking the fate of the republic to the declarative promises of the West. Ten days later, on August 24, Soviet Russia signed a pact of friendship with the Turkish nationalists led by Kemal, and Armenia fell between the Soviet hammer and the Kemal dungeon. The last phase of the republic’s existence began in the early September, when Turkish troops preemptively attacked along the former Russian-Turkish border. Events developed quickly. Although Moscow sympathized with the Kemalists’ anti-imperial agenda, each side was suspicious of the other’s intentions regarding Transcaucasus. Legrand had signed a draft of a generous treaty in Yerevan, granting Soviet recognition to a part of Armenia’s territorial claims, but at the same time, Soviet policy in Moscow and Baku was oriented towards the militant position, preferring the Sovietization of the republic, which took place in the middle of 1920 in the context of

²⁵ Andersen, Partskhaladze 2020, October 10.

²⁶ Hovannisian 1996, vol. IV: 95.

turning points in the political situation around the Transcaucasian region, when civil war in Russia was almost over, and the European countries that had intervened in Russia's internal affairs and supported the civil strife, simply abandoned it, including the national republics, which had aligned their expectations with the victorious countries of Europe.

In that difficult situation, the countries of the Entente reformed their strategic calculations, noticing how the newly victorious Bolshevik Russia and Turkey came to a mutually beneficial agreement. Abandoned by the allies in the created panic situation, Armenia had no choice but to enter into an agreement with Soviet Russia, obtaining a survival option for the Armenian people. Well, the former allies of the RA themselves, being alarmed by this new combination of geopolitical forces, sought ways to negotiate with Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey, simultaneously striving to restore lost positions in the countries of the Muslim world. Thus, the interests of Armenia and the problem of existence were subordinated to the acquisition of positions in the Muslim world, directing it against the expansion of the British imperialist strategy. Already in 1920-1923, the RA allies finally renounced both the Treaty of Sèvres and the role of guarantor of the existence of the Armenian Republic, excluding the use of military force for the solution of the Armenian Question.

Along with the refusal of Sèvres by both the Kemalists and the former rulers in Turkey, the refusal of the previous promises to help Armenia by the victorious countries was also evident, which was repeated in a similar way at the end of 1920 and led to the secession of Armenia.

As a result, the attack launched by the Armenian troops on October 24 failed, which was prevented by the enemy, who launched an active counter-attack, and already on October 29, the Turks appeared in Sarighamish, on October 30 in Kars, which was not defended, where the great remnants of the Russian imperial army were still located. We have already mentioned that according to Kemal Atatürk, almost no resistance was shown by the Armenian side. The attack of the Turkish troops continues, and on October 30, Yerevan turns to its Allies of the Entente for help, on November 5 to the USA, and in the meantime, on November 6, the Turks capture Alexandropol as well. However, none of the great powers had any desire to intervene in the conflict. Armenia appeared to be alone, as it happened a hundred years later in the autumn of 2020.

The Turks continue the attack, accompanied by the most brutal massacre and ethnic cleansing in the regions already subject to the Turks, and this desperate situation was recorded by S. Vratsyan. As a result, the capitulation of Alexandropol was signed: peace, which was the first international treaty signed by the government of Ankara, and it recorded their complete victory and the actual surrender of Armenia. "He, recalls Kemal Atatürk, handed over to us, the national government, the territories that the "Ottoman" government had lost in 1876-1877"²⁷. Here it is quite appropriate to mention that M. Kemal simply made true again what Turkish Minister of Defense Enver Pasha had clearly said in one of his conversations with A.Khatisyan during the conference of

²⁷ Mustafa Kemal 1934, V. 3: 119.

the powers in Constantinople, which lasted from June 15 to November 1, 1918. As for the borders, Enver expressed the following idea: “We cannot think about the expansion of the Armenian borders, because I managed to do what is of great vital importance for Turkey. I and my friends created Armenia and thereby satisfied the national aspirations of the Armenians and thereby solved the Armenian Question. And at the same time, we managed to do it outside of Turkey, on Russian territories. Thus, we have two achievements: the state of Armenia was created and the territory of Turkey remained complete. Only at that price we agreed to the creation of an independent Armenian state. How is it possible to claim new territories now, when Kars, Ardahan and Batumi have just returned to their old homeland?”²⁸

And so, in the conditions of these new realities, in fact, the Sovietization of Armenia matured earlier and came to the fore. Although Kemalist Turkey and Soviet Russia were Allies, nevertheless it was not at all beneficial for either of them to see progress of the other in a region of strategic interests, as it is today. The Entente especially considered this expansion of the Soviet side as an attempt to make Armenia “its citadel”, but was satisfied with just announcements.

The dejected Armenian army panicked in Kars, surrendering the fortress to General Kyazım Karabekir’s troops on October 30, thus deciding the fate of the Republic of Armenia. The Turkish army captured Alexandropol (Gyumri-Kumairi) and advanced towards Gharakilisa, forcing the Armenian government to sign a humiliating cease-fire agreement. Alarmed by the Turkish successes, Soviet Russia offered to mediate the conflict resolution, with which Yerevan and Ankara agreed. Part of the negotiations took place directly with the Turks in Alexandropol, and the other part took place with the Soviet delegates in Yerevan. Meanwhile, the more militant communists decided to declare Armenia a Soviet Socialist Republic on November 29. The Red Army entered Armenia from Azerbaijan, preventing B. Legrand’s efforts to transfer power peacefully. The leader of Soviet Azerbaijan, Nariman Narimanov, “generously and unilaterally settled” territorial demarcation disputes with Armenia by donating Nakhichevan, Syunik-Zangezur and Karabakh-Artsakh to the newly proclaimed Soviet Armenia, which was just a clever political trick, a cunning maneuver and later the idea about this “donation” quickly was thrown away.

In contrast to this, the Turks were extremely radical in the issue of the amputation of the Armenian territory. In that situation, the RA government decided to transfer the power to the Soviet forces. General Dro (Drastamat Kanayan), the plenipotentiary representative of the government of Armenia, and Silin, the representative of Soviet Russia, declared Armenia an “independent socialist republic” on December 2, 1920. A few hours later, a delegation from the former government signed the Treaty of Alexandropol, which, although de facto illegal, established the border between the newly formed Soviet Republic of Armenia and nationalist Turkey.

²⁸ Khatisyan 2023: 492.

At the time of Sovietization, the country was at the extreme point of decline in its modern history. Armenians were not only expelled from the part of the Armenian Plateau by Turkish in 1915 by genocidal massacres and forced displacement, but since the outbreak of the First World War, the population of Russian Armenia had experienced a sharp decline as a result of war, migration and epidemics. By 1920, only 720,000 people lived in Eastern Armenia, a 30 percent decline. Moreover, almost half of this population was made up of refugees. Many social and political institutions that Armenians had built over centuries in the Caucasus and Turkey were destroyed. The Armenian middle class, once privileged elite in Tiflis and Baku, now distrusted by the new Soviet governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan, was driven from the scene. Their unenviable choice was either to adapt to a foreign socialist order or to migrate to the West. During the seven years of war, genocide, revolution and civil war (1914-1921), the Armenian society was “de-modernized” in many ways; it turned back to its pre-capitalist agricultural economy and a more traditional peasant society. And so, the First Republic being too ambitious in its attempts to create an immense Armenia, in the conditions of its very limited resources and powerful opponents, found itself in a geopolitical impasse and was destroyed, the alternative was to be a Soviet Armenia.

The failure of the San Remo Conference from April 19 to April 26, 1920 was also a serious defeat for the diplomacy of the South Caucasian states, during which the delegations of Georgia and Armenia could not reach an agreement with each other on the resolution of territorial disputes, which led the governments of the great powers to abandon all their promises to support the Transcaucasian republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia against the aggression of Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey. From that moment, the still independent South Caucasian republics (Azerbaijan was already out of the game with the voluntary and bloodless Sovietization that took place in April 1920, only Armenia and Georgia remained independent at that time) were left to the whims of fate by the Western European powers.

It was the Western powers that pushed the Kemalist forces to move closer to Russia, which was gradually coming to its senses already in 1919-1920, in the military and political spheres, and to support each other, which is insufficiently researched by historiography.

And as a result, in the situation of complete military defeat and rapid occupation of Armenian territory by Turkey, as we have already mentioned above, the government of the Republic of Armenia was forced to allow Georgian troops to temporarily occupy the neutral Zone of Lori for 3 months, allegedly to prevent it from being captured by the Turks. However, on November 16, Georgian troops not only occupied the Neutral Zone, but also moved further, crossing the old border of the former Tiflis province, which was considered in Georgia to be an indisputable border between the two South Caucasian republics, and added to this, it was also confirmed by Moscow Agreement, and thus, Georgia took control of the entire previously disputed part of Borchalu province, where the Georgian side held a referendum, based on which the entire Lori district of Borchalu

province, i.e. the Neutral Zone, which was handed over to the Republic of Armenia by the agreement of January 17, 1919, was annexed by Georgia and its demarcation was not changed for about a year²⁹.

As a result, the allied countries of the Armenian people, during the First World War, using the human and other resources of the Armenian people with great pleasure and efficiency in the form of the Armenian legion, during which the Armenians gave thousands of victims³⁰, began to consider Armenia, a small country with not very large natural resources, as a source of difficult questions to resolve. Perhaps, in this case, the approach of Levon Shant, who was not experienced enough in terms of diplomatic preparation, is very spectacular, who believed that the British wanted to see not strong and independent states in the Transcaucasian region, but “dependent independences”³¹.

In August 1920, the allied powers of the Entente, while signing the peace treaty with Turkey, stated that the Armenians should be given a part of the territory of the former Ottoman Empire, but it remained on paper. The Treaty of Sevres was not recognized by either the Sultan or Kemal, the Allies were unable to support Armenia in solving the issue of those territories by military force, and accordingly, the attempt of the RA government to do it independently was not successful, which led to the war, in which the main actors were Bolshevik Russia and Turkey, which led to a crushing defeat and the destruction of the first Armenian republic. Turkey and Soviet Russia, which established close ties, divided the small Republic of Armenia³².

This last circumstance was also well noticed by Hr. Acharyan: “The alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists was formed, and with the material and moral help of the Russians, Kemalism spread and took hold of the entire Asia Minor.” But the four new Caucasian states stood in the way of those two allies: Dagestan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. It was necessary to eliminate these barriers in some way, either by conquering them and making them allied states. Many propagandists scattered in those countries and persuaded them to accept the Bolshevik regime and join the Russian Bolshevik government. The Caucasian states fell into a dilemma. It was not an easy thing to suddenly give up the pleasure of having a national self-governing state, the dream of which had only just come true since centuries. On the other hand, the British provoked those states in every possible way, even with the promise of military aid, to stand against the invading Russia. Finally, the fact that Russia was weak made them believe that it would not be difficult to resist even in case of war. Especially the Armenians, apart from all these, had several articles of the Treaty of Sèvres, which promised them a great and vast Armenia.

²⁹ Virabyan 2016.

³⁰ Virabyan, Poghosyan, Yeprikyan 2020.

³¹ Shant 1925: 61.

³² Khurshudyan 2017.

For these reasons, the Caucasian nations did not see the danger that came from the north and (instead of pre-negotiating) the possibility to accept the Bolshevik regime and form allied states, instead of it they went out to fight against the Russians³³.

Basically, the Sovietization of Armenia matured earlier and came to the fore, in contrast to Menshevik Georgia, which was associated with the Turkish attack and the activity of the Entente that was still maintained at that time, and although Turkey and Soviet Russia were Allies, still none of the sides was interested in the other's advance in the region of mutual interest, as it is today. Azerbaijani author Ilgar Niftaliyev has also noticed this: "Continuing to suspect Ankara of a secret agreement with the Entente, and wanting to occupy all of Armenia and invade Azerbaijan, Moscow realized that the time had come for military intervention, with the goal of Sovietizing Armenia as soon as possible, so that it would not be completely lost to the ever-expanding Turkish military presence. Based on Ordzhonikidze's proposal, which was approved by Stalin, the Bolsheviks decided to militarily drive a wedge between Turkey and Azerbaijan, in order to deprive the latter of their immediate borders by creating an Armenian buffer"³⁴.

This was also clearly demonstrated in the case of Georgia, when the Sovietization plan of Georgia was being implemented. Taking advantage of Georgia's difficult situation, Kyazım Karabekir's military units were directed to capture Batumi and a number of other regions, as the Turkish military commander openly announced on March 17, 1921, thinking that the Soviet side either will not be able to prevent or they will stop the latter in just this reality.

During that time, the Bolsheviks also obviously manipulated the Lori Neutral Zone issue to implement their geo-occupation plans for the Sovietization of Georgia: between Armenia and Georgia there is a neutral zone with a width of about twenty *verst*s, around which there was some tension between the two countries in the past.

The Bolsheviks introduced Emergency Committee's Armenian spies into this zone, who were supposed to make the Georgians attack them. After that, the Soviet Union could send troops to Georgia to "protect the poor Armenians living in the neutral zone from the attack of the bourgeois-Menshevik government of Georgia." That, combined with the calls, such as "Save our communist friends imprisoned in Tiflis", would be enough to show the world the brotherly feelings of Soviet Russia. This was done and fighting in the neutral zone took place in early February, while troops from Baku were sent to the eastern border of Georgia. This was to be the third and last stage of the subjugation of three independent countries whose freedom was guaranteed by Great Britain and the League of Nations.

O. Baldwin states in his memoirs that "among those sent to the Neutral Zone were the former head of the Armenian Intelligence Service (Baldwin undoubtedly means the famous detective Tigran T. Devoyants, an Armenian officer distinguished by his intelligence activities in 1914-1920, who was the first Armenian intelligence officer, led

³³ Acharyan 2004: 469-470.

³⁴ Niftaliyev, Armenian-Azerbaijani territorial conflict in Soviet-Turkish relations (1920).

by the Armenian intelligence group successfully operated in Turkey, Constantinople in the second half of 1919-early 1920³⁵), a man with extraordinary talent, who was once an intelligence officer in the headquarters of Grand Duke Nicholas. He spoke Armenian, Russian, Turkish, German, French and English fluently, and when he reached the Georgian border, he was able to escape to Constantinople, where the information he possessed was of great value to the Allies.

During all this time, the Bolsheviks in Armenia did nothing to ease the grief of the poor people who were dying from cold and hunger”³⁶.

And despite the stubborn resistance of the Georgians, it could have failed if the Georgian troops fighting in Ajaria had not been supported by the red troops who arrived in time, which forced the Turks to leave³⁷, thus Soviet Russia established its supremacy in that vitally important strategic junction, which it could not give Turkey anymore.

Oliver Baldwin, the son of British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, who served as a colonel in the Armenian army, very deeply and clearly assessed the role of the Allies, particularly Russia, at this geopolitical moment: “This war, which began in mid-September 1920, was a concerted attack at the suggestion of Russia in order to arouse the concern of the Allies, since General Kyazım Karabekir attacked Armenia only after Moscow demanded the following from Erivan:

- free transit through the territory of Armenia for Turks and Russians so that they can work together,
- to abandon the Treaty of Sèvres, by which the independence of Armenia was agreed and protected by the great powers,
- to sever all relations with allies.

Armenia could have agreed for much smaller concessions than it did in the end, but the country strangely blindly trusted Great Britain, which had made many promises to help and had once defeated the Turks³⁸.”

The Entente especially considered this strategic expansion of the Soviet side in the Transcaucasian region as an attempt to make Armenia “its citadel” and base with the goal of increasing its influence in the East. Armenia was alone in a rather difficult war situation, without the expected allies and had to resist the Russian-Turkish attack with its own forces.

After Sovietization, the Allies, in the new reality and geopolitical situation, sent their anti-Bolshevism to the archive and began to look for edges in the economic and political spheres. The Allies quickly abandoned Transcaucasus and Armenia, recognizing it as a Bolshevik sphere of influence, putting forward the idea of improving

³⁵ Devoyants Tigran (1887, August 20, Yerevan – 02/09/1965, USA), studied at the Mining Engineering Faculty of Tomsk University, pedagogue: he was known as Tigr, Devo and other code names. - see Hovakimyan 2005: 596; Horizon, 1914, N 230, 233; Armyanski vestnik, 1916, N 33, p. 2; Kavkazskoe slovo, 1914, N 28-30, 34-36, 1918, N 117, Appendix 6 [1, 2, 3]; Virabyan 2015; Virabyan 2018.

³⁶ Baldwin 2022: 134-135.

³⁷ Mayilyan 2010: 135-136.

³⁸ Baldwin 2022: 36-37.

economic, political, commercial and military relations with Soviet Russia, which they had long rejected. At the same time, on January 16, 1920, the Supreme Council of the Entente adopted a resolution on canceling the economic blockade against Russia, and on November 1920, D. Lloyd George and the representative of the Soviet side, the famous Soviet diplomat L. B. Krasin reached a preliminary agreement on the conclusion of the Russian-British economic treaty³⁹, active discussion of the Soviet-British trade treaty began, which was signed on March 16, 1921⁴⁰. And as a result, the Prime Minister of Great Britain not only accepts the fact of the military and political presence of Soviet Russia in the Transcaucasus, but also unofficially gives his government's consent to the latter's free operation in the Transcaucasus region⁴¹.

Thus, the inter-ethnic political developments in the Transcaucasus in 1918-1920 proceeded in accordance with the unexpected geopolitical developments of the RA leadership and the Armenian people, when Armenia, treacherously abandoned by its allies, and in the autumn of 1920, during the Turkish-Armenian war, found itself surrounded with enemies from all sides. Russia and Kemalist Turkey, who had made a deal with each other, made their anti-Armenian verdict by amputating Armenia and imposing a different national-political perspective. And Soviet Russia was also in the role of an active supporter of Turkey.

During the Turkish-Armenian war in November 1920, when, as one of the leading modern researchers V. M. Mukhanov said, none of the Great Powers wanted to get involved in the conflict, Armenia was simply left to the whims of fate.

Turkologist R. Safrastyan is quite right when he concludes that when determining the final date of the attack on Armenia, mainly the external factor was taken into consideration. According to the author, the situation at the end of August and beginning of September 1920 was such that neither the Western countries nor the Bolsheviks would intervene in the planned war against Armenia. Accordingly, the establishment of actual alliance relations between the Kemalists and the Bolsheviks was of decisive importance. On September 8, 1920, 200 kilograms of gold sent as aid from Russia arrived in Karin (Erzurum). Part of it was given to the army under the command of Karabekir; the other part was sent to Ankara and was used to pay the salaries of officials and officers⁴².

Moreover, the allies did not even think of disturbing M. Kemal in his aggressive plan to destroy Armenia, and starting from the summer of 1920 and especially after the successes achieved by the Turks in the initial phase of the Armenian-Turkish war, some common ground appeared between Ankara and London, the diplomacy of secret contacts was started, at the same time Ankara's close relations with Moscow began to cool somewhat and contacts had assumed an irregular character. Turkish sources state

³⁹ Lang 1962: 231.

⁴⁰ Virabyan 2021: 65-82.

⁴¹ Pipes 1964: 234.

⁴² Safrastyan 2019: 75.

that Kemal was able to correctly assess the newly emerging situation and skillfully took advantage of it⁴³. It can be said that in the mid-1920s, the situation gave advantages to Turkey rather than to Bolshevik Russia, which was struggling to come out of the civil war and still had many worries.

Thus, Turkey was able to provide a more favorable diplomatic atmosphere in the war against Armenia in order to achieve its strategic goals. Taking advantage of a favorable geopolitical moment, the Turks, in particular, conducted a policy of evasion in the mediation mission of Russia in the Armenian-Turkish negotiations, to which they had given their consent in advance, which forced Russia to adopt a more decisive position, not to concede much more, which could endanger its vital interests in Transcaucasus.

In retrospect, Khatisyan has generally correctly noticed these nuances of the political process: "On the other hand, the Paris Assembly delayed dealing with Turkey's problems too much and gave them time to strengthen. And then, when Russia ended its internal civil strife, the Allies were afraid of complications and left, leaving the new republics alone"⁴⁴. He continues: "It is also a fact that they divided Armenia among themselves. And the Bolsheviks did that, not because of an enmity towards Armenia, but motivated by their "global" policy, via which they wanted to win the friendship of the Turks by sacrificing Armenia. And the Bolsheviks gave the Turks what they wanted - Kars, Surmalu, Ardahan, the rest, which did not belong to the Turks, that is, the regions inhabited by Armenians."⁴⁵

The Treaty of Sèvres, signed on August 10, 1920, left a great impression on Armenian political circles; they lost the sense of reality, which was fatal. However, for known reasons, the Treaty of Sèvres did not enter into force. And already from February 21 to March 14, 1921, at the conference of heads of governments and foreign ministers of England, France, Italy and Japan held in London, the policy of making new concessions to Turkey was started. On October 20, 1921, the Franklin-Bouillon Treaty signed between France and Kemalist Turkey in Ankara was one of the important stages of the destruction of the Sèvres system in the Middle East. One of the central member states of the Agreement was leaving the Sèvres system, thereby condemning the Sèvres Treaty to non-existence. Expressing the sentiments of the French ruling circles, Maurice Pernot, a publicist enjoying great authority in the political circles of Paris, wrote: "We should no longer test the issues of either autonomous Kurdistan or independent Armenia"⁴⁶, which was simply the realization of Enver Pasha's plan, which according to according A. Khatisyan's memoirs, a solution could be found "at least by creating a small Armenia. And thirdly, they would like to have a territory where it would be possible to deport Armenians from Turkey, leaving a limited number of them there for their

⁴³ Safrastyan 2019: 80-81.

⁴⁴ Khatisian 1968: 193.

⁴⁵ Khatisyan 1968: 293.

⁴⁶ Baiburdyan 2014.

needs, as Enver directly said about it - moreover, under the condition that the number of Armenians should not exceed 20 percent of the total population in any region"⁴⁷.

And already at the Lausanne conference held from November 1922 to July 1923, İsmet İnönü, the head of the Turkish delegation, announced that the Kurds did not want to separate from Turkey, as was envisaged by the Treaty of Sèvres, that the Kurds of Anatolia were ready to fight side by side with the Turks.

And this is how Colonel O. Baldwin, who served in the Armenian army and was a direct witness of that sudden turn of fate in Armenia, represents the triumph of Bolshevism in Armenia, abandoned and deceived by the Allies, and in particular Great Britain: "The entry of Bolshevism into Armenia and Georgia... put an end to the hopes of all those people who had devoted their lives to the goal of achieving the independence of their own country.

From the manifestations I saw, Bolshevism appeared to me more like a mental illness than a social order. Its preachers were very often people with a nervous mentality and careless actions. In its modern form, it is regressive, a form of degenerate tsarism, anti-religious obsession, endless worship, war tensions and general depravity. Here, all this, instilled in a people whose reputation of being corrupt, lying, immoral, weak and ignorant since ancient times was unsurpassed, turned into the regime we call Bolshevism.

...It is just amazing. Step by step, without visible effort, the powers played in favor of Lenin"⁴⁸.

It is obvious that the Armenian side was mistaken in all its foreign-political calculations.

Another circumstance is important, which is related to the personal qualities of former Armenian politicians, who neither knew Europe nor Europeans well, in the event that Turkish diplomatic-military and statesmen did not leave the impression of poor former teachers, and in everyday life they felt more confident as a type of man who had a psychological advantage, felt more confident, which came from the fact that they ruled for centuries, who could feel more confident in all level contacts with Europe, Russia. We find a very good reference to all this in S. Vratsyan's notes: In 1919 in one of the letters written to Armen Garo, he simply states: "Our intelligentsia wants to enjoy independent Armenia from outside. We asked Michael to come. He replied that his presence was needed in Rome. The other day, Khatisyan said that Avetik wrote to him that after the signing of the peace agreement, he wants to remain ambassador in Paris. Don't be offended, but you also preferred Washington to Yerevan. And men like us were left to organize and enjoy the state of Armenia. I agree that at this moment the work outside is very important, it is necessary to sign a peace treaty with all its implications, it is necessary to find sources of material support - I agree, but these are all the upper

⁴⁷ Khatisyan 2023: 469.

⁴⁸ Baldwin 2022: 336-337, 338.

floors of the building, if the pedestal is not strong, those international achievements have no value. The basis is the state and the government⁴⁹.

We should write about an extremely interesting conclusion of Khatisyan, who makes an important confession when talking about Enver Pasha: “Middle-height, he gave the impression of a very simple and almost shy person in communication. His face was very strict and calm, his eyes were insightful and thoughtful, and he even somehow drew the other person’s attention towards him. In Turkey, it is people like this who attract the Europeans. In the same person there is combined the ability for massacre, the destruction of tens of thousands of Christians, and the most exquisite charm in manners. How many times have European diplomats scolded us?⁵⁰

In 1918-1920, it was not possible to form a legally strong, economic state and leadership structure, all more or less serious efforts to form a functional state organization failed. H. Qajaznuni, considering the composition of that supposedly democratic institution strange and depressing, most of which were ARF representatives, wrote: “We didn’t understand that for us own we needed a strong opposition to stand by us, to always keep us attentive, call for order and not allow us to go beyond the limits of the law and authority... There was no government either; this was also subordinated to the bureau, which was a kind of executive body in the state. This was a Bolshevik system...”⁵¹

This was important in order to unite the people on the ground of solidarity, which did not become reality.

The formation and development of the First Republic of Armenia took place in difficult conditions. The period can be clearly seen from the following words of S. Vratsyan: “The Republic of Armenia was born not in its time: neither prepared with objective conditions nor with subordinate consciousness”.⁵²

In the end, those who wanted, stayed in Armenia and did what they could. The number of people who wanted to work in Armenia was small, most of them simply did not want to work in Armenia, but sought to provide themselves with “oasis” conditions. There was a personnel gap in Armenia. Many sought to stay abroad and not work in the difficult conditions of Armenia, but instead they demanded from the remaining local authorities a stable, powerful state with a powerful army, an excellent officer-commanding staff, a “professional” Cabinet of Ministers, offering nothing in return.

The result was what happened: the brutal and unstoppable collapse in December 1920, when the Armenian army suffered a crushing defeat, and we signed the shameful Treaty of Alexandropol, and then the infamous “Agreement”, according to which the Republic of Armenia was divided into two conquering countries - the Soviet Russia and Turkey.

⁴⁹ Vratsian 1962: 301.

⁵⁰ Khatisyan 2023: 491.

⁵¹ Qajaznuni 1923: 37-38.

⁵² Vratsyan 1966: 11.

Moreover, R. Hovhannisyan believes that, contrary to their constant Western orientation, ARF and the Armenian government remained isolated and abandoned by the West, which had drawn Western Armenia on paper, the country was exhausted, there was no assistance, and the additional delay necessitated not only the cooperation of Bolshevik Russia and Turkey, it also gave the Turks an opportunity to exterminate Armenia and impose oppressive conditions⁵³.

Perhaps this is what Al. Khatisyan meant, when in exile, looking back at the past and the collapse of the First Republic, becomes insightful and eventually comes to a realistic conclusion: “For this reason, our people began to think and express themselves with great bitterness about the Allies, in general. And that feeling remained until today.

It will be clear from the historical analysis that the Allies came to the Caucasus not because of the love of the Caucasian peoples and left there not because of enmity. The prognosis was not justified and they left, leaving us at the most difficult moment, completely helpless and alone. That was their role”⁵⁴.

As specialists in Caucasian studies E. Andersen and G. Parkhuladze say, the Allies did not show any real desire to help Armenia solve the issue of the annexation of those territories through military force, as a result of which the RA government tried to solve it independently, which led to the Turkish-Armenian war and the destruction of the first Armenian republic.

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⁵³ Hovannisian 1993: 32-35.

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