

Treaty of PEACE & FRIENDSHIP

*Traité de Paix et d'Amitié
entre le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman et la République
de l'Arménie.*

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile Ermenistan
Cumhuriyeti arasında Barış ve Dostluk Antlaşması

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman d'une part, et le
Gouvernement de la République de l'Arménie, qui s'est déclaré
indépendante d'autre part, étant tombés d'accord pour assurer
l'établissement de relations amicales et de bon voisinage entre
leurs pays respectifs sur les terrains politique, juridique, écono-
mique et intellectuel, ont nommé pour leurs plénipotentiaires,
savoir :

l'Empire Ottoman :

Son Excellence Halil Bey, député, Ministre de la Justice et Prési-
dent du Conseil d'Etat, ~~Plénipotentiaire~~

et

Son Excellence le Lieutenant-Général Vehib Mehmed Pacha,
commandant en chef les armées ottomanes sur le front
du Caucase, Délégué militaire ;

la République de l'Arménie :

Monsieur Alexandre Khatissoff, Président de la Délégation,

Monsieur Rouben Hadjajourni, Délégué

et

Monsieur Mikael Papadjianoff, Délégué ;

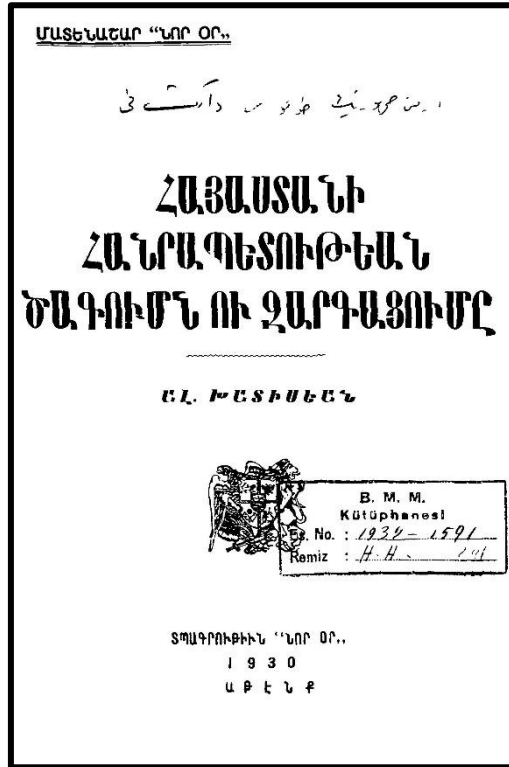
lesquels, après avoir examiné leurs pleins pouvoirs trouvés
en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des dispositions
suivantes :

Alexander Khatissoff (Khatisian) was always the senior
diplomat/politician representing Armenia. As such he signed the
Batum as well as the Alexandropol [Turkish Gümrü] Treaty.

Fait en double à Batoum, le 4 Juin 1918.
M. Khatissoff
M. Papadjianoff
O. R. Hadjajourni

künye sayfası

KHATISIAN's BOOK (Athens, 1930)



The Birth and Development of the Republic of Armenia

Editor & Translation Fatma Sarıkaya

Editor Mehmet Arif Demirer

CONTENTS:

Treaty of PEACE & FRIENDSHIP	1
KHATISIAN's BOOK (printed in Athens, 1930)	3
The Contents Page of His Book (Written in Armenian)	7
Contents of the Original Book (Written in English)	9
Introduction	11
Chapter – 1: Provisional Government of Russia and the Armenians	13
Chapter – 2: Transcaucasian Commissariat and Talks With Turkey	25
Chapter – 3: Trabzon Conference (February 23 – April 1, 1918)	43
Chapter – 4: Turkey-Transcaucasian War and the Batumi Negotiations (April 1 – May 26, 1918)	55
Chapter – 5: Collapse of The Caucasian Union and Declaration of Armenia's Independence (April 1 – May 26, 1918)	91
Chapter – 6: Four Months In Istanbul (June 15 – November 1, 1918)	107
The Story of the Tokatlian Hotel in Istanbul	131
Chapter – 13: War With the Turks, Attack of The Bolsheviks and Loss of Independence of the Armenian Republic (1920 Autumn - until December 2 nd)	135
Katchaznoui Wrote a Different Story (Excerpt from His Manifesto regarding The Turkish Armenian War 1920 and The Alxandropol Peace Treaty	189

Chapter – 14:	Alexandropol Negotiations and Signing of The Treaty	193
Chapter – 17:	London Conference (February 21 – March 13, 1921) And The Turkish-Bolshevik Moscow Agreement (March 16, 1921)	213
	VRATSIAN’S LETTER As Provided in Katchaznoui’s Book	224
Chapter – 18:	Ankara Agreement (October 20, 1921) Paris Conference (March 1922) and Defeat of The Greeks (August 25 – September 9, 1922)	227
Chapter – 19:	The Lausanne Conference (November 1922 – July 24, 1923)	235
Chapter – 20:	The Armenian Issue From The Lausanne Conference till Today	297
	Editors’ Remarks on Khatisian’s Book	309
	The Prime Ministers of the Republic of Armenia	314
	Hovhannes Katchaznoui	314
	Alexander Khatisian	325
	Hamo Ohanjanyan	329
	Simon Vratsian	332

The Contents Page of His Book Written in Armenian

ԲՈՎԱՆԴԱԿՈՒԹԻՒՆ

Էջ

Ա. — Ռուսաստանի ժամանակաշար կառավարության հայերը Երկրորդ Գլուխ	5
Բ. — Անդրկովկասի կոմիտեի և բանակցությունները Թուրքիայ հետ Երրորդ Գլուխ	14
Գ. — Տրապիզոնի խորհրդատուներ	28
Դ. — Թուրք Անդրկովկասի պատերազմի և Պառլամենտի դաշինքները	37
Ե. — Անդրկովկասի Միության խանութները և Հայաստանի Անկախության հռչակումը	76
Զ. — Չորս ամիս Կ. Պոլսի մէջ	79
Է. — Իմ մանակցության ժամանակ Գաղաթիվի Գաղաթիվ Ունեցող Գլուխ	96
Ը. — Իմ վարչապետության շրջանը	112
Թ. — Հայաստանի սահմաններու ընդարձակումը և 1919 Մայիս 28ի ապրիլ	121
Ժ. — Գաղաթիվները Կովկասի և Հայաստանի մէջ	145
ԺԱ. — 1920 թ. դարձնել և Մայիսի անկախության թիւնը	167
ԺԲ. — Ուղևորության ընդարձակումը և Իզմիր	191
ԺԳ. — Պատերազմ Թուրքիայ հետ, բոլշևիկներու յարձակում և Հայաստանի Հանրապետության անկախության անկումը	216
ԺԴ. — Այնքան զարգացող բանակցություններ և դաշնագրի կնքումը	260
ԺԵ. — Խորհրդային իշխանության ժամանակ Հայաստանի մէջ	275
ԺԶ. — Ուղևորության ժամանակ և Լոնդոն	280
ԺԷ. — Լոնդոնի խորհրդատուներ (21 փետր. 13 մարտ 1921 թ.) և Մոսկուայի թուրք-բոլշևիկների դաշնագրի (15 մ. 1921 թ.)	294
ԺԸ. — Էնկիւրիի դաշնագրի (20 հոկտ. 1921) Փարիզի խորհրդատուներ (մարտ 1922 թ.) և Ֆրանսիայի խորհրդատուներ (25 օգոստոս - 9 սեպտեմբեր 1922 թ.)	303
ԺԹ. — Լոնդոնի խորհրդատուներ (նոյ. 1922 24 յուլ. 1923)	309
Ի. — Հայկական հարցը Լոնդոնի խորհրդատուներին և Թուրքիայի մեր օրերը	358

THE PAGES OF EACH SECTION IN THE ORIGINAL BOOK

INTRODUCTION	Page: 3
Chapter 1 PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF RUSSIA AND THE ARMENIANS	Page: 5
Chapter 2 TRANSCAUCASIAN COMMISSARIAT AND TALKS WITH TURKEY	Page: 14
Chapter 3 TRABZON CONFERENCE (February 23 – April 1, 1918)	Page: 28
Chapter 4 TURKEY-TRANSCAUCASIAN WAR AND THE BATUMI NEGOTIATIONS	Page: 37
Chapter 5 COLLAPSE OF THE CAUCASIAN UNION AND DECLARATION OF ARMENIA’S INDEPENDENCE [In the contents of the original publishing the page number must be written as 76 instead of 67 erroneously]	Page: 67
Chapter 6 FOUR MONTHS IN ISTANBUL (June 15- Nov 1, 1918)	Page: 79
Chapter 7 MY PARTICIPATION INTO KATCHAZNOUNI’S LOUNGE	Page: 96
Chapter 8 MY TERM AS PRIME MINISTER	Page: 112
Chapter 9 EXPANSION OF ARMENIA’S BORDERS AND THE PROMISE OF MAY 28,1919	Page: 126
Chapter 10 “DASHNAKS” IN THE CAUCASUS AND ARMENIA	Page: 145

(In the original publishing, this chapter is marked as 9 probably erroneously.)

Chapter 11 Page: 167
SPRING OF 1920 AND THE MAY REVOLT

Chapter 12 Page: 191
TRIP TO EUROPE, EGYPT AND IZMIR

Chapter 13 Page: 216
WAR WITH TURKEY, ATTACK OF THE BOLSHEVIKS AND
COLLAPSE OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE ARMENIAN
REPUBLIC

Chapter 14 Page: 260
ALEXANDROPOL NEGOTIATIONS AND SIGNING OF THE
TREATY

Chapter 15 Page: 275
SOVIET POWER IN ARMENIA (December 2, 1920 – February 16,
1921)

Chapter 16 Page: 286
TRIP TO LONDON AND PARIS

Chapter 17 Page: 294
LONDON CONFERENCE (February 21 – March 13, 1921) AND
THE TURKISH-BOLSHEVIK MOSCOW AGREEMENT (March
16, 1921)

Chapter 18 Page: 303
ANKARA AGREEMENT (October 20, 1921), PARIS
CONFERENCE (March 1922) AND DEFEAT OF THE GREEKS
(August 25 – September 9, 1922)

Chapter 19 Page: 309
THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE (November 1922 – July 24, 1923)

Chapter 20 Page: 358
THE ARMENIAN ISSUE FROM THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE
TILL TODAY

The Birth and Development of the Republic of Armenia

Alexander Khatisian

INTRODUCTION

(Page 3 in the Original Book)

These writings of mine, first published in the Hairenik Magazine, are undoubtedly not a story but a historical source in the form of memoirs. And in a way that everyone can understand, the events and faces that I have been in contact with were predominantly included in my writings and only the thoughts that I am personally responsible for were disclosed. Likewise, it should not be considered strange that some facts and documents created by the events or those that emerged coincidentally have not been recorded. My role in here has been to write my memoirs as a politician by including the personalities around me as well. Anything more, is the historians' duty.

Al. Khatisian

CHAPTER – 1

(pages 5-13 in the Armenian book)

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF RUSSIA AND THE ARMENIANS

The great Russian Revolution occurred on February 28, 1917, and in short time, members of the “Special Transcaucasian Committee” appointed [on March 9, 1917]¹ by the order of the Russian Provisional Government and later named “Ozakom” [meaning: local government] arrived in Tbilisi. This committee was accepted enthusiastically. The Committee Chairman, [Vasily] Kharlamov who was born in Kazakh was a member of the Russian Kadet Party. Besides him, there were three committee members; [Mikael]. Papajanian an Armenian, [Akaki I.] Chkhenkeli a Georgian and [Mammad Yusif] Jafarov [an Azerbaijani].

This establishment was signaling the existence and importance of a **nationalistic problem** in the Caucasus. The Committee and the Central Government were themselves taking into consideration the interests of the local nationalities and were trying to please them to some extent. On the other hand, the peoples were showing signs of national awakening and doing business on their own. National congresses were being convened and national bodies were elected for conducting affairs related to the nations.

The Armenian National Conference convened during the month of October 1917 and elected the Armenian National Council members. Parallel to this process, elections for local administrations were also being held; together with this, national unifications and conflicts were clearly emerging. The national whirlpool which was flowing beneath the surface without being felt prior to the revolution came out to the open with all its strength even though too suddenly for many. Development of nationalistic feelings and expectations, especially among the Armenians helped the victories of the Russian weapon and our volunteer groups. These things brought closer the time to achieve national desires, in line with the Armenians’ ideas. According to the

¹ We have placed our additions like, the first or last names of some people or years of some events, as discovered through reliable web pages, for reminding purposes [in square brackets].

Armenians, a large portion of Turkish Armenia was under occupation² and Turkey faced amputation from all sides as a result of the victories of Allied soldiers.

The National Council replaced the National Bureau which had been forming the Armenian Volunteer Movement and administering the Armenian political life from the beginning of the war until then. The first deed of the National Council was to establish an Armenian Army and to give it to the command of General [Tovmas] Nazarbekian.

During that period, the Bolshevik movement was progressing in Russia with a very strong momentum. In the month of July, the Bolsheviks attempted an armed uprising in order to take power, but they failed. Later, [Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army], General Kornilov's anti-revolutionist movement came about. There was a strong Bolshevik movement within the army too. Day by day, the slogan of "peace without land compensations and war reparations" was getting more and more common. This slogan broke down the military momentum of the masses; people started to question why they were fighting and shedding their blood if there was not going to be any compromise or compensation.

The Armenians started to get uncomfortable, they were afraid that Russia may leave the lands they occupied in Turkish Armenia; especially this anti-war rhetoric had entered the Caucasian army too. The Bolshevik propaganda and provocation were freely carried out everywhere, playing with the most basic instincts and feelings of the masses. Bolshevik agents were saying to the middle-class people "**Only**

² According to this Armenian logic or the lack of it, the six vilayets of Eastern Anatolia where the Armenian minority comprised less than 20% of the total population was under the occupation of Turks and Kurds. The expectation was that the Major Powers were supposed to send the Turkish and Kurdish nationals of these lands to somewhere else, and to bestow these lands to the Armenians.

Refer to **the Memorandum** that Aharonian and Nubar Pasha submitted to the Paris Peace Conference, in 1919.

https://soyarmenio.com/wp-content/uploads/the-armenian-question-before-the-peace-conference-1919_OCR.pdf

two people are living in this big and beautiful house, while ten proletarians like you are squeezed into a small room to live in hardship, isn't this unfair? Bolshevism is going to eliminate this situation."

These sayings were affecting the crowds' way of thinking. The slogan "to return home" was introduced in the army, and it sure was affecting the morale of the soldiers. Consequently, the soldiers started to leave their positions in groups and flee to their homes.

The Bolshevik provocateurs had thrown a similarly attractive slogan among the villagers; "all lands belong to the people."

This is how the Russian army collapsed and a big portion of the soldiers in Caucasia who were composed of ordinary villagers, rushed to reach their homes in order not to be deprived off the land sharing opportunity.

The Armenian National Council appealed to Prime Minister Kerensky and requested that all Armenian soldiers on the Western Front be allowed to return to Caucasia to establish a special Armenian army in defense of the Caucasian front. [Alexander] Kerensky was taking it slow, but the Armenian army gathered in Tbilisi.

In those days, I received a telegram from the General Command of the Russian Army asking me to immediately go to Mogilev [city in Eastern Belarus] where the Chief of General Staff was located.

They were invited for consultations regarding the Caucasus Cities Association. Preparations were underway to hold a general congress in Moscow and St. Petersburg. I arrived in Moscow from Alexandropol³ in early October. The congress had already begun. Over there, instead of the old politicians that I knew since the year 1916, I saw new people who were elected through new election principles.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Party was in power. They made up the vast majority. There were only a few Bolsheviks. Heading them was the famous Bolshevik [Sergey Konstantinovich] Minin, the new Mayor

³ Founded as Kumayri in 8th BC and Turkified as Gümrü, renamed as Alexandropol in 1837 and Leninakan under Russian rule. Current name is Gyumri since 1992.

of the City Tsaritsyn. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks were in such an active and provocative stage that it was making everyone smile.



In Yerevan, Prime Minister Khatisian is saluting the soldiers who are on their way to Zangezur.

The saluting soldier is General Araratian – the Minister of Defense – and the person next to him is the representative of America.

It is necessary to mention that it was possible to see the Bolsheviks everywhere in those days. Even though very few in number, they were working very diligently and had especially a bigoted belief that they would be victorious during the election. I remember that – a Bolshevik, Dr. [Mamia] Orakhelashvili who is now heading Georgian Soviet Republic was with me in the automobile during my trip to Vladikavkaz while I was on my way to Moscow from Tbilisi. He strongly believed that the power would fall into their hands within a month. Nazaretian, another famous Bolshevik who was working with me and was surprisingly confident, he also had no doubt that they would be victorious. But the memory that impressed me most was that of Stepan Shaumian's, who was [an ethnic Armenian] one of Lenin's favorite comrades, a zealous believer apostle of the Bolshevik ideals. I knew him since the year 1905 and at every opportunity, I had attended the

arbitration courts with him. Shaumian was killed in Turkistan in the year 1918. I knew a few other bigoted Bolsheviks, for example 1Atarbekov who had a bad reputation and worked in the Union of the Cities. I remember Bolshevik Makharadze among them as another bigoted Bolshevik who later became the Head of Georgia's Soviet Government. In the spring of 1917, this gentleman used to be the general secretary of the Revolutionary Executive Committee, while I was its president. Makharadze knew of no punishment other than the gallows.

Now, let's go back to the Congress.

This time, the Congress was colorless. The speeches lacked soul. The temporary government was weak and the members were speaking non-stop, as if words were the only weapon of the government.

From Moscow, I went to the Headquarters of the General Staff. The Chief of General Staff [Nikolay Nikolayevich] Dukhonin had called me for consultation. But too many things at the headquarters seemed strange to me, there were no military guards on duty anymore, the general commander spoke in a very unstable and insecure tone. They waited for Kerensky's arrival until the end of the third day, to no avail. We prepared a plan for the future activities of the Union of the Cities. I was staying at a hotel in Mogilev, and the former justice minister of the Kerensky Cabinet [Pavel] Pereverzev had been settled in the room next to mine. He was a politician of the Union of the Cities and extremely angry at Kerensky, blaming him for releasing Lenin and Trochky. Pereverzev had them [Lenin and Trotchky] arrested and found it essential that they should remain jailed. He used to tell us that due to Kerensky's shortsightedness, the cabinet's downfall would come through these two. Because of this disagreement, Pereverzev was left outside the cabinet.

I set out from Mogilev to St. Petersburg and arrived there on October 22nd. I did not see anything extra-ordinary on the streets. The huge city had its usual calm life. I got together with my dear friend Acemov a member of the Russian Parliament and dear Dr. Hakob Zavriev [aka Hagop Zavrian]. The Ministries were continuing with their usual activities. On October 23 and 24, I made a few visits to the government

divisions for the works of the city Alexandropol [Gyumri] and I even bought a return ticket for October 27th to Caucasias via train.

However, at 10 o'clock on the morning of October 25th, my attention was drawn to some strange group gatherings while I was passing by the main street Nevsky [Prospect, meaning Boulevard in Russian]: they were armed with rifles, but they wore no military uniforms. No one stopped to ask them who they were, why they were armed or where they were going.

The passers-by were looking at them with interest and passing by quietly. When I reached the junction of Moika and Nevsky Boulevard. I heard a sudden rifle explosion. It was 12 o'clock when I reached the building where I was told the pre-parliamentary meeting would be held. Everyone there, was busy giving long-term breathless speeches.

Kerensky spoke, the Group Chiefs of the Mensheviks spoke, the leaders of the Socialist Revolutionaries spoke, the cadets spoke. From the subjects of those speeches, I understood what the sights that I saw on the streets were. Kerensky was saying ***"I can suppress the rebels with firearms and swords. Free Russia will not allow any tyranny or demolition of the legal government."*** Enthusiastic applause was heard. The parties promised their undaunted support to the government.

During the interval, I went to the dining hall with Prof. Kuzmin-Karavaev [Russian legal scholar and liberal politician (1859-1928)]. When we sat at a table, he told me what was happening outside. He stated that a very powerful movement was taking place in the barracks, the soldiers showed signs of leaning towards the Bolsheviks, but assured me that the government was suppressing this process.

The meeting restarted. But within seconds, armed sailors entered the meeting room and demanded everyone to disperse to their homes. Protest sounds were heard from various corners but everyone left without resistance. I also went outside.



1. General Pirumyan, the Garrison Commander of the Kars Castle, 2. Miss Lyhtbody, the Manager of the Kars Orphanage, 3. General Hovsepiyan, Commander of the 3rd Regiment, 4. Sepuh, 5. Colonel T. Arakelian, the Chief of Staff of Pirumyan.

I noticed there were numerous vehicles filled with soldiers on Nevsky [Boulevard]; they were moving towards the Winter Palace.

Again, I went by my friend Acemov and told him the things that I had seen and heard. Sitting next to Acemov was his brother's son Leala Acemov, a 17-year-old young man and a crazy Bolshevik. He was later killed on the days of the 1921 February rebellion. He informed us that the Bolsheviks would take power that day, and rushed back to Smolny Institute where the Bolshevik Council met under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. In his book related to those days, Trotsky described his experiences at the Smolny Institute that day.

Suddenly we heard our phone ringing. Commander [Armenian Prince Jaques] Bagratuni [who was married to Kerensky's sister] whom Kerensky had assigned as Garrison commander for the Petersburg⁴

⁴ The City's name was changed to Petrograd in 1914 and then to Leningrad in 1924 and back to St. Petersburg in 1991

District was on the phone. He was calling from the Winter Palace. Observing the Bolsheviks approaching the palace, he felt the sensitivity and responsibility of the situation, so he felt the need to consult with me and Dr. Zavrian. He was requesting us to reach the Winter Palace promptly. We went there. In the room authorized to General Bagratuni, we saw Commander Tigranian, who was the chief of staff. Through the window, I observed that the Bolshevik soldiers had surrounded the palace. Commander Bagratuni explained that some of the 40,000 soldiers in St. Petersburg had sided with the Bolsheviks and some chose to stay neutral. Siding with the government was only the students of the Officers' College and the women's battalion numbering a mere 800. So, what was supposed to be done?

Bagratuni informed us that Kerensky had gone from the city to the front lines to bring loyal soldiers.

Consulting among us, we decided to tell the General that there was no hope to defend the palace and we personally observed that the General had no power left.

We came out of the Palace which was literally surrounded by them. They barely let me and Zavrian out. General Bagratuni was arrested. Commander Iskhan Tumanov, Deputy Minister of Military Service resisted, and was shot by the soldiers. Then his body was thrown on to the Moika Water Channel. While passing by the river side, we saw how they were bombarding the Palace from the Bolshevik's battleship Aurora just at the time when the ministers' meeting would have been held there. Many streets were closed down by armed men. While passing close by the City Duma building, I saw a crowd under the leadership of Iskhan Aleksandr Yergaynabazuk of Armenian origin who used to be an aide of mine in Tbilisi one year ago and was sent to the Russian Capital with the same assignment. These were members of the City Parliament, writers and politicians, and they were walking towards the Palace to prevent bloodshed; however, they were not permitted to go further. The Palace was captured and the Ministers were arrested. Government buildings and establishments were seized by the Bolsheviks – in one word, the power fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

The next day, the city appeared empty, and on the same day I went to Caucasia. I heard bombardments while waiting in the Moscow train station. **A fierce war had occurred between the Bolsheviks and the government forces – a war that lasted exactly seven days.**

I reached Tbilisi on the last day of October. Zavrian also arrived. In Tbilisi. It seemed as if no serious attempt was made by the Bolsheviks to take power. Early in the morning the next day, Dr. Zavrian and Stephan Shahumian came to me.

In Zavrian's mind all these events had only one single value: to what degree were they going to solve the Armenian problem and achieve independence for Turkish Armenians? Zavrian's opinion was that the Armenian people should earn their independence through armed means. Whichever regime came to power in Russia, it had to aid the Armenians. He was an enthusiastic advocate of this vision, he had left aside his comfortable life, his house and personal business to serve his nation; he had a great personality with a crystal-clear spirit. From the point of view of moral cleanliness and patriotism, he was the greatest person – a very rare one that I had seen in my life journey. He loved every human being and it was hard not to like him.

The Bolshevik administration did not see Zavrian's ideas as an obstacle on their path of power. For this reason, he was at all times staying close to Shahumian for whom a decree of arrest was made by the Caucasian power holders. Zavrian had brought Shahumian by my side for him to read, what Lenin was going to publish in relation to the self-determination principle of the nations while presenting the rights of Turkish Armenia, according to his references and Shahumian's mediation.



The Fourth Brigade Practicing in Kars.

Zavrian had prepared the rough draft of the proposal that Shahumian had approved in my presence. Zavrian submitted it promptly for it to be delivered to Lenin who was in St. Petersburg, so that it would be published promptly. And in fact, this announcement was officially realized, it even found its place as an article in the Bolshevik constitution.

Even though it remained in power, the prestige of the Transcaucasia Special Committee assigned by the Provisional Government did not last long after the October Revolution. **A new power from a different source became essential. And thus, the Transcaucasian Commissariat was created by the consent of local parties. Armenians, Georgians and Tartars participated in the power sharing.**

This Commissariat replaced the Special Committee which was assigned by Kerensky and declared that it sees the Caucasus as an integral part of Russia.

CHAPTER-2
(PAGES 14-27 in the original book)

**TRANSCAUCASIAN COMMISSARIAT
AND TALKS WITH TURKEY**

In terms of researching the history of diplomacy in the Republic of Armenia, the period beginning with the Bolshevik Revolution of October 25, 1917 [this date in Gregorian Calendar is November 11, 1917] and ending with the declaration of independence of Armenia on May 28, 1918 is quite important.

As long as the Provisional Government remained in power in Petrograd, breakup of the Caucasus was out of the question. The Bolshevik Revolution happened to be the first blow in this respect. Caucasia did not accept this Revolution. Although it still was legally connected to Russia, it started to lead an almost independent life on its own. **Along with the Caucasus, the Armenian people together with the Turkish Armenian immigrants that it absorbed, numbering up to 300,000,⁵ also started to live separate from Russia.**

It is possible to divide that time period into two parts: the first is the period from October 5 to April 1 and the second from April 1 to May 28. History of the Transcaucasian Commissariat, and talks with Turkey that took place in Trabzon are included in the first period. In the second period the war with Turkey, declaration of the independent Transcaucasian Republic on April 9⁶ and the Batumi talks, demolition of the Republic of Transcaucasia, declaration of the national states and the Batumi Peace Treaty are included. In this chapter, the events of the first period are included.

When I returned from Petrograd to Tbilisi, the Bolshevik Revolution had taken place and there was big excitement in Tbilisi [capital of Georgia, prior to 1936 the city was called Tiflis]. **I was the first person to have witnessed the revolution in Petrograd.** Questions were forwarded from all sides to clarify the situation. Consultations within, and in between parties were taking place. The public's interest was so

⁵ For the first time in his book, prior to the Trabzon Conference, he is giving this number as 300,000. Whereas, in Trabzon, on March 25, 1918 the number he stated to Turkish Commander Rauf Orbay in this regard was 400,000.

⁶ Someone like Khatisian, as if he is trying to bewilder his readers, is using two different calendars in the same sentence: April 1-9 refers to the old calendar, May 28 refers to the new calendar. There is a 13-day difference between the two calendars. April 1 according to the old calendar is April 14 according to the new Gregorian calendar and April 9 is April 22.

great that on Nov 5, I had to read a public report to an unprecedented crowd.

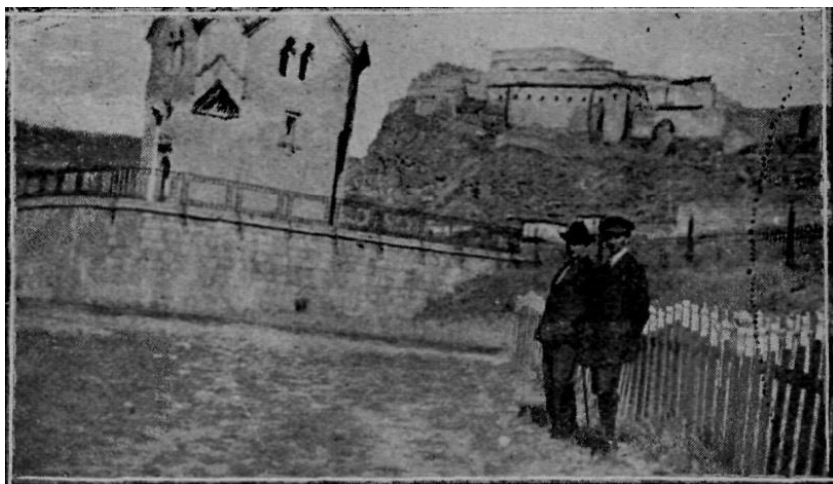
In particular, the frontline was in a dangerous situation. The Armenians, especially feared that it would be difficult to hold the Russian soldiers in the Caucasian front while they were fleeing from the Western fronts to their homes in panic. Even though a little less than the Armenians, Georgians were also worried because the flight of the Russian Army from the Caucasus could create a dangerous situation for them too. Only the Muslim Tartars⁷ thought different. But they too were very careful and secretive, it was obvious that they felt happy only about the surprise developments in the events that happened.

This insecure situation of the Caucasus naturally concerned the Armenians more than anyone else because the Tajik⁸ army's forward movement was replacing the Russian soldiers leaving their lines of duty. No trust was left on the Russian soldiers, because they fled in spite of all efforts like psychological support to keep them in the Caucasus; so, the program of establishing a special Armenian Army, consequently acquisition of the national territories and its recognition gained an urgent and necessary character. The primary duty of the Armenian soldiers was going to be the defense of Turkish Armenia⁹.

⁷ Tatar in Turkish is used for the Crimean and Siberian Tatars, but the author refers to Azerbaijani Turks as Tartars like many Armenians do.

⁸ Even though Tajiks are of Iranian origin and mostly from Central Asia, like Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the author uses this term for the Turks of Anatolia, even though the Turkish Republic was already up and running by the time he started to write this book. For someone who had held such respectable positions like prime ministerial and reached a mature age by then, it is not reasonable not to call the Turks with their proper name.

⁹ They were going to defend against the Turkish Army, the Turks' great province of Erzurum which the Russians had occupied in 1916 but evacuated following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.



The fortress of Kars and the Church of Surap Arakelot (Holy Apostles) [in Ani]

In those days, the Regional Council of the Caucasian Army's Military Representatives broadcast the following call, in relation to the October Revolution.

"The Regional Council, decisively and firmly condemns the revolution of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd and invites the Russian Army to remain in place in a calm and orderly manner.

Chief Donskoi"

The Committee of the Caucasian Front replied immediately with the following decision:

"The Committee of the Caucasian Army, who is knowledgeable about the events that took place in Petrograd and about the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, thinks as follows:

- A) This Bolshevik attempt is against the sovereign will of the people who handed the power to the Kerensky Cabinet.*

- B) *Only Kerensky's Ministry is authorized to administer the country under the control of revolutionary democracy until the Constitutional Assembly convenes.*
- C) *Any other government's attempt to take over governmental control by self-declaration of its own authority would drag the country to the horrors of a civil war and hand it over to German Imperialism which would lead the gains of the revolution towards crucial destruction.*

Considering these situations, the Committee of the Caucasian Army has taken the following decisions:

- 1) *To recognize the Kerensky Government as the sole authority of the Russian State.*
- 2) *To declare any other revolutionary government as an enemy and fight by any means against its destructive activities.*
- 3) *To protect the Army's order and combat power, considering that all hopes of the revolutionary people are tied to the Army and that it is the last castle of the newly born independence.*
- 4) *To immediately start the election phase of the Constitutional Assembly that will convene in the shortest time possible, because only the Constitutional Assembly should be the voice of the people in an undisputed manner and has to handle the fate of our precious motherland."*

This decision was written in Erzurum, and there is no doubt that it reflected the general mood existing at the time.

Socialist-Revolutionaries and Party Bodies of the Social-Democrats also made calls to the public and the army **"to calculate the positive and negative effects of the Bolshevik Rebellion in a peaceful manner"**, and took similar decisions by inviting the establishment of a Constituent Assembly urgently. The Armenian Revolutionary

Federation made a similar statement. Thus, a unified political front was established.

It was necessary to regulate the power. In Tbilisi, a temporary “Community Safety” Committee composed of political party heads was established and an invitation was called for a comprehensive consultation meeting where representatives of all political, military and community organizations could attend at the Community Home on November 11. The following conclusion was reached at the end of the consultations:

“Considering the absence of a centralized power recognized by everyone, the country is subject to an increasing lack of power and this situation may also be spread to Transcaucasia. With the same token, also considering that the near future of Transcaucasia is dependent on the solution of these communal economic and financial problems;

“The Consultation Board has taken the following decisions:

- A) Until the Constituent Assembly elections in the Transcaucasian and Caucasian Army are concluded, management of the country should be given to a Community Security Committee which includes representatives of national and other community organizations in addition to the Revolutionary-Democratic Party.*
- B) Following the election of the Constituent Assembly, the Temporary Government should be formed under the following conditions:*
 - 1) To follow a policy suiting all Russian democratic principles and common state interests,*
 - 2) To autonomously administer only the local current issues,*
 - 3) To rule the country by the Constituent Assembly until a central power recognized all around Russia is established,*

4) *To rely upon the Worker, Military and Peasant Councils, and Local Autonomous Managements Bodies.*”

These decisions were accepted almost unanimously and four days later, on November 15, the new government took office under the name of “Transcaucasian Commissariat.

The people listed below participated in this Commissariat:

[Evgeni] Gegechkori (Georgian) [Menshevik = Social Democratic Party = anti Bolshevik], Head of the government and Commissar of Foreign Affairs,
Chkhenkeli (Georgian), Commissar of Internal Affairs,
Dr. Donskoi (Russian Jew), Commissar of Military and Marine,
H. Karjikian (Armenian), Commissar of Finance,
Alekseev-Meskhiev (Georgian), Commissar of Justice,
[Mammad Yusif] Jafarov (Tartar) [Azerbaijani], Commissar of Commerce and Industry,
Melik Aslanov (Tartar) [Azerbaijani], Commissar of Communication,
Neruchev (Russian), Commissar of Agriculture,
Ter-Ghazarian (Armenian), Commissar of Food Supplies,
Dr.H. Ohanjanyan (Armenian), Commissar of Public Welfare,
Khasmammadov (Tartar) [Azerbaijani], State Auditor,

Three days later, the Commissariat published a call to the Caucasian peoples and invited them to peaceful restructuring studies by drawing their attention to three important subjects:

- A) Constituent Assembly elections**
- B) Solution of national problem**
- C) Establishment of peace with Turkey as soon as possible**

These three basic problems drew Caucasia’s full attention. I can assure you that the entire Caucasia responded with sympathy to the Commissariat’s call. However, unfortunately, all the parties and peoples, entering the Commissariat had conflicting desires, feelings and political tendencies. This was the situation since the first day I came to Yerevan. Armenians wanted Tajik [Turkish] Armenia for themselves,

Georgians desired to establish friendly and peaceful relations with the Tajiks [Turks] and Tartars [Azerbaijani Turks].

Georgians had taken important duties in the New Caucasus Government. Indeed, the balance of administration and power was in their hands.

As a result of ethnic disagreements, the National Councils gradually and consistently played a bigger role. The Transcaucasian Commissariat was pushed to a level of secondary importance. Especially in the Armenians' life, the National Council Leadership which was located in Tbilisi – unfortunately outside the borders of Armenia, always took the front stage. The Armenian Army General Staff was also stationed there.

Out of the three problems pointed by the Commissariat, solution for two primarily came to the fore. They were: peace with Turkey and elections of the Constituent Assembly.

The elections were held peacefully, without major events and conflicts. It was evident that the three parties in power; Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Georgian Menshevik and the Musavats would win absolute majority in their national districts. And that is what happened. But these elections did not reach their goal, because on its first day of duty, the Constituent Assembly was disbanded by the Bolsheviks.

The second subject, which was peace with Turkey went through a tragic process and it concluded fatally in determining the fate of the Caucasian peoples' future.

On November 21, the Commissariat decided to begin peace talks with Turkey and this brought the truce deal signed in Erzincan, on December 5, 1917.

On January 1, 1918, the Tajik [Turkish] Army's Commander of the Caucasian front Wehib Pasha sent to the Transcaucasian Commissariat a striking question written by Enver Pasha;

“What does the I n d e p e n d e n t Transcaucasian government think about the terms of the peace agreement to be made with Turkey?”

and he presented an additional information:

“Enver Pasha is thinking of sending delegates for the signing of a peace treaty to the capital city of I n d e p e n d e n t Transcaucasia.”

I wish to draw the attention of my readers to the use of the word ‘**I n d e p e n d e n t**’ that he used twice. The Tajiks only wish was to report their desire to do business with an independent state and to encourage the Caucasian power to this. An independent Caucasia for the Tajiks was a desirable buffer zone between Turkey and Russia.

This situation was felt in Tbilisi, but no one wanted to speak openly the subject of separation from Russia. Nevertheless, the idea of independence and its ignition by Turkey was striking.

The Commissariat held several sessions for the preparation of the answer, postponing the issue with the purpose of reaching an agreement with Ukraine and North Caucasus. Thus, on the one hand while trying to emphasize its connection with Russia, it aimed at finding support during its negotiations with Turkey. The Caucasian Government replied to the Tajiks’ letter on January 15, 1918 saying that it will respond to their call in three weeks with the emphasis that it is essential to learn the thoughts of the autonomous members of the Russian State. There was no clue about ‘i n d e p e n d e n t’ Transcaucasia in this explanation.

The Tajiks in the meantime, did not sit back idly waiting for a reply from Caucasia. With a series of telegrams that they sent to the Chief of General Staff of the Caucasian Army who was a Georgian, they announced some false news of Armenian barbarism. And on January 30th, they informed that they had to start a military action for the defense of the Muslim population. A new war was brewing.

In reality the Tajik [Turkish] forces had realized that the Russian soldiers were hurrying to return home, irregularly, leaving the war front

in masses. For the entire two months, I had followed the flight of these soldiers passing through three roads and uniting in Alexandropol [Gyumri]; they were coming from Iran via Yerevan by rail, from Erzurum via Kars, and from Yelenovka [Azeri lands] through the trails. Frequently, they were selling anything they had; their weapons, military vehicles, uniforms and even their religious icons – anything they could sell. They all considered themselves Bolsheviks, declaring that they were subject to the party that sent them home. They were all confident that land-lots were now distributed in their homeland and they were in a hurry not to be deprived of their share.

The Armenian Army started a rather difficult, almost impossible task. As they did not receive any assistance from their Caucasian neighbors in these difficult conditions, they had to defend the Caucasus front and resist the advancing Tajik Army. In the sharp cold of January and February, it was difficult to take the soldiers to the territory of Tajik Armenia, which was occupied and empty. Food was also scarce.

We had to carry on two jobs at the same time while living in Alexandropol. On one hand, we were accepting Russian soldiers who ran away from the frontline causing distress and panic and on the other hand we were urgently collecting Armenian soldiers and sending them to the front.

The Armenian and Tajik forces could not be equal under such conditions.

The Armenian National Council was busy with the establishment of the Armenian Army, but at the same time, the Transcaucasian Commission was establishing the Georgian and Tartar armies. The military leadership of the Transcaucasian power was not in the hands of the Armenians. It was even working against the Armenians, that is, against their military purposes. Because, the Tartars were openly holding the Turks' side, and the Georgians were actually supporting them; the Transcaucasian Commissioner was not allowing recruitment of soldiers, so various fictional objections were put forward to overcome this obstruction. A time came when the Armenians were ready to gather Armenian soldiers on their own, without the permission of the Commissioner. This struggle continued for exactly one and a half

months between us and our neighbors, until we managed to achieve permission.

It is necessary to take into account that the railways were in the hands of the Georgians and Tartars, not the Armenians.

They were refusing to assign wagons to transport troops to the front line. The President and members of the Armenian National Council had to wait for 48 hours at the Tbilisi Train Station, until they found a train to go to Kars. Tartars detonated the railway bridge to stop the operation of the Armenian soldiers on the Yerevan-Julfa line.

There were also great difficulties to establish an Armenian army. City residents were hardly registering for the army, especially as infantry. The wealthy Armenians were not donating money, they had to be jailed until their share was collected. Especially the Armenians of Tbilisi were evading the military service. Mostly, the Armenians of Yerevan, Bayezid and Zangezur, that is those of the mainland Armenia were becoming soldiers.

Apart from the Armenian National Council, a Committee for the Turkish Armenians was active in Tbilisi. At that time, it was not possible to talk about a more united Armenia and the Armenian segments were not yet merged by approaching each other.

The Turkish Armenians were only dealing with the independence of Tajik [Turkish] Armenia and forming special military units under Antranik's command.

The British Colonel Park was working with them. He was later killed by the Bolsheviks in Vladi Caucasus. Thanks to him, the National Council received [from the British] 4 Million Rubles for military purposes.

The power and competence of the Armenian National Council was increasing day by day, and all Armenian segments were uniting around it with the understanding of acquiring a special Armenian land in the Caucasus.

The Armenian army was being organized and sent to the front-line in portions. However, I cannot say that it was a threatening force, because there was a vast front-line and very small number of units were being scattered around, in small groups. Dro (Drastamat Kanayan) undoubtedly an inherent military talent said it was a huge mistake to disperse the soldiers so much. He thought it was necessary to narrow down the front-line and unite the soldiers like a fist. But instead, our soldiers were being divided into small groups and thus they were broken down.

The situation behind the front-line was also getting worse, day by day. By creating armed groups, the Muslims of the Caucasus were attacking our military units that were heading to the front, destroying railway lines and blowing up bridges. In short, they were doing whatever is necessary to block an army's operation.

A small typical case study: there was a Muslim village called Molla-Musa [new name: Voskehask] in Alexandropol. The residents of this village were attacking Armenian soldiers, killing them and taking their weapons. Before sending a punitive unit to this village, it was decided to send a delegation of directors under the leadership of Asribekian the President of Military Deputies Council. Asribekian was a young Menshevik, social democrat, who believed in using means of persuasion in such cases. The Alexandropol Council Members also accompanied him. When the delegation approached the village, the villagers targeted them with rifles and Asribekian fell dead. The people of Alexandropol were deeply saddened and hurt. When the train from Tbilisi approached the train station, a crowded mob dragged a Muslim passenger out of the train wagon and killed him on the spot.

Such events were common in all corners of the Caucasus.

The Turks, seeing that the Russian soldiers were leaving the front-line, sent telegrams one after the other to Iliya Odishelidze who was the General Commander of the Caucasus Army, accusing the Armenians of bullying the Kurds and Tartars by terrible means.

It was evident that whenever the Turks were prepared for a slaughter, they accused the Armenians, in order to prepare a psychological

infrastructure for their demonic projects. The purpose of these messages was to provoke Muslims of the Caucasus against the Armenians and to arouse them into action. Thus, our relations with the Azerbaijani Tartars were greatly strained and it became impossible to reach any agreement with them. The Tajikis [Turks] made every effort to ensure that there was no ground for such an agreement and they succeeded by provoking religious and other passions of our neighbors.

However, the Tartars [Azerbaijanis] were not only attacking the Armenians; they organized attacks to the Russian soldiers returning home from the fronts as well. The saddest of such attacks was the one when the Tartars among the Russian soldiers attacked the other Russian soldiers at the Shamkhor Train Station. They attacked out of nowhere, to the naïve Russian soldiers who were resting in the wagons with their weapons put aside. 1,000 Russian soldiers were burned inside the wagons, cannons, many rifles were captured and taken to Ganja [second largest city of Azerbaijan]. The Russian soldiers took revenge of this event in 1920 by killing thousands of Ganja Tartars and by burning to destroy all their neighborhoods. Tartars accused the Armenians of helping the Bolsheviks to avenge their own revenge.

Armenians were gradually abandoning the Tajik Armenian territory [districts within Turkey where Armenians used to live as minorities] under the pressure of the advancing Tajik Army in January of 1918; behind them were refugees, followed by Armenian troops. The front-line came close to where the Russian-Tajik border was in 1914. The truce signed on October 5, 1917 was violated both in real and in legal terms.

While I was preparing to go to Erzurum, from where they had been calling me non-stop, I suddenly received a telegram from our party organ in Tbilisi; they were calling me there. When I arrived in Tbilisi, the subject of the general talks was peace negotiations with Turkey. I saw that we were too late.

With a letter that he wrote on January 3, 1918, the Turkish Commander of the Caucasus front - Wehib Pasha was inviting the representatives of Transcaucasia to Brest-Litovsk, where the well-known peace

conference was being held. Wehib Pasha was promising that he was going to ensure that his comrades (Germans, Austrians and Bulgarians) would recognize the Transcaucasian Government. This invitation caused some disagreements among the Caucasian politicians; the vast majority were against going to Brest-Litovsk. Wehib Pasha's letter arrived in Tbilisi on February 1. The Georgian nationalists were in favour of going to Brest-Litovsk, but the Georgian Social Democratic Mensheviks and Armenians were absolutely opposed to going there.

It should be said that apart from the government, the Transcaucasian Sejm¹⁰ also had a determined word to say among the problems of this order. The President of Sejm was Georgian [Nikolay] Chkheidze and the Vice Presidents were S. Tigranian and (Tartar) Dr. Aghayev who was later killed in Tbilisi. The Sejm was containing within itself different aspirations and policies of the three main parties of the Caucasian nations, so it could not show solidarity on any fundamental issue. Behind the lobbies of Sejm, the central organs of the parties carried out the work.

On February 1, the Government of Transcaucasia began to seriously worry about peace talks for the first time. At that time, no agreement was reached between the Bolsheviks and the German Coalition in Brest-Litovsk. Turks and Germans had started an offensive and were proceeding forward with almost no resistance.

The Transcaucasian Government continued to negotiate with the North Caucasus about the situation of the non-Bolshevik Russia.

The military governments of the Caucasus saw peace talks essential so that it would be possible to save at least the weapons and large military supplies that were being kept in storage in Trabzon [called Trebizond in the Middle ages]

Taking into account these conditions, the Government of Transcaucasia decided on February 1 to request from Sejm, to establish the conditions of peace through a special committee and at the same time to start the negotiations. It is after this decision that they invited me from

¹⁰ Legislative Assembly of the Transcaucasian Commissariat.

Alexandropol to Tbilisi. The Armenian Revolutionary federation saw my attendance to the peace talks meetings a necessity.

The Government held numerous sessions in February with the purpose to discuss the subject and the conditions of peace. On February 1, the Chief of Staff for the Caucasian Front declared ***“There is no military power left anymore to continue the war”***. The Armenians wanted peace too. Only the Russians were trying to delay the peace talks to stop the Caucasus from leaving Russia.

One subject of controversy was where the Peace Conference should be held. Tbilisi, Batumi and Trabzon were presented as candidates. The first two cities were refused to prevent the Turks from observing the internal situation of the Caucasus. Finally, focus was turned towards Trabzon, a city considered “neutral” because it was in the hands of the Russians at the time.

On February 13, taking into account that no one attended from the North Caucasus and Ukraine, the government of Transcaucasia informed the Central Government of Ukraine that it had consented to conduct peace negotiations with the Turks in Trabzon; and also announced that the Peace Conference would begin on February 17 (according to the old calendar).

At Sejm, I spoke with determination in favor of peace and reconciliation with Turkey. The Russian politicians became very upset and angry at this, and slapped me with the speeches that I had previously made in Moscow. But they were forgetting that it was not us who moved away from Russia, but Russia itself had abandoned us.

On February 16, Sejm elected a delegation for peace talks. Its establishment was as follows:

President: Akaki Chkhenkeli (Georgian)

Members: Abashidze (Georgian Muslim)

Gwaghava and Laskhishvili (Georgians)

H. Katchaznouni and I on the Armenian side

Hajinski, Haydarov, Mekhedov, Hasmamedov and

Sheyhulislamov (Tartars).

The Turks originally chose Batumi for the location of the conference, but later they gave up their proposal and consented on Trabzon. Our main goal was not to lose Turkish Armenia, because the Tartars and Georgians had no case to defend this cause. But it was obvious that the main topic of discussion would revolve around Turkish Armenia. The rather major change in the psychology of the Georgians was conveyed through the expressions of Chkhenkeli, the President of the Delegation. Unlike Gegechkori, he did not have a Russian tendency; on the opposite, he was a person in the Turkish orientation.

Among the Tartar members of the delegation Mammad Hasan Hajinski of Baku, stood out as a very serious and careful politician.

Ruben Ter-Minassian and Leon had come as advisors with the Armenian Delegates.

I had taken with me, a geographical map from the Caucasus Military, while I was preparing to go to Trabzon. This map is still with me today and it stayed on the table during all subsequent conferences. On it, in turn, Enver Pasha, Wehib Pasha and Bekir Sami [Kunduh] Bey drew the borders of Armenia.

Because I wanted to get the opinion of the Turkish Armenian Council, I applied to Vahan Papazian first and asked him to give me his conditions for the borders of Turkish Armenia in writing.

I must say that the borders he gave were almost the same as what [the US] President Wilson drew later.

The Committee was set to go to Trabzon at 12 o'clock on February 17th, but a meeting was held in the formerly Governor's Palace in order to have a final exchange of ideas between the Delegates and the Government members. While we were in the Palace, a telegraph signed by Karahan arrived. It was from the Bolshevik delegation in Brest Litovsk. We read, among other things, the following items in the telegram:

"This new proposal of the Turks, which is in agreement with the ultimatum dated February 11 includes time limitation. Due to this, and by taking into consideration that the Germans had

previously refused the cessation of military operations before the ceasefire was signed, we decided to sign without examining, the ceasefire agreement, and to leave immediately. The most serious deterioration among the February 11 conditions is separation of Ardahan, Kars and Batumi from Russia due to grounds of sovereignty. Karahan”

This telegram created great surprise and frustration. We had held long sessions discussing the merger conditions of Turkish Armenia, but now we were learning that not only Turkish Armenia, but almost half of Transcaucasia was also going to be separated and delivered to the Turks. We faced a little dilemma regarding if we should go or not. But in the end, we felt it was essential to go. However, a poisonous suspicion, pressuring us had entered into the hearts of us all. According to our hunch, when the subject reached the stage to surrender, it would no longer be possible to hold peace talks. However, it was also essential to find a common language with the Turks somehow, especially when the news coming from Europe regarding the war were also not comforting to us.

People wanted peace so we could not turn our backs and stay. Sometimes it felt as if we could have saved the borders of 1914 if we had gone to Brest-Litovsk.

On the same night i.e., on February 17, the Transcaucasian Sejm’s Head Chkheidze and Government Head Gegechkori informed all the governments of the world that Transcaucasia did not recognize the Brest-Litovsk Agreement and that their own delegation would go to Trabzon.

However, Wehib Paşa demanded on February 25, the evacuation of Kars, Batumi and Ardahan as soon as possible, based on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. On that same day, he was replied: the Transcaucasian Government did not recognize the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty and because the Transcaucasian Sejm had already sent a special delegation to Trabzon, this request of Wehib Pasha meant refusal to conduct peace negotiations.

To consolidate this view, the Transcaucasian Government considered it necessary to invite Sejm to an extraordinary session the next day – on February 26. At the meeting, Prime Minister Gegechkori presented a report regarding Wehib Pasha's demands, the government's response and the delegation's progress. Following this presentation, Gegechkori reminded publicly and formally for the first time that Transcaucasia was working as an independent political unit. Gegechkori notified that it was surprising to them to see the Turks sign with the Russians a separate treaty which is harmful to the Transcaucasian lands, after promising independence to Transcaucasia in the Brest-Litovsk Agreement, and without waiting for the Trabzon Conference. Gegechkori informed ***"Peace is at stake and the people should be prepared for all kinds of events."***

All the Parties, except Musavat [Democratic Islamic Party, the oldest existing political party in Azerbaijan] agreed that it was not necessary to recognize the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and strengthened the government's unwavering stance. Only Khan Khoyski, the leader of Musavat demanded to wait and take no definite steps until some news come from Trabzon.

The decision accepted by Sejm refused the Brest-Litovsk Agreement and gave vote of confidence to the steps taken by the government.

The center of gravity shifted to Trabzon. But psychologically, Transcaucasia felt completely lonely, abandoned by Russia, though not officially separated. An uncertain situation had occurred, the independent Transcaucasia, in reality was not legally fully-independent. And the Turks were explaining this with the Armenians and partially with the Georgians' affection towards Russia, and this was further provoking them.

From the military point of view, the condition of the Armenians was more difficult than the others. And naturally, the Armenians who were waiting anxiously for the result of the Trabzon discussions with their hearts pounding were more uncomfortable than all the others.

CHAPTER-3
(PAGES 28-36 in the original book)

TRABZON CONFERENCE
(FEBRUARY 23 – APRIL 1, 1918)

The delegation that came to Trabzon consisted of many members. All included, there were 40 of us; members of the delegation, consultants, secretaries, managers of the economics department and special officers. In addition, we had taken a protection team of up to 50 people with us.

In reality, the large size of this delegation showed how inexperienced we were to establish a peace conference delegation. On the other hand, it was evidence of how low the level of mutual trust was among the representatives of various nations forming the delegation. So much so that each person wanted to have their own private consultants because they did not trust the others. Upon our arrival in Trabzon, Turkish newspapers wrote malicious articles on this subject: “If the incoming team is a military occupation force it is small, but if it is a peace delegation then it is larger than it should be.”

We set off from Tbilisi on a private train at midnight of February 17¹¹. We were at sea on February 22nd. We informed Istanbul that we were on our way with a radio telegraph. We were travelling with the ship “Karl”.

It was 4 a.m. in the morning when my cabin door was knocked suddenly. I was told that the chairman of the delegation was requesting me to come for consultation on a very important issue. Upon my arrival at the Captain’s cabin, I saw that Chkhenkeli and the commander of our security team were also there, and so was the captain. From the captain’s explanations, I learned that he was told by the captain of the Black Sea Fleet of the Bolshevik Committee to go to Sivastopol immediately and that he should deliver us to the Committee. Even though the captain did not have an obligation to obey this command, he was shaken and he was also scared of not fulfilling the requirement of the demand to change the ship’s route towards Sevastopol; however, he had given his word of honor to take us to Trabzon. But later it became known that to take us to Trabzon was for his own purpose, it turns out he later took that boat out of the Black Sea and sold it.

¹¹ The author has used the old calendar in here and in the Title of this Chapter (Feb 13–Apr-1) as in many other places in this book; 13 days should be added to find their equivalent in Gregorian Calendar.

At the time, we were thinking of only one thing; to reach Trabzon alive. Thanks to our strongest and capable workers, we immediately took some precautions. We distributed money to the crew. We gave at least 60,000 rubles to each one and promised to give them 10,000 rubles more for each day of our stay in the Trabzon port. We threatened the more stubborn crew members through our guard team. All these measures succeeded and our ship turned its route from Sivastopol towards Trabzon. We were offshore Trabzon, at 8 p.m. on February 23rd. The next day, on February 24, when we got out and looked all around us from the ship's deck, we could not see another ship which should have brought the Turkish delegation from Istanbul.

The sound of the military band was heard from the beach and the movements of the military detachment were noticed. When we looked through the binoculars, we got the impression that Turks were performing a military ceremony. At 10 am we sent our secretary and the Commander of the Guard Team to the shore to find out if there was any news from the Turkish delegation. Upon returning, they informed us that the Turkish delegation had just left Istanbul. We stayed on board our ship on February 24 and 25, however no one arrived. We started to feel uncomfortable, our ego was hurt. We informed Tbilisi that the Turks had not arrived. On the evening of February 25, the Governor of Trabzon came on board our ship, to inform us that the Turkish delegation would arrive in short time. We performed a return visit to him and notified that we had decided to return back to Batumi immediately, unless the Turkish Delegation arrived the next day. But, the next morning, the Turkish boat carrying the Turkish delegation appeared on the horizon and then entered into the port that we were in.

Three hours later a small boat approached our ship. From the boat; Chief of the Turkish Delegation Mr. Rauf [Orbay], Colonel Hamit who was born in Bosnia, and the Young Turks Committee member Mr. [Ahmed] Rıza who had joined the Ajaria expedition in 1914 came on board our ship.

The Turkish delegates requested us to come ashore. A discussion occurred between us and the Turkish team, regarding our right to have a security team of our own. Turks firmly stated that Trabzon was not a

neutral city, but rather a Turkish city, and that under international laws they assumed responsibility for the protection of our committee. After some deliberations, we came to an agreement to have ten of our protection team members allowed to stay with us and the rest to return to Batumi with the next available ship.

In the evening after paying a return visit to the Turkish delegation, we landed ashore. They greeted us with a marching band – terrible in music, and a display of fireworks. Then, they placed us in a two-story building, right across the building was a Turkish army barrack full of soldiers. The next morning, we went out on the street, the city was almost empty, and the streets were covered in mud. Of course, there was not even one Armenian. The shops were empty and closed, a few Greeks sold only meat and vegetables. We walked towards the Armenian Church that had been converted to a stable.

On the next day, only our first official consultations were held with the Turkish Delegation. Mr. Rauf took over the presidency and invited us to the opening ceremony of the Peace Conference. With this, Trabzon became indirectly recognized as a Turkish city.

On the first day of our conference, we heard the news of two events of vital importance. The first was the news that Turkish soldiers had taken Erzurum back, and the second news was that the Bolsheviks had signed a peace treaty in Brest-Litovsk, according to which they were leaving Kars, Batumi and Ardahan to the Turks.

In order to present our conference efforts in more detail, we need to remind that the Turks continued their forward operations non-stop on the Caucasus Front throughout the entire discussion period and our soldiers constantly withdrew.

At the beginning of the conference, the locations where our soldiers were positioned were as follows:

- Batumi and Çoruh Valleys were occupied by Georgian soldiers.
- Our Erzincan regiment stood in the direction of Erzincan.

- In Erzurum our Erzurum regiment, as well as the 1st and 4th Regiments were present.
- In Kars, we had three regiments.
- The positions all the way below Hınıs were held by the 2nd Armenian regiment, and Hınıs and Van regiments,
- In the south of Van, we had 5th Armenian regiment, as well as 1st, 2nd and 4th Van battalions,
- Maku Regiment had settled in the East of Van,
- Apart from all of the above, in these fronts, we had one special military unit under the command of Antranik and other teams of Sepuh, Murad, Ter Ghevondian, Torkom, Bandukhi and others.
- Commander Silikian's division was in Yerevan,
- Commander Aressian's division, and a cavalcade under the command of Corganian in Alexandropol
- the Supreme Commandment and Nazarbekian were in Tbilisi
- There were over 10,000 Armenian soldiers in Baku,
- Assyrian Garrisons under the leadership of Bedros Agha, and an Armenian battalion under the leadership of Stepanian were present in Iran.

The main plan of the Turks was to capture Batumi – Baku railway line, Baku oil fields, as well as passing their soldiers to Turkistan and from there to threaten Britain. At the same time, they were getting close to Alexandropol, from there they wanted to march forward to Baku, Julfa and Iran and from there they aimed to threaten the British stationed in Baghdad.

Transformation of the Caucasus into a military operations zone is an understandable subject. In his memoirs about the war, German Commander [Erich Friedrich Wilhelm] Ludendorff said that the heroic resistance of the Armenians has prevented realization of this plan, and also prevented gasoline to be obtained from Baku, which could have if reached on time, would allow the cars to be operated.

At the beginning of the summer season of 1918, Germans had piled up 15,000 soldiers in Odessa with the purpose of occupying the Caucasus.

The number of Turkish soldiers in the Caucasus was approximately 30,000, out of which 8,000 were in Baku. These were brought from the Palestine fronts and they were the best Turkish troops.

And the two forces, Caucasian (or more correctly the Armenian) and Turkish forces collided. Following Erzurum's occupation by the Turks, the Armenian soldiers retreated towards Sarikamish. The Armenian soldiers were able to resist for 11 days until reinforcements came from Tbilisi. **Despite this, it was not possible to hold on to Sarikamish and on March 23rd the Turkish military captured Sarikamish as well. While retreating, the Armenians set the city and its storage houses on fire and withdrew to Kars.**

On the first day of the conference, Mr. Rauf the President of the Turkish Delegation gave a long speech decorated with nice words. As understood from the following conversations, Mr. Rauf gave high importance to the rapprochement between Turkey and the United Kingdom. Because he was of Circassian origin, he was very interested in the fate of the people of his race and Caucasia. In his speech Mr. Rauf said: ***"A new star is rising in the East; this star is the Republic of Transcaucasia"*** and he was celebrating it. He was also celebrating return of the lands which had been kept away from their mainland. From this, Mr. Rauf meant the return of Kars, Batumi and Ardahan to Turkey.

Naturally, these implications created surprise and discontent among us. In spite of this, we continued to defend our positions that we had stated in the special declaration published on March 7th.

From the formal and informal talks, it became evident that;

- a) The Turks wanted to capture Kars, Batumi and Ardahan no matter what, as per the Brest-Litovsk Agreement.
- b) By creating a buffer zone between Turkey and Russia and giving it to the Transcaucasian Republic, it became evident that they were trying to make sure that it would be independent legally and in reality, and separated from Russia as well.

In order to turn these plans into reality, the Turks had decided to make a military expedition and to occupy controversial lands.

Mr. Hami the Turkish Delegation's Secretary, an 85-year-old "International Law Professor" who was close to Mr. Rauf, was coming to visit us frequently upon Mr. Rauf's assignment, most of the time, to talk about the Armenian Issue. I had come across this gentleman in Istanbul in the autumn of 1918 as well. From the discussions I had with Mr. Rauf and Mr. Hami, I had come to the conclusion that the Turks at that time had two plans for the solution of the Turkish Armenians' issue:

The first was to have a population exchange between Turkey and Transcaucasia, and the second was local autonomy under Turkish rule in Eleshkirt, Van and Hınıs regions.

As per the population exchange alternative, Mr. Rauf was offering us to leave 300,000 Turkish Armenian refugees in Transcaucasia for good and in their place receiving 300,000 Tartars to be settled in Turkey. We rejected this alternative, because it would deprive us from demanding the right of Turkish Armenia from Turkey. Turks' wish was to settle down the Muslims they would bring from Transcaucasia, into there.¹²

The second plan in the Turks' mind was very blurry, Mr. Rauf was never exceeding the limits of speaking in general terms, only one thing was clear; this way, he was trying to turn the Turkish-Armenia issue into an internal affair of the Turks.

As for the independence of Transcaucasia, Turks were very determined on this issue. They wanted Transcaucasia to declare its independence gloriously, otherwise they would refuse to formally negotiate with us.

In line with the gradual development of military operations on the Caucasus Front, we concluded that some land concessions should be

¹² Conveniently, he does not mention the two SEYM (Armenian) requests (Re: Editors' Remarks) at all, the second one being his own request on 25 March.

made to the Turks. While we reached this opinion, discussions started between the group representatives of the Caucasus Nations. Georgians did not want to give concessions from Batumi, while the Armenians were unwilling to make any concessions from Kars. Tartars on the other hand, were neutral on these subjects, except for Sheikhulislamov, who was a socialist and always favored the Armenians and Georgians.

Representatives of the North Caucasus Highlands; [Tapa] Tchermoeff¹³ and [Haydar] Bamatof also came to Trabzon immediately. They were both adherents of United Caucasus Federation and saw their liberation there. In general, it must be expressed that on the subject of guiding Turkey, the Dagestan Mountaineers were not up to par with the Azerbaijanis. The memory of Independent Dagestan and hero Shamil was still fresh in their hearts. They attempted to help us. They spoke with Mr. Rauf, reminding him that he himself was a Circassian [Cherkes] and Caucasian, and that he was obliged to help Caucasian politicians for the independence of their people. But their intervention did not yield any result. The Turks were relentless.

P. Chkhenkeli who was the Chief of the Caucasian Delegation, seeing that the discussions could not yield any positive results due to too many opposing moods and attempts even among his own staff, offered to send a special committee to Tbilisi so that he personally assumes the task of explaining the events to the Government, and also for special powers to be given to the Chief (himself) in the subject of taking “autonomous steps”. A committee including Katchaznouni from our side went to Tbilisi and obtained from Sejm in the name of Chkhenkeli, extraordinary powers including to compromise a part of the Caucasus to Turkey.

When the committee returned, our delegation informed in a letter they penned on March 23, that they were willing to hand over some parts of the Kars Province to the Turks. These concessions did not please the Turks. The Turks demanded that all of their proposals be fully

¹³ Tchermoeff was a Chechen statesman, general, oil magnate and the only Prime Minister of the Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus. He was in office from May 11, 1918 until the entire government was forced into exile by the advancing Bolsheviks in 1921.

accepted. In the same correspondence, the Caucasian Delegation had transformed all problems of the Turkish Armenians into the issue of the return and placement of Armenian refugees by connecting them to certain guarantees aiming at safeguarding the lives of refugees. Refugees from other nationalities, especially the Assyrians were also mentioned.

It is necessary to mention that the Assyrian leaders had applied to us with the request to defend their problems too upon our arrival from Tbilisi to Trabzon. Their hopes too were broken like ours. It will be better to postpone this subject to the Lausanne Chapter.

The Turks were insisting on their strict attitudes. Wehib Pasha arrived in Trabzon and was greeted with a magnificent ceremony of marches and military parade.

He spoke with us too and mentioned his military successes. Some disturbances were noticed in the city. And on March 24th very late at night, our delegation received the following letter from Mr. Rauf:

“Esteemed President, The Government of the Ottoman Empire insists on the statement they made on March 21st 1918 and they are requesting the respected Transcaucasian Delegation to give him their final decision within 48 hours.”

This ultimatum created a very serious situation. Because, in case it was not accepted, it was obvious that military operations would restart and Transcaucasia would be open to invasion. Our delegation immediately organized a night meeting and voices were heard that it was time to compromise. But the surrender of Kars and Batumi to the Turks meant the separation of its most valuable regions away from Transcaucasia. We attempted to save at least somethings. In a telegram that Chkhenkeli sent to Tbilisi on the morning of March 25, he notified that according to his belief, the best compromise would be to give all the province of Kars with a small correction on the eastern border of the city where Armenians lived, northern districts of the Ardahan region, and the Artvin district of the Batumi province to the Turks. P. Chkhenkeli added in particular:

“I am sure the Turks will not yield any concessions from Batumi either. Wehib Pasha said this with certainty, but with this difference, maybe they may negotiate on the borders of Batumi. On the subject of Kars, it is not possible to protect this place especially through diplomatic means. The Turks do not even want to speak about Kars. I know that writing of the problem in this manner will endanger Transcaucasia and Sejm but unfortunately, there is no other way out. The Turks have very seriously started to provoke war.”

I spoke to Chkhenkeli at night. We both agreed on the subject of giving concessions since we did not want war and it wasn't possible for us to fight anyway.

In the meantime, the Turks had entered through the borders of Transcaucasia, Turkish soldiers had occupied a certain portion of Sarikamish and Batumi. For this reason, on March 26th, the Government of Transcaucasia sent instruction to the Delegation via a telegram;

“It is necessary to explain to the Turkish delegation that peace negotiations have to be halted due to the Turkish soldiers entering through the borders of Transcaucasia and this situation will also be informed to the peoples of Transcaucasia.”

In spite of this, the Government informed on the same night that it was ready to give concessions from Kars province and Artvin district, however they added that the Armenians did not want to surrender the city of Kars to the Turks.

But time was running out. The Delegation was feeling that the Turks were trying to make the events look unimportant. And with a telegram dated March 26th, they informed the Government that the existing situation necessitated that the Brest-Litovsk Agreement should be accepted immediately. The Delegation took the responsibility on itself and informed the Turkish Delegation on March 28th that it accepted the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Katchaznouni and I realized that we had to personally put pressure on the Dashnak Fraction of the Sejm, and for

this purpose on March 28th we sent the following telegram to Prime Minister Gegechkori and the Finance Minister Karjikian:

“We find it necessary to draw the attention of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation to the following issue; acceptance of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty should be considered the lesser evil in the situation we are in.”

I must mention that Prime Minister Gegechkori had invited Katchaznoui and me to participate in the government one week prior to this telegram. Since we had given our acceptance, we addressed our telegram to all members of our Government.

In order to further influence our psychology, the Turks reported that Verdun fell and the Germans approached Paris. On March 30th, the Turks sent an ultimatum to the Commander of Batumi demanding that the Batumi Fortress should be handed over to them with all the fortifications and military supplies. They threatened by saying that otherwise they would attack the castle on April 1, resulting in “destruction, bloodshed and captivity of soldiers.” On March 31, Mr. Rauf informed our Delegation that ***“it was possible for their allies in arms (Germans, Austrians and Bulgarians) to participate in the negotiations, and that above all Transcaucasia should declare its independence.”***

We were in a state of anxiety. We were waiting for Sejm’s telegram at every second. We thought that Sejm would accept the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. However, there was a very strong excitement in Tbilisi, they had received our telegram, and serious discussions were made on the topics. An important meeting was held in Tbilisi on March 31 daytime at 1:50, under the presidency of Chkheidze, with the participation of Sejm Presidency, party representatives and with the participation of the government. The Gegechkori Government announced that according to the opinion of the Military experts, the Batumi defense was in best condition. [Georgian] Tsereteli said that it is better to die fighting, than delivering a deadly blow to themselves by giving up Batumi. Karjikian made a statement in the same line of thought. All party factions were

talking in the same spirit, and the following decisions came out of the meeting that ended at 2:55:

“Proposing to Sejm to recall the Delegation from Trabzon, establishing an organ composed of three members who would be given extraordinary powers to carry out the defense of the country, calling Sejm to an urgent meeting.”

This decision was accepted unanimously. On the evening of the same day, at 7:00 pm, Sejm was called to meeting and the following decision was accepted unanimously upon the proposal of Georgian Social Democratic Party’s Group President Jordania: ***“Considering that it is impossible to come to a peaceful agreement on the subject of borders between Turkey and Transcaucasia, we offer the Transcaucasia Delegation to return to Tbilisi immediately.”***

Adoption of this proposal by Jordania’s statement meant declaration of war against Turkey. A competent body with extraordinary powers was elected for administration of the war. Members of this body were: Prime Minister and with equal duties Minister of Military Service Gegechkori, Minister of Interior Ramishvili and Minister of Foreign Affairs Karjikian.

The Delegation received a telegram from Prime Minister Gegechkori on April 1 at 10:00 am. With this, we were informed about the decision accepted by Sejm and we were instructed to return to Tbilisi immediately.

With the decision that we took, Chkhenkeli informed the Turks that we were leaving Trabzon immediately by giving a short pause to the peace negotiations not by ending them. The Turks had understood very well what our behavior meant, but they accepted it quietly. On the evening of the same day, we set off by ship.

Thus, we were bringing WAR instead of PEACE to our country from Trabzon.¹⁴

¹⁴ The same event was experienced again, two years later, and both of the local Turkish – Armenian wars ended with the defeat of the Armenians who had opted for WAR instead of PEACE.

CHAPTER-4

(PAGES 37-66 in the original book)

TURKEY-TRANSCAUCASIAN WAR AND THE BATUMI NEGOTIATIONS (APRIL 1 – MAY 26, 1918)

We reached Batumi at noon time on April 2nd with our hearts squeezing tightly. We knew that an ultimatum was sent from the Turks to the Transcaucasian Government the day before for immediate surrender of Batumi.

It was a bright sunny day. The weather was so clear that we could easily see far distances. Suddenly our ship captain approached me and Chkhenkeli very sadly and said in a low voice, ***“I see the Turkish flag on the castle, the city is in the hands of the Turks, so we cannot enter the harbor.”*** Indeed, the Turkish flag was flying over the Batumi Fortress, and undoubtedly the city was in the hands of the Turks.

Following a short consultation, we decided to change our ship’s route towards Poti. We arrived there in a few hours. On our way there, we saw ships and boats filled with Georgian soldiers fleeing from Batumi. The port of Poti was filled with people who fled the same way. The soldiers and the people were in a state of mess, with their properties and household goods in their hands.

We hurried off the ship to get on a train for reaching Tbilisi at once. We saw a massive rally upon arriving the Samtredia Train Station which connected the Poti railway line to the Batumi – Tbilisi main line; the rally was mostly composed of the soldiers fleeing Batumi. The Georgian Social-Democratic Party Chief [Noah] Jordania was speaking to the crowd, and he had come from Tbilisi, specifically to raise the morale of the soldiers. Along with Jordania, also present were a prominent Georgian politician and government member like him Noe Ramishvili and several Sejm members. We continued our trip to Tbilisi with them. Jordania and his friends expressed their hope about the possibility of strengthening the frontline towards Batumi.

Upon our arrival in Tbilisi, we learned that the Georgians had delivered Batumi almost without fighting, just by giving only one dead. Some of the commanders and soldiers were captured. After occupying Batumi, the Turks started their operations in the direction of Ozurgeti. [the capital of the Western Georgian Province of Guria. It was formerly known as Macharadze.] After several vague clashes, Ozurgeti was also occupied by the Turks and soon merged with the Tartars of the Abastumani region. And Abastumani was also captured by the Turks.



Simultaneously, by forcing the Armenian troops to withdraw, The Turks moved in the direction of Kars. Classic War began. The people were running away towards Tbilisi in front of the advancing enemy.

Once our delegation reached Tbilisi, the members started reporting to their affiliated parties immediately. Different attitudes of the parties towards the war began to emerge. The Georgians were not expecting Batumi to fall so easily, and for this reason, they were very sad. Georgian masses did not welcome the war. Muslims were on the side of the Turks with their body and spirits, and the entire weight of the war was again on the Armenians. It was obvious that the war which had started was not going to be between Transcaucasia and Turkey, but between Armenians and Turks.

First of all, it is necessary to state for which actual purposes the war was started for. For the Armenians, this was a phase of the eternal Armenian-Turkish conflict, so in this condition, this phase was the war for Kars. For the Georgians, this war meant a battle for the defense of

Batumi. When Batumi was lost, the war lost its meaning for the Georgians.

Under these conditions after discussing the situation with several meetings, the Armenian National Council over whom the entire weight of the Armenian struggle had fallen upon decided to send a committee consisting of members from the National Council, Sejm and members of the Government, to Alexandropol, with the purpose to see the situation on the frontline from close-up. An important consultation took place in Alexandropol on April 5th and 6th. Representatives and other officials who brought quite refreshing news from the war front also attended. After the consultations, it was concluded that resistance should continue and the front should be supported.

Upon our return to Tbilisi, we found the mood of this place in worse condition than how we had left it. Serious disagreements arose among the ruling party members of Georgia about continuing with the war. They could feel that the people did not want to fight upon falling of Batumi. On the other hand, they had found a means to secure themselves against the Turks. This means was to come to an agreement with Germany.

This situation created a fatal effect on the course of events. It is worthy to note that over the last days of the Trabzon Conference, three consultant German officers had come to Trabzon and had visited Chkhenkeli. Chkhenkeli did not officially say anything to the delegation about this visit, but he had unofficially said to me that they were experts and were interested in the manganese of the Chiatura Region [the largest reserve in Georgia].

Chkhenkeli kept his communication lines open with the Turkish Army's Commander Wehib Pasha in Tbilisi, taking advantage of the fact that he himself was the Chairman of the Delegation at the Trabzon Conference and because he had not completely interrupted the negotiations but officially declared only a temporary break. In particular, the Armenian circles were furious about these self-prepared secret talks. Their anger reached the

level of craziness¹⁵, when Chkhenkeli came up all by himself with the decision to hand over Kars to the Turks.

There were major differences of opinion about the delivery of Kars under such hidden conditions, and I will try to explain only what I personally saw during those troubled days of April 7 through 13. First, let us mention that four important events took place in those days:

First one was that on April 13th, a new cabinet under the leadership of Chkhenkeli was presented to Sejm to replace the Gegechkori Cabinet.

Second one was that Transcaucasia declared its separation from Russia on April 9th.

Third one was delivery of Kars to the Turks under the orders of Chkhenkeli.

And fourth was the diplomatic exchange of notes between Chkhenkeli and Wehib Pasha for restarting peace negotiations.

All these events occurred because the Georgians did not want to fight anymore and because Chkhenkeli was transformed into a peace-loving centrist person by throwing the supporters of war like Gegechkori and Karjikian to lower ranks of the Cabinet. **Chkhenkeli had given the order to hand-over Kars, without the approval of Sejm.**

As I mentioned, there were two currents among Georgians. First group wanted to continue war under the leadership of Jordania and Gegechkori, and they were also against separation of Transcaucasia from Russia. The second movement was in favor of independence and peace under the leadership of Chkhenkeli and Ramishivili. The struggle among these two currents was maddening, and the votes had split almost in half between the two of them. After two days of heated debate, the Georgian Ruling Party's Central Committee finally decided with a vote of 7 against and 9 in favor, to declare Transcaucasia as an

¹⁵ The news that the Kars has been taken over by the Turks makes the Armenians crazy.

independent state placing Chkhenkeli as the head of government and for restarting peace negotiations with the Turks.

There was no heated debate like this one among the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, they all desired to keep good relations with all of their Transcaucasian neighbors, especially the Georgians, in order not to be left alone against the Turks. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation would not be able to take full responsibility of the war with the Turks, but this is what was going to happen if Dashnaktsutun worked against the Georgians. Sejm member Hovhannes Katchaznuni was expressing the current mood of the Dashnaktsutun leaders' circles very well and he gave the following special statement on behalf of the Government at the Sejm:

“Citizens, Sejm members. Being fully aware of this great responsibility, Sejm Group of the Dashnaktsutun takes the responsibility at this historic moment and participates in the Transcaucasian Republic’s proposal to declare its independence.”

Karjikian explained these moods prevailing among the Dashnaktsutun during a Sejm meeting with a wide and beautiful speech a few days later.

Socialist Revolutionaries who later became members of the Armenian Parliament, L. Tumanian and Georgian Lont Kipanidze personally opposed the declaration of independence. In spite of this, the entire cabinet accepted the declaration of independence of Transcaucasia on April 9 with enthusiastic demonstrations. After this decision, Chkhenkeli presented a report on the Trabzon Conference. After hearing this report, Sejm accepted the following decision without any further discussion:

“After listening to the report of the Peace Negotiation Committee, Sejm proposes the Government to continue with the peace talks and find means to sign the peace treaty at the shortest time possible. Sejm, at the same time proposes the government to take strong measures to organize the country’s defense.”

On April 9, when Sejm decided that the Transcaucasian Republic should declare its independence and that peace negotiations should be restarted with the Turks, the Gegechkori Cabinet described this decision as an expression of distrust towards his policies and moved away from the political scene. When I went to the Palace on the morning of April 10, I came across Gegechkori on the stairs while he was going out. I asked him why he had left and he replied: “The old cabinet can no longer exist, after the decision of Sejm.” In response I said that there is not a new one. I was personally a member of the Gegechkori Cabinet, and was thinking that it was essential to stay on duty until Sejm bestowed its vote of confidence to the new cabinet. I still am thinking that the Gegechkori-Karjikian-Ramishvili trio abandoned power prematurely. I said the same thing to Karjikian too.

Indeed, the country was deprived of a legal power from April 9 till April 13.

Chkhenkeli, on the other hand, was running the business by himself and autocratically. Despite this, Sejm gave its vote of confidence for the cabinet, established by Chkhenkeli on April 13 with the theme of independence and peace.

But it will be interesting to know what Chkhenkeli did during the three days of his autocratic regime (April 10, 11 and 12). He contacted Wehib Pasha by starting peace talks, ordered Commander Nazarbekian to hand over Kars to the Turks and was busy with the establishment of the cabinet.

In fact, Chkhenkeli was not entitled to take all these steps at that time, he started a storm of anger that could cause very dangerous problems.

After leaving Gegechkori, I went upstairs and entered the private room of the President of the Government where I found Chkhenkeli alone. After exchanging a few trivial sentences, I left and the Commander of the Caucasus Front entered in his room. The next day, it was understood that the President of Sejm, Cheidze had given Chkhenkeli the task of creating a new cabinet.

On the afternoon of April 12, Avedik Sahakian (future head of the Armenian Parliament) Hovhannes Katchaznouni and I received an invitation from Chkhenkeli to enter the cabinet. I was offered the position of Finance Minister, Katchaznouni was offered the position of the Ministry of Public Works, and Shahakian was offered the position of Minister of Food Industry. With the approval of our party, we accepted the tasks offered to us. On the evening of the same day at 8 o'clock, Chkhenkeli invited us to the first meeting of the new government which was convened to form the cabinet declaration to be presented to Sejm.

Chkhenkeli opened the meeting with the following speech:

“Gentlemen, I thank you for your work. After Sejm declared the independence of Transcaucasia and accepted the decision to start peace negotiations again, I took the duty to establish this cabinet. In order not to waste time, I took a series of steps since April 10th. I explained to Wehib Pasha that Sejm accepted the Brest-Litovsk Agreement and informed him that I had given the necessary orders for the evacuation of Kars. On the same day, I gave the first order to all our soldiers to stop the military operations. On April 11, Wehib Pasha replied that he had stopped military operations in such a way that his army would wait two versts [around 2.1 Km] away from Kars. Wehib Pasha requested the peace delegation to be sent to Trabzon again.”

When Chkhenkeli finished his speech, we just learned that Kars was now handed over to Tajiks. We were shocked by this news. And since we could not take responsibility for the work done before under such surprising circumstances, Sahakyan, Katchaznouni, and I withdrew our consent to join the Chkhenkeli Cabinet and left the meeting. I immediately informed the Chairman of Sejm's Dashnak Group, Karchikian, about the latest state of events by phone. Karchikian immediately came to the palace and contacted the Georgian Menshevik Party Presidency about the incident.

At 10 pm on the same night, the development of events was as follows: on the side of the Georgian Mensheviks; Jordania, Gegechkori,

Dzereteli and Ramishvili; on the side of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation; Karjikian, Ohanjanyan, Katchaznouni and I have consulted whether Chkhenkeli could remain as a candidate for prime minister after the steps (which could cause great harm) that he took and executed on his own. At the same hour, a question was being forwarded from Kars or more precisely from Alexandropol, under the instructions of General Nazarbekian, to the Armenian National Council, about whether they approved the order to hand over Kars to the Turks. No matter what, Commander Nazarbekian was demanding the extension of the time given for the evacuation of Kars.

Nazarbekian stated that all the Christian people wanted to evacuate Kars and that at least one week was required for everyone to leave. In addition, Commander Nazarbekian also stressed that the destruction of the Alexandropol fortifications in the province of Kars, is actually the surrender of Alexandropol as well to the Turks, and it is unclear who should defend the Kars-Alexandropol railway.

Very bad news were coming about the evacuation of Kars. The Commissioner of the Kars Province, Dzamoyan made the following statement, officially on April 14:

“With the order that came from Tbilisi, as a result of the rapid surrender that occurred unexpectedly and in an extraordinary manner, the people who were preparing to defend this biggest fortress of Transcaucasia have been forced to evacuate this city of Kars; on April 12 at 5 pm, they were forced to leave the city alone without taking any of their belongings, amidst the major fire that was spreading around the city. The best buildings were on fire. The withdrawal images of the people are in an indescribable state.”

Under these conditions, the prime ministry of Chkhenkeli had become unbearable. We explained this view of ours to the Georgian Mensheviks, and they too showed approval to pull back Chkhenkeli's candidacy but they were not willing to give another Menshevik name as a candidate to replace him. The Georgians said that they were willing to accept Katchaznouni to become the prime minister and expressed

that they were ready to help him. After this statement, we made a private discussion. Katchaznoui expressed that he found this offer of the Georgians' absolutely unacceptable with this explanation:

“Everything is finished now; Kars has been surrendered and it is not possible to take it back. The things that have been done must be taken into account. It is not possible for us to take the responsibility for things done yesterday. If we accept the Georgians' proposal, it will mean that we will be challenging the Muslims and leading a war against the Turks. We have no right to take such a step with our current powers.”

As a result, we rejected the Georgians' offer.

At midnight, the Georgian Mensheviks came back to us and stated that they repeat their offers by saying **“either Chkhenkeli or Katchaznoui”**.

Upon this situation, we discussed the issue again. We knew that the community condemned us in their minds for joining the Chkhenkeli Cabinet. But we considered above all else, the understanding of protecting the solidarity of the Transcaucasian peoples and thought it was necessary. For this reason, we reached the following conclusion at 4 o'clock; We had no solution other than accepting Chkhenkeli's prime ministry and participating in his cabinet. So, we gave our approval.

Politicians from the party started to explain the worrisome situation to the masses and the inevitable consequences arising from this situation. And this became possible, thanks to the nice organization of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and its influence over the popular masses. The discipline of the party won.

At the same time, the Armenian National Council was busy with sending the immigrants to Alexandropol, placing them there, and with the defense of the Armenian provinces.

Now many knew that the war had turned into an Armenian-Turkish war and that it would continue on Armenian soil. And it was felt that in a short time, hostilities between the Caucasian nations would reach the extreme level due to various orientations.

On April 15th, General Nazarbekian and Wehib Pasha officially notified the details in the surrender of Kars. In his message, Wehib Pasha accused General Nazarbekian for firing cannon-fire upon Turkish soldiers, in defiance of the conditions to surrender.

General Nazarbekian on the other hand, was pointing out that under normal circumstances the fortress could be defended for another month, but that the news of peace and the representatives' meetings had killed the resistance power of the soldiers and the people.

One way or another, Kars fell into the hands of the Turks and our soldiers retreated to Alexandropol.

As a result of these events, it was revealed that Georgians played a crucial role in the important issues such as the declaration of Transcaucasia's independence, peace talks and the delivery of Kars. They welcomed the war with enthusiastic speeches, but only after 9 days, they had opened up the issue of peace and had taken fatal steps. They succeeded in playing this role because Transcaucasia's Muslims were also behind them.

Chkhenkeli's Cabinet was composed of the following people:

Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs:	Chkhenkeli
Minister of Interior	: Ramishvili
Minister of Finance	: A. Khatisian
Minister of Communication	: Melik Aslanov (Tartar)
Minister of Justice	: Khan Khoyski (future Prime- Minister of Azerbaijan)
Minister of Military	: Georgadze (Georgian)
Minister of Education	: Usubpekoy (future Prime- Minister of Azerbaijan)
Minister of Trade	: Hatchinski (Tartar)
Minister of Labor	: Aramays Yertzinkyan
Ministerr of Food	: Avedik Sahakyan
Minister of Public Works	: H. Katchaznouni
Government Auditor	: Haydarov (Tartar)

As the readers can see, the Chkhenkeli Cabinet was strong in terms of its foundation, because it contained all the prime-ministers, ministers and ambassadors of the future Transcaucasian states.

The statement that Chkhenkeli read in Sejm advocated two basic purposes; peace and independence. He also offered the following action program:

- ***Solution of the land problem,***
- ***correction of the working classes' situation,***
- ***creation of an independent financial situation,***
- ***legalization of food business,***
- ***reconstruction of the means of communication,***
- ***harmonization of the administrative institutions with the new state regime.***

Following Chkhenkeli's statement, the three main parties of Transcaucasia, in other words the representatives of the nations, expressed their own views.

Resulzade spoke on behalf of Musavat, that is to say the Tartars. He celebrated Transcaucasia's separation from Russia with a special excitement.

Dzereti, who played a brilliant role in Russia, spoke in the name of Georgian Mensheviks. He was a brilliant orator and had played a special role in revolutionary Russia. Dzereti tied the separation of Transcaucasia from Russia to two main motives; [1] external pressure (generated by the Turks) and [2] impossibility of living a common life with Russia, since the power was captured by the Bolsheviks who have been killing the peoples' soul and enforced the governance only by bullying.

H. D. Karjikian spoke on behalf of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation at this historic meeting of Sejm and said the following:

“Citizens, members of Sejm; I must explain to you on behalf of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation that our group will support the political program presented here by the Prime Minister of the State of Transcaucasia.

“In the context of strengthening the Transcaucasian State, which is basic and more important than all other matters, we think that the government faces the difficulties created by foreign establishments. [Prime Minister Chkhenkeli], himself is saying that he has taken the step of declaration of independence at this time of extraordinary significance, and under the pressure of external forces, and under a deadly threat endangering the Transcaucasian nations.

“Pressure of these forces is coming from Bolshevik Russia and the external enemy. And that is how these external forces, which force Transcaucasia to declare independence at such a time, are provoking Transcaucasian nations and causing traumas in democracy of Transcaucasia. Could the path to salvation at this time, be what will bring us to destruction?

“These are the questions that worry us. This dilemma of the Transcaucasian peoples show that we are not sure if it is essential to announce the current splendid moment.

“There is no doubt that not only political groups and parties, but many have different views on this fundamental problem. And here is a request placed before the new Transcaucasian Government; ensuring this trust, telling the people of Transcaucasia that independence is good for them and that this is the path of Transcaucasia. In this regard, very severe difficulties are standing in front of the Transcaucasian Government. The greatest service of the new government to Transcaucasia will hopefully be; to overcome these challenges, to succeed instilling confidence in the democracy of Transcaucasia on the subject that its own independence will save Transcaucasia, and to lead Transcaucasia to an independent life. If this trust does not exist, if the jolts continue, then I will say on behalf of our party that no government and no power can strengthen the independence of Transcaucasia, nor will it lay a solid foundation for the new state institution.

“Another extraordinarily serious problem placed in front of the government is the signing of the peace treaty. The fact that the head of the delegation of the previous peace negotiations is now the chief of government shows that very harsh conditions will be imposed on the new government. The delegation that came here from Trabzon was sure that it would be possible to sign a peace treaty that would save Transcaucasia. The delegation did not only assure himself of this belief, but also managed to convey this trust to the masses. This situation imposes a heavy responsibility not only on the delegation but also on the government; the government is obliged to pay this bill.

“Another one of the problems, placed in front of the government, which is not at all easy, is that the division of land in Transcaucasia should be done according to the nations. Undoubtedly, it is not possible to talk about peace and relaxation before this basic problem is solved. If the government can solve this problem, which has severe obstacles placed in front of it, it will be a government worthy of Transcaucasia.

“On the subject of these main issues, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Group will support the government with all its means in all efforts to prepare the masses, in gaining of the masses’ trust, and to create an appropriate environment in the country. Armenian Revolutionary Federation will defend the new government by trying to facilitate its work.”

After these speeches, Sejm accepted the following decision:

“Listening to the explanation of the first Cabinet Head of the independent Republic of Transcaucasia, Sejm thinks that it is necessary at the highest level, to be able to see the realization of the matters about domestic and foreign policies voiced in the speeches given; and promises full support to have the government start working on daily problems.”

The government had started to work the next day. I went to the Finance Ministry and began working.

Transcaucasia now had its own money. Their values were also very good; its 1 Ruble was equivalent to 2 Francs. Prices of the goods were normal. A delegation from the trade class led by Milov, the veteran of Tbilisi merchants, came to me. The delegation promised me full support in the name of all traders.

I invited Mr. Keralev, Opochini and several other experienced bureaucrats from the former administration. I handed them the task of preparing the budget for the Republic of Transcaucasia and drew the financial reform program.

However, political affairs and especially the trend of the Turks was not allowing us to deal with our current activities calmly. In order to soften the growing sadness in the public, we decided to make an analysis on how long we could have defended Kars in case an order of surrender had not come. General [Mikhail] Levandovski, Chief of Staff of the General Command Headquarters, explained his opinion in writing as:

***“As of April 11, the situation of Kars was hopeless and its hours were numbered. When the Turks arrived within two kilometers of Kars Castle, the morale of the army collapsed. It was hard to wait to see if Kars could last a week or not.”*¹⁶**

I still have all the telegrams that were sent from Tbilisi and that came to Tbilisi between April 10 and 17, regarding the surrender of Kars. It will be very long to present the contents of these telegrams here, but I want to say this; Now, even after 6 years following the occurrence of events,¹⁷ when I look at them again, it is not possible not to call the surrender of Kars or the atmosphere of that surrender as a tragedy.

Since the society continued to feel sad about the issue of Kars, the government on May 5, 1918, issued all the conditions explaining why Kars was delivered, with a detailed and realistically written statement.

While Tbilisi was still living with speeches and sorrows about the surrender of Kars, combat operations were being carried out in the Armenian regions. On April 16, our soldiers evacuated the Kars

¹⁶ So, Chehmkeli's decision was right. They were going to pour blood unnecessarily.

¹⁷ Khatisian must have written these lines in the year 1924.

Province and gathered in Alexandropol. The Turks also approached Arpachay and stopped six versts [equivalent to 6.4 Km] away from Alexandropol. **Immigrants from Kars, Erzurum, Van and Mush had crowded into the Yerevan Province.**

The Local National Council was operating in Yerevan, under the leadership of Aram, and Dro the commander of the soldiers. These two strong faces were administering both the civilian and military affairs of Yerevan. General [Movses] Silikian, who committed suicide in Soviet Armenia a year ago, had a great authority on the Yerevan front. Yerevan was involved in its own daily affairs. The core of the national state was growing there. We sent military supplies and money to Yerevan, which was feeling almost independent of the Tbilisi Central Government and was fully engaged in the military activities of the front line. This separate and almost independent situation became stronger when the Turks invaded Alexandropol on May 15 and cut the Tbilisi-Yerevan railway.

We continued to strengthen the understanding of the independent Republic of Transcaucasia in Tbilisi. We issued an independent circular for all powers, instructed to strictly follow the peaceful coexistence of the Transcaucasian peoples, and to end banditry, conflicts and all kinds of tyranny. We also promised a bright future “when the lack of power ends and the Republic of Transcaucasia becomes a truly independent and powerful state.”

However, our recommendations and the means that we applied to did not have enough power to bring peace to the country. Tartars continued to create confusion and obstacles in every way. Wherever possible, they were disrupting the Armenians’ self-defense, against advancing Tajiks.

The strong influx of immigrants towards Yerevan, the lack of equipment, war operations and epidemic diseases created a serious situation especially in the Armenian regions, which required speeding up the signing of the peace agreement.

The negotiations were approaching towards failure. The conference was to be held in Batumi. We started to create a delegation again, with

smaller number of members. Chkhenkeli was again the head of the delegation. Katchaznouni and I were the delegation members from the Armenian side. This time, our mission seemed easy to us. We thought we only had to go and sign a treaty in line with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.

We left Tbilisi on the evening of May 5, and reached Batumi on the evening of the next day. All delegates were staying at Hotel Imperial.

Simon Vratsiyan was guiding us as a consultant¹⁸.

For the Tartars, Tussupbekov Khan Khoyski and Hajinski came as delegates, and Resulzade came as their advisor.

Avalov, Nikoladze and Rkhiladze were there in the name of the Georgians.

For the Tajiks, Mr. Halil, the Turkish Minister of Justice and Chief of State Council and Wehib Mehmet Pasha, the Commander of the Caucasus Front-line of the Ottoman Army had come.

There was only one representative from the German side, Commander von Losov.

At the time of these events, Russia remained silent. It will be very interesting to remind in here, that one day before the fall of Batumi, we received a telegram on March 31. Few people know about this telegram, but it is worth mentioning here because it is very useful. The telegram is below:

MOSCOW: The Turkish Army is progressing in the direction of Batumi, Kars and Ardahan by destroying the country and exterminating the villagers. The fate of the future of Armenians, lies with Germany, because the Russian soldiers were removed from the Armenian provinces at the request of the Germans, and now it is the responsibility of Germany to restrain the Turkish soldiers' bullying based on their feelings of revenge and hostility. It is difficult to come to terms that a culture state

¹⁸ Last Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. He wrote the letter dated 18 March 1921, asking Ankara Government for military aid against the Bolshevik Russians.

like Germany which is capable of influencing its ally Turkey, could allow the Brest-Litovsk Treaty to turn into an unpredicted misfortune for the Armenian people, who entered the Great War beyond their control. For this reason, the Council is confident that, as in Ardahan, you will use the means necessary to put pressure on the Turkish rulers, to prevent the destruction of the Armenian people. [Georgy Vasilyevich] Chicherin, [his assistant of Armenian origin] [Leon M.] Karahan”

I would be very pleased if Chicherin and Karahan could today once again read this telegram that they wrote and make the appropriate deductions from it. In those days they were demanding this from Turkey’s ally Germany. Turkey’s current ally Russia, who is giving half of Turkish Armenia as concession today, could himself bring this demand to fruition.

In one word; at that time, Transcaucasia and Turkey had come up against each other. The two conditions determined in the Trabzon Conference; independence of Transcaucasia, and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty were two existing realities, already executed. But there was one more thing the Turks took into account here: Kars and Batumi were now in the hands of the Turks. When we arrived in Batumi, it was obvious that the Turks had come to Batumi; soldiers were everywhere, trade had stopped, valuable goods were disappearing, shops were plundered by soldiers at night, the city was almost dead and the streets were empty. There was a big pharmacy next to our hotel. At night, Turks came with big cars and evacuated that pharmacy. Later, after the ceasefire, I heard that General Commander Wehib Pasha was blamed for the looting of the pharmacy. Georgian captive soldiers were being taken away by passing them through the streets. Russians were feeling relatively fine because the Turks were more compassionate and careful with them. They were paying wages to the Russian officers and hiring some of them. In one word, they were trying to exploit them in any way they could.

There were almost no Armenians left in the city [Batumi], all of them had gone to Tbilisi. The number of Georgians left behind were relatively higher.

Due to the confusing events which came about suddenly in Artvin, only the Armenians were left in place.

One of our first assignments in Batumi was to visit the Chairman of the Turkish Delegation, Mr. Halil and the German Delegate, General von Losov. Mr. Halil was a fat, round-faced man, and he spoke French very well. It was believed that he was one of the softest, moderate and compromising among the Turkish statesmen. Mr. Halil used to defend the idea that Turkey and Transcaucasia should become tightly knit friendly countries. It is a known fact that Mr. Halil was subjected to Young Turks' torture, after the coup of Nazım Pasha, and he took refuge with Zohrab. But in 1915, when Zohrab's wife desperately applied to him with the request for him to defend her husband, Mr. Halil strictly declined to give any help.

The second Turkish Delegate was Wehib Pasha. This person had very confident mode of actions, he had a deafening voice. Surprisingly, he knew how to lie very well, looking directly into your eyes. By acting surprised when his soldiers performed this or that kind of barbarities, Wehib Pasha used to try to leave the impression that he was really unaware of these pathetic events. But the later events convinced us that he himself was the reason for all the brutality that his soldiers performed. Wehib Pasha acted in a surprisingly civilized and friendly manner toward us; he spoke French badly, but his German was better.

General von Losov was a tall, nervous and old man. He was openly angry at the barbarism of the Turks, but as a loyal person to his fatherland's interests, he was trying to find a language of agreement between the Caucasian peoples and Turkey. General von Losov had received some instructions about the Georgians, and there was now a preliminary agreement between Georgians and Germans. The Georgians had given concessions to Germany about the Oltu Port, the Georgian manganese and the use of its rich forests. In exchange for these privileges, Germany had promised to protect Georgia's borders.

The first official meeting between us and the Turkish delegation was held in a local clubhouse on May 11, 1918. Mr. Halil chaired the meeting in accordance with the international law which stated that the

presidency was to be given to the representative of the country over whose territory the conference was gathered upon. Besides the representatives of Transcaucasia Sejm, Representatives from North Caucasus and Daghestan also attended the conference.

After the opening speeches, Chkhenkeli made the following statement on behalf of the Transcaucasia delegation:

- A) Transcaucasia is an independent state and the official information regarding this issue has been announced to all the countries, primarily to Turkey.***
- B) We are ready for the adoption of the Brest-Litovsk Agreement as a basis for the negotiations.”***

This was a condition set by the Turkish Delegation in Trabzon.¹⁹

After several surreptitious questions and trials, Mr. Halil made the following statement explaining the plans of the Turks at once:

“Armed conflicts have occurred since the Trabzon negotiations and blood is shed among the Turkish and Transcaucasian soldiers. For this reason, the character and foundation of our statement has changed now. As a result, I cannot allow the only basis of our current negotiations to be the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.”

This statement determined the course of the subsequent events. This was not an unexpected situation for us.

Regarding this matter, Katchaznoui and I sent a telegram from Trabzon to Tbilisi, saying: ***“The Brest-Litovsk Treaty is acceptable as the lesser evil.”*** These words were said on March 28. In the 44 days following that day, additional wars and disappointments had taken place. Just like we had fallen behind in the last years of our history, we were too late this time too. **The reason was overestimating our own power and seeing the enemy’s power way below its real level.**²⁰

¹⁹ If they had accepted, Peace would have been signed in Trabzon instead of Batumi and much less blood would have been shed.

²⁰ Katchaznoui also wrote the same things in his manifesto. Pls see pp 189-192 in this book.

Following Mr. Halil's announcement, discussions which were described as fruitless and meaningless by Mr. Halil began. It soon became clear that the new draft of the Turks' peace treaty was ready, and Mr. Halil delivered it to Chkhenkeli right there.

The German Delegate, von Losov said: ***“he would take into consideration various opinions of the Turkish and Transcaucasian delegates regarding the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, that he was ready to examine Turkey's new agreement proposal and that he would participate in the examination of the draft from the point of view of German interests.”***

Upon this statement, the meeting was closed. We returned back with a rather heavy and pessimistic impression. Our first effort was to learn the contents of the Turkish treaty's draft, which was delivered to us in a sealed envelope. Upon opening the envelope, the first thing that caught our eye was the borders. In the drawings we saw that not only the Kars Province, but the Surmalu region of Alexandropol, and the railroad were also taken away from Armenia. Armenia was being sentenced to drown inside unbearably narrow borders. Also, the Georgians had nothing to rejoice, because a significant part of the Ahiska region was being taken away from them. Our resentment had no limit.



Misha Arzumanian, Shavarsh Missakian, Al Khatisian, Hakob Kotcharian

Our delegation gathered for consultation, the next day, on May 12. The general view was to stand firmly on the basis of Brest-Litovsk, and rely on the countries that had signed it, like Germany, Austria and Bulgaria. After our meeting, we went to General von Losov, the only representative from Turkey's allies and presented to him, our justified complaint regarding the blatant breach of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. General von Losov now knew of the demands of the Turks. He told us in a cautious but determined way that he too agrees with us but he also needs to be cautious.

As understood from Lepsius's book ***Germany and Armenia***, General von Losov, the same night, sent a telegram full of anger about the Turkish demands, to the German Embassy in Istanbul and the Berlin Government. The contents of his telegram are as follows:

"The Turkish demands which are exceeding all limits, and aiming to separate Armenian lands like some regions of Alexandropol and Yerevan provinces are clearly violating the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and are intent on destroying the Armenians in Transcaucasia. Tonight, the Turks gave an ultimatum to allow their soldiers to cross to Julfa over Alexandropol, and they did not give me any information about it. I am complaintive about such a process."

While sending this telegram to the Government of Germany in Berlin, the Ambassador of Germany in Istanbul dictated two conditions that are basic according to his own opinion, for the peace agreement:

- A) Turkey must accept the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and
- B) To make a reciprocal exchange in order to facilitate the retreat of the Turks to Brest-Litovsk, that is, the Turks should take the Turkish settlements in the Ahıska region, and in exchange, give the Armenian part of Kars, ie: Kaghzvan [Kağızman in Turkish].

The German Ambassador added that Mr. Halil and Wehib Pasha agreed to such a mutual exchange, but Enver Pasha wanted an ultimatum to be sent immediately. The Ambassador was stating that in his opinion, it is necessary, to explain to Talaat Pasha that such an ultimatum would start a new war in the Caucasus and that the allies of the Turks' would not be able to defend such a Caucasus policy; and on the contrary, this would harm Turkish interests by encountering the harsh opposition of their allies.

German General von Losov and German Ambassador in Istanbul, Koms Bernstorf thought and worked like this. In those days, on May 15, a German delegation led by General von Kress reached Tbilisi. The delegation had a military and political mission.

German Deputy Foreign Minister Köbberts, taking advantage of this opportunity, sent the following message to the representative of the Armenian National Council:

“The Turks want to expand the borders of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. This will create a conflict between them and the Armenians. The German Government is conducting talks with the Turkish Government on this problem. You have to go to the Caucasus and see General von Kress and General von Losov.”

On June 9, General Hindenburg, the General Commander of the German Army sent the following telegram to Enver Pasha:

“On behalf of the German High Command, I request from your esteemed self to give the order for all the Turkish soldiers to withdraw from the borders of the Caucasus excluding Kars, Ardahan and Batumi.”

There were two reasons, for these complaints and steps taken by the Germans. First, they wanted to hold firmly to the basics of the conditions of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, which had already been drawn up and decided by them, as in many other issues concerning the war. Secondly, they were learning about the real situation of the events in the Caucasus through General von Losov and through the Armenian National Council that happened to be in Germany at that time. With these operations, the Turks were violating the general military plan. In fact, the Turkish forces were supposed to operate in the south direction and stop the British forward operation towards Baghdad. In spite of this, the Turks were advancing in the North direction, towards Baku and the Caucasus to carry out their special purpose intended for all Turks.

On this basis, there was conflict between the Turks and their allies. Wehib Pasha and General von Losov also explained this to me. From here, it can be understood, albeit partially, why the Germans are trying to defend our interests.

An attempt was made to ensure that the Bulgarians also participated in the Batumi meetings. For this purpose, we decided to send a delegate to Varna in the same way. However, the rapid course of the events did not allow the implementation of this project.

When the Turkish Delegates could not receive a response to their new demands, on May 14, they presented us with a new request to allow the Turkish soldiers to cross to Julfa through Alexandropol. With this excuse, I was compelled to go to Notanep Station to ask Aharonian and Karchikian to review the demands of the Turks and to respond as soon as possible, via the direct telegraph line. But until I received an answer, Halil Bey, Wehib Pasha, Katchaznouni and I, attended a meeting which was held on May 14-15, night at 1:00 am. The meeting was held in the beautiful house of the famous rich Chilingarian, in Mr. Halil's apartment. Mr. Halil told us the following:

“Please understand the course of the events. Mr. Wehib and I are representing a bland and peaceful trend in the committee. Talaat and Enver Pashas are wanting the Armenian land to be destroyed to its end. Help us to strengthen our position, give us all concessions, allow us to go to Julfa via Iranian railway. And also give us permission to go to Baku and the North through the Karakilise-Yevlak road. Then, when the war is over, we will send you help and give you back what we received from you today. We will help you in the future. Resisting today will only harm you and cause a new flow of blood.”

Mr. Halil reminded all the events took place when the Armenians said that he himself was a good advisor of the Armenians while they were cooperating with him. Katchaznouni and I sincerely explained our sorrow to them by emphasizing that Turks have no policy other than the destruction of Armenians. We said that we, the Armenians were looking for an exit to come to terms with the Turks, but the Turks were pushing us to conflict with their uncompromising attitude.²¹

Our conversation took two hours, and as a result, we agreed to allow Turkish soldiers to cross through the Armenian territory under the condition that Germany also defended. We reported this issue to Tbilisi by telegram. If we are to come to the terms of the peace treaty; Mr. Halil told us that only his personal peaceful willpower prevented the events from getting worse because at that moment, the Turks' ultimatum which Enver Pasha had wanted him to deliver immediately, was in his pocket but he had postponed to deliver it, hoping that Transcaucasia would give the necessary concessions without an ultimatum.

But, on May 15, the Transcaucasian Government instructed the Delegation by a telegram to enter discussions about the Alexandropol - Julfa rail-line with the Turks. However, they also ordered General Nazarbekian to ***“hold Alexandropol and the railway-line under protection with ammunition until an agreement was reached”***.

²¹ Armenians were the ones who did not come to agreement in Trabzon.

On May 15, the Turks claimed that the Brest-Litovsk Treaty could not be the sole basis for peace, that peace agreements could be signed without the Germans or other allies and the others could join in the future.

On May 16, we responded in a long article to the demands and perspectives of the Turks, again based on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and demanding the participation of Germany and other allies. But while we were negotiating with the Turks on the terms of the peace treaty in Batumi, the Turks suddenly attacked Alexandropol at 7:15 am on May 15, giving three hours to evacuate the city, but suddenly occupied the city without waiting for a reply.

On May 17 and 18, there was a dynamic telegraph traffic between Tbilisi and Batumi. The Dashnaktsutiun group in Sejm wanted from us the following three things by telegram:

- A) The Germans should defend the Alexandropol -Julfa railroad.
- B) Armenian troops should be able to keep their positions on both sides of the railways,
- C) In case the peace negotiations committee secures these guarantees, they should publish an announcement to the people, asking them to stay calmly in place. The telegram was signed by Karjikian.

We immediately applied to General von Losov and Mr. Halil to ask them for the fulfilment of these three demands. General von Losov reported that the Turks did not take his objections into consideration much, but he promised to get in touch with his own government on this matter. Mr. Halil and Wehib Pasha replied by saying: ***“What do you need the Germans for? We can come to an agreement with you, between ourselves. Let the public stay in their locations.”*** Since we could not receive any guarantees, we did not publish an announcement.

Seeing that we could not reach any agreement with the Turks through instant negotiations, General von Losov sent the following remarkable letter to the Transcaucasus delegation on May 19:

“Batumi talks are not progressing and no results have been achieved so far. In spite of this, since it is in the interests of all parties to come to any agreement as soon as possible, Dear Minister, I am honored to offer you my high services as a mediator. I kindly ask you to inform me officially whether the Transcaucasian Delegation is ready to accept my offer. Von Losov”

A delegation meeting was held on this subject at 8:30 in the evening of the same day. Katchaznouni and I and the Georgian Delegates gave consent immediately; but Tartar delegates, Hatchinsky and Rasul Zade hesitated for a long time. Because they feared from taking an unpleasant step for the Turks, they offered us to ask the Turks’ opinion first. After long conversations, finally, they said they were willing to sign too. And at 12 o’clock at mid-night, we reported our positive response to General von Losov.

After the Turks invaded Alexandropol, they continued to carry out forward operations. General Nazarbekian informed us by telegram on May 20: ***“Despite the ceasefire, the Turks continue their operations in the direction of Karakilise and they pushed back our union of guards from the village of Artibet. They are moving towards Karakilise in the direction of Lori and will probably pass from there to Tbilisi. My conclusion is that the invasion of Alexandropol and the railway line is only an excuse.”***

Seeing that the conflict mostly gained the character of a Turkish-Armenian war, the Armenian National Council sent to Batumi a new delegation composed of Dr. Hano Ohanjanyan and Arshak Zorabian. The Council gave to General von Losov the responsibility of officially requesting the protection by the German Government.

The delegation of the Armenian National Council arrived in Batumi on May 20. We told them that the Muslim members of the Transcaucasia Sejm Delegation did not only refrain from helping us, but directly hurt us. They refused even our most basic demands. As an example, when we demanded the Turks to leave the Armenian regions of Alexandropol, the Azerbaijani Tartars opposed this by demanding that Yerevan should

be included in Azerbaijani territory and the capital of the Republic of Armenia should be the Vagharshapat (Etchmiadzin) Village. Through Usupekov and Khan-Khovski's speeches, they claimed that Yerevan is a Tartar city, and so Muslims would not allow Yerevan to be left to Armenia. After the delegation of Azerbaijan, the Muslim representatives of Gandzak [Genje] and Ahiska: Sultanov, Rafibekov and others also got together and invited the Turks to occupy Caucasus directly. The Turks were presented with a special article with 40 signatures on it, by the Ahiska and Ahilkelek Turks. With this article, unification of these regions with Turkey was being demanded.

Under such circumstances, surrounded with enemies from all sides, the only hope remaining to us was the intervention of the Germans. By examining the current situation, we came to the conclusion that the opinion of the Armenian National Council was correct; We prepared the maps, numerical data, written report that we planned to give to General von Losov and immediately started the process in accordance with the instructions of the National Council.

On May 21, Katchaznouni and I, together with the Georgians went to General von Losov, with the purpose of explaining the situation of the Armenians. He dictated us to submit our request in writing, and we made it on May 22. On May 23, General von Losov transferred the essence of our problem to the German Ambassador in Istanbul with a long and detailed telegram. In this telegram, it was pointed out that the representatives of the Armenian National Council and the Armenian Ministers who were members of the Transcaucasian Delegation asked for help from Germany and expected to save their people from this tragic situation. General von Losov was describing the unbearable situation of the Armenian immigrants and explaining the extreme demands of the Turks. He was also advocating the idea that the real purpose of the Turks was to conquer the Armenian lands and destroy the Armenian people. General von Losov was asking not to believe the guarantees given by Enver and Talaat Pashas. He was saying that, from the point of view of the German interests, the Armenians would switch to partisanship wars, disrupt the railway transportation and would drag the Caucasus Front into a bad situation.

Mr. Halil was also involved in the telegraph communication and assured us that he would try to persuade Enver and Talaat Pashas to make concessions, but he was also adding that the committee did not want to give any concessions.

The situation of events was as follows: Germans were getting stronger in Tbilisi, with the aim to protect the Georgians and the Georgian borders, while the Turks were mobile in the Armenian territory and they were provoking a war with the Armenians. The problems had reached a deadly spot in Batumi.

The Minister of Admiralty, Djemal Pasha [commonly known as Jamal Pasha] arrived in Batumi on May 22nd with his ship “Gul Cemal” and visited our delegation. I remember that day very well. The delegation celebrated the arrival of Jamal Pasha with three speeches: Chkhenkeli spoke on behalf of the Georgians, I spoke on behalf of the Armenians and Rasul Zade spoke on behalf of the Tartars. In solidarity we talked about the interests of Transcaucasia, and then each of us focused specifically on the interests of our own nations. In our speeches, we defended the harmony of the interests of Turkey and Transcaucasia, we also defended the idea that instead of bloodshed, how important is living, breathing, working and giving everyone the opportunity to be nourished. I in particular, asked a return to the conditions of agreement, pointing out the horror and destruction of the war.

While answering the speech of Rasul Zade, Jamal Pasha said in a very soft tone that the Azerbaijanis were the beloved brothers of the Turks and that the Turks came to secure “independence” to them. Next, while speaking to Chkhenkeli and the Georgians, Jamal Pasha turned towards them in a similarly friendly and pleasant fashion and spoke in a warm tone. He said that temporary misunderstandings had occurred between Turks and Georgians but he was confident that those misunderstandings would no longer be repeated in the future, and that it was possible to form a basis for cooperation in solidarity very easily. When he finally turned towards me, his face lost its color, the tone of his speech became dry, he was speaking in a weak and slow voice now, with his eyes radiating grim and misty fires. He said: ***“The Turks have had disagreements with the Armenians for a long time, the Armenians are***

not taking any steps to make peace with the Turks. This trend will cause new misfortunes for the Armenians.”

Jamal Pasha reminded Antranik's uncompromising attitude in the Zangezur Region, the ties of the Armenians with the Bolsheviks and the Armenians' "monstrosities" against Muslims. At each step of his speech, it was felt that there was a deep, terrifying gap between Turks and Armenians, and the heart of this Pasha was filled with an invincible hatred against the Armenians who stood on the way of the Turks.

After that, I saw Jamal Pasha in Istanbul and found him in a blander mood, but his stance in Batumi was clearly hostile and in an irreconcilable attitude towards us.

The next day, a magnificent feast was held in honor of the Transcaucasia Delegation on the Turkish ship. The image was very sympathetic in appearance, the ship was covered with carpets, flowers and they welcomed us with modest greetings. During the feast, they seated me in between Jamal Pasha and Dr. Bahaettin Shakir. Dr. Shakir explained how he joined Enver Pasha's expedition towards Ardahan in 1914 and how he organized the Acar gangs with Colonel Rıza. And he clarified that he was a noble enemy of the Armenians. He said:

“Armenians are standing in the path of the realization of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism ideals of ours, and we inevitably clash with them. This is an independent issue above our personal feelings and mood. We naturally have to destroy everything that hinders us from the path of our sacred national ideals. And then, you are always besides the Russians, you are their pioneers. Russians are also our main enemy, our historical enemies. Consider changing your psychology and orientation. You are the enemy, I am also the enemy, but we are travel companions.

We understand the life of the human body that is alive; in it there is no weakness of humanism or willpower. A strong and vibrant body is a right, and that body is the only right that it will live along with. This is also the case, in the life of the nations.

There is no feeling of guilt there, only the instinct and feeling, of self-defense.”

Naturally, I gave him the required answer, but it was obvious that we were speaking in terms of different languages, so we left each other not in a persuaded manner in any way.

Ten days after this discussion, Enver Pasha officially applied to us Armenians, to sign an Armenian-Turkish military treaty. I wonder if we did right or if we did wrong, this is a different subject, but as in 1914, we rejected this offer.²²

A few months later, we learned that Jamal Pasha had taken valuable goods with him from Batumi, and that a criminal investigation was initiated about him, but it ended without conclusion.²³

One day after Jamal Pasha left Batumi, I encountered Koms Schullenberg, who had just arrived from Berlin. He was a very interesting person. He had come to Batumi as a German officer. I had known him since 1912; he had come to Tbilisi as German General Consul, prior to the War. He spoke Russian and French. He had connections with the highest society of Tbilisi, and he explored the life of the Caucasus broadly and profoundly. A month prior to the war, Koms Schullenberg went to his homeland for a holiday. In 1914, when Enver and Ihsan Pashas organized a military expedition to the Caucasus with three armies, Koms Schullenberg was also in their headquarters. When the Turks were defeated, he disappeared, because the Russian commanders wanted him to be captured. And now, he suddenly appeared in Batumi. He explained to me that he was assigned on a German military-political mission in the Caucasus. I explained to him our point of view. Upon this, he walked in front of us and said: ***“We Germans are concerned with the independence of Transcaucasia. If you, Armenians, help the German cheese producers and factory owners of the Lori Region, we would help to solve the future of this controversial region in a style suitable to you.”*** It must be said that

²² It would be beneficial if any documents were provided regarding this offer and its refusal.

²³ As usual, an accusation without any supporting document.

there is a large German factory called von Kuchenbach in this region and several other small factories. Georgians had allegations over this region, and because of that an Armenian-Georgian war took place later on, after that war, it became a neutral region.

Learning the course of the events, Koms Schullenberg went to Tbilisi, on May 23.

Taking our consent for his offer, von Losov, applied to the Turks with the same request; but was rejected by them. And he told our delegation about his mediation efforts dated May 24, which unfortunately was unsuccessful.

With a telegram from Moscow on May 25, Chicherin had informed the German Cabinet that the Soviet Government was ready to conduct talks with the Transcaucasian Government, in any city in Transcaucasia regarding the independence of Caucasia, without any set preconditions.

When the peace efforts between Turkey and Transcaucasia that were carried out in Batumi turned out fruitless, and the German mediation also did not yield any results, a classical warfare had begun over the Armenian territory. There were two battles as the most important of the events that occurred during this war and of great historical significance; the 24-29 May Sardarabad and 25-29 May Karakilise battles.

My purpose is not to describe these battles in detail here, but it gives me the right to say what the Russian, Turkish and Armenian prominent military figures have told me that these battles are the most serious and brilliant wars of the Armenian armed forces. Dro and General Silikian were the heroes of Sardarabad.

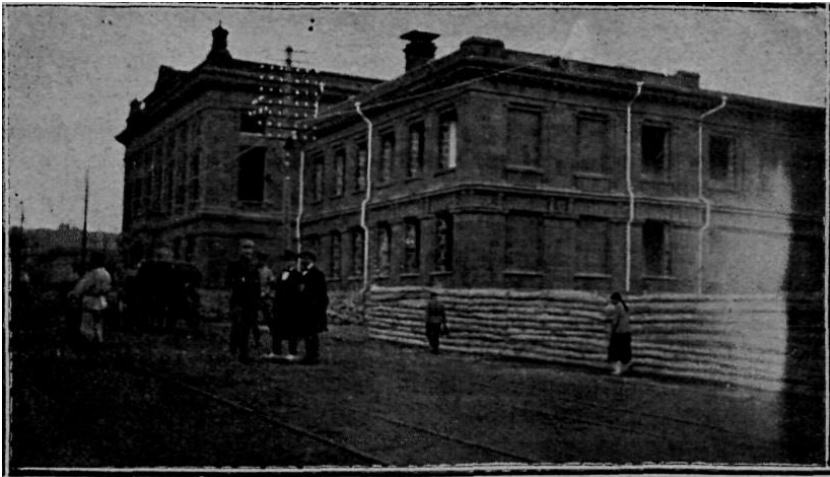
French Captain Puatebar depicted the Battle of Sardarabad in his famous book as follows:

“The second Armenian Division, under the command of General Silikian was defending the valley of Aras, a few versts [kilometers] from the city, from Yerevan to the South. The entire army of Shevki Pasha was in front of him. On May 24, General Silikian attacked the Turks with such power that he completely defeated them. The Armenian Cavalry followed the

Turks up to the hills of Alexandropol exterminating them. However, the shortage of military equipment stopped their advance.

This brilliant battle saved the future capital of Armenia, Yerevan. This war gave the Armenian soldiers morale for new victories.

Almost at the same time, on May 25, while the Turkish troops were on their way forward to Tbilisi, they fought a war with the Armenian First Division near Karakilise. The battle lasted four days. The Armenians' resistance was the best and the most magnificent, throughout the war, as also witnessed by the Turkish headquarters. Puatebar says: "But due to the enemy's superior artillery fires and the Armenians' lack of military equipment, the Armenians were forced to leave the region to the superior power of the Turks. And those remaining from the Armenian First Division retreated towards Yerevan, while the Turks killed 7,000 civilians and prisoners in Karakilise."



The University Building

The readers know in advance that the independence of Armenia was declared in Tbilisi on May 28. The military spirit and the will necessary to declare an independent state was created in our people due to the Battles of Sardarabad and Karakilise. Wehib Pasha told me during one of our conversations that in terms of strength, motivation, bravery and mobility, the battle of Karakilise reminded him of the most difficult Chanakkale Battles, in which he had participated.

After the Karakilise War, there were no serious battles anymore. Only in the Lori and Borchalu areas, the Tartars were killing Armenians wherever they met. The Tartars killed a female teacher and 20 Armenian children, in front of General Korganian's eyes, and accepting him in place of Antranik, they took him to the forest. According to the report of a German officer Walker to his government, Tartars surrounded and killed around 300 Armenians in a field, near the German settlement of the Yekaterinenfeld city. The previous German Consul Anders had given information from Kars on May 14, about the brutality of the Turks on the Erzincan-Kars road.

May 25 was a tragic day for us in Batumi. We had fallen into a difficult situation after the German commander's mediation had failed. Tartars and Georgians did not want to fight. Tartars demanded peace at all costs. Georgians had secured themselves with German power. We were the only ones fighting in Sardarabad and Karakilise. Our paths had separated, and we certainly couldn't find a common language. There was a feeling in the air that the Republic of Transcaucasia would collapse. However, just as death is not spoken in the house of a deceased, we were avoiding any implication about the destruction and division of the Republic of Transcaucasia.

However, General von Losov made the first speech on this subject at 7 pm on May 25th. According to a certain information he obtained, the Republic of Transcaucasia was on the brink of collapse. He informed us in a letter that he had decided to leave Batumi on the same evening, with the German Ship "Minna Khorl"; He was competent on the subject of the Republic and government of Transcaucasia, but he was thinking that it was unnecessary to waste time in Batumi since this republic and the government had now become problematic.

Later that evening, Katchaznouni and I went by the ship “Minna Khori” to see the General, to request from him at least to defend our rightful demands in front of the German Government. The General promised to us and advised us to immediately send representatives to Berlin by the Armenian National Council.

When we returned to the hotel at 12 o’clock at night after the ship’s departure, we learned that Jordania the future head of Georgia’s government had arrived in Batumi. He had come to consult with Chkhenkeli the foreseen problems related to Georgia’s declaration of independence. The next day, on May 26 it was decided to declare Georgia’s independence and that is why Jordania was hurrying.

Jordania was a central face among the Georgians, as a member of the Georgian Menshevik Party Central Committee and the President of the Georgian National Council. I had known him since 1900. He was a very smart man, he had understood his people’s mood very well, he was very talented and theoretically a well-prepared political scientist. His influence on the Georgian masses was great. Despite his disastrous stuttering, his speech was beautiful in terms of his fiction and ideas. The muscles of his face almost never moved, reminding the facial expression of an Egyptian Priest.

When I found out the reason for the arrival of Jordania, I immediately went to him. Likewise, Georgian Professor Avalov was also with him. Jordania talked about the prevailing mood in Tbilisi and reported that the Armenians continued fight with the Turks and that the Turks were advancing in an unbridled fashion. He added that under these conditions, Georgians had no choice but to declare Georgia’s independence.

- ***“How?”*** I screamed. ***“Are we not in a general war against a common enemy? How can you leave us while we are still shedding blood? Is this a noble act?”***

- ***“Noble behavior is a behavior that is beneficial to the public.”***

- ***“Well,”*** I said, ***“what about us?”***

- *“We cannot go down drowning with you,”* replied Jordania. *“Our people want to save whatever is possible. You too have to find a language of agreement with the Turks. You have no other way out.”*

Upon this, our conversation ended. An hour later, Jordania went to Tbilisi with some of the Georgian delegations.

Indeed, we had no other way out but to declare the independence of Armenia. **THE ULTIMATUM THAT WE RECEIVED FROM THE TURKS THAT SAME NIGHT ALSO PLAYED A VITAL ROLE.**

We were given three days to accept the brutal conditions of that ultimatum given in a closed envelope, in the first session of the Batumi Conference by the Turkish Delegation.

After this ultimatum and the departure of the Georgians, nothing was left for us to do in Batumi. We had to go to Tbilisi, in a hurry. On the evening of May 26, at 7:00 pm our train departed from the Batumi Station. We arrived in Tbilisi on the morning of May 27. German soldiers were standing at the stations along the way and German flags were waving at the Georgian border. This is how the Georgians were protecting themselves from the Turks.

CHAPTER-5
(PAGES 67-78 in the original book)

**COLLAPSE OF THE CAUCASIAN UNION AND
DECLARATION OF ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE
(APRIL 1 – MAY 26, 1918)**

As soon as Katchaznoui and I arrived at Tbilisi, we went to the large house of Aramian, the Armenian National Council building, on the corner of Galovinski Avenue and Breatinskaya Street. Meanwhile, they were looking forward to seeing us, due to the bloody war going on in Sardarabad and Karakilise on the one hand and the attitude of the Georgians, which kept raising suspicion on the other. Armenians had to decide what their own attitudes were going to be.

On the evening of the same day (May 27), we received a telegram from General Silikian, urgently asking us to send bullets. The National Council convened immediately; the nerves were tense at the highest level. The parties forming the National Council had very different positions about Georgia's declaration of independence. Some thought that this step of the Georgians would not force us to do the same, others said that it was finally time for our country to declare independence.

Katchaznoui and I presented a report regarding the Batumi Conference on the evening of the same day (May 27). On the next day, Sejm issued the following decision:

“Taking into account the main differences of opinion on war and peace among the nations that make up the independent Republic of Transcaucasia, which made the existence of current power impossible for the whole Transcaucasia; Sejm cancels its powers, by recording the fact that Transcaucasia no longer exists.”

After this decision, Georgia declared its independence on the same day and elected its government under the chairmanship of Noe Ramishvili.

Georgia announced its declaration of independence to 18 countries by telegraph.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that the Tartars were preparing to proclaim the independence of Azerbaijan on May 28.

In these circumstances, the Armenian National Council instructed its members to immediately disperse, and bring the decision of the party to which they belonged until 10 o'clock the next day for Armenia's declaration of independence.

The next day, all parties were present at the National Council to announce that they too were in favor of Armenia's declaration of independence. The work of drafting the independence declaration was started immediately. Draft correction work was assigned to Avetis Aharonian, Nikol Aghbalian, Hovhannes Katchaznoui and me. Finally, at 12 o'clock noon, the following historical decision was accepted by the Armenian National Council:

“The Armenian National Council declares itself as the biggest and only power of the Armenian regions in the face of the new situation caused by the deterioration of the political integrity of Transcaucasia due to the independence of Georgia and Azerbaijan. For some *force majeure* reasons, all the administrative functions are temporarily undertaken by the National Council in order to direct the Armenian regions politically and administratively by avoiding the establishment of the Armenian National Government.”

This decision was published by the Armenian National Council as the declaration of independence of Armenia.

Thus, the independence of Armenia was declared at 12 o'clock noon on May 28 1918.

The establishment of the government was postponed until the peace committee's return to Batumi, because Katchaznoui and my participation in the government were deemed essential. We had to go to Batumi again. **The time given in the ultimatum of the Turks was going to expire on the next day (May 29) at 8 p.m. As a result, we had to hurry.**

Our delegation, which was only Armenian, was composed of 3 people, I was the chairman, the members were Katchaznoui and M. Babajanian. The delegation was given a *carte blanche* and we set off towards Batumi at 12 midnight on May 28th. We arrived at 12 noon, the next day.

This time we stayed in Batumi for only 8 days until June 5, and during this time we were busy with the determination of the terms

of the peace treaty. This was the first international contract that Armenia would carry out. Under the challenging conditions of the time, a grand and devoted work was necessary to sign a treaty with Turkey, which could be tolerated as much as possible.

As for Batumi, our first job was to inform Mr. Halil with a letter that Armenia's independence was declared and that Turkey's ultimatum was accepted. The letter was delivered on May 29 at 7 in the evening, that is one hour before the deadline before the ultimatum was to expire.²⁴

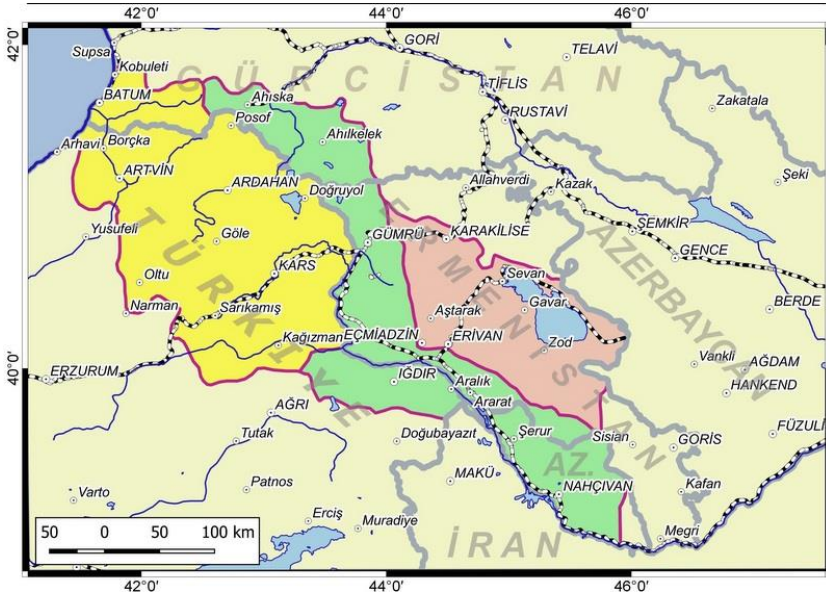
Georgians were not in a hurry because they had tied their hopes to Germany. Although the ultimatum ended at the same time (at 8 pm on May 29) for them too, they contacted Mr. Halil on May 31. This left a very bad impression on the Turks, but we will come to this issue later.

Halil Bey answered us the same evening and we agreed to hold a meeting the next day at the club-house at 12 am on May 30. The talks were held in French. During the first session, Wehib Pasha personally drew the borders of Armenia over that historical map which had been with me both in Trabzon and later in Istanbul, Alexandropol and Europe.

Looking at the map, we tasted two sharp emotions. The first one was honor, after hundreds of years of struggle, we eventually had a small corner on the world map.²⁵ And the second one was sadness; this corner given to us barely contained 9,000 square kilometers, and it was not enough for our people to fit inside.

²⁴ This is the only written and published document by an Armenian which publicly declares that the Republic of Armenia was born (taking this word from the title of his book) out of a time-set ultimatum given by Turkey and duly accepted by Armenia.

²⁵ A small but important detail which Armenians to-day prefer to forget



[NOTE: During the Trabzon Conference, Turkey was willing to sign the Peace Treaty by taking back Kars-Ardahan-Batumi. But, due to Armenians' pressure, SEYM did not accept this. As a result of the Ottoman Army's forward operation, an area of 15 Km² passed to Ottoman Empire including Ahıska in the north and Nakhchevan in the south. Armenia had only 10,000 Km² of land. As head of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia, Khatisian signed the Peace and Friendship Treaty in Batumi on June 4, 1918. Katchaznouni also signed it as a member of the delegation.]

The first meeting was devoted to the discussion of the borders. In fact, the Turks were avoiding to pay attention to our borders with Georgia and Azerbaijan. They were leaving it to us to reach an agreement with our neighbors. They had only drawn the border between Turkey and us. But we now knew that all our neighbors demanded a large part of the Armenian lands; Georgians up to Karakilise, and Azerbaijanis up to Yerevan. Only the Nor-Bayezid region and the mountainous part of Alexandropol was not disputed. We were left with barely a 13-kilometer stretch of the railway line there.

We devoted the third meeting to the issue of borders, completely. We listened to many things from Wehib Pasha and Mr. Halil that will have priority for the fate of the Armenian people today and tomorrow. Wehib Pasha said, by pointing to the map and describing Turkey's initiatives:

“You see that fate is drawing Turkey from the west to the east. We moved away from the Balkans, we are leaving Africa too, but we need to spread eastward; our blood is there, our religion and our language are there. And this is based on a basic instinct; Baku, Dagestan, Turkestan and Azerbaijan are our brothers. Our path to reach there should remain open. And you Armenians are blocking our way. By demanding Van, you are closing our road to Iran. By requesting Nakhchivan and Zangezur, you are preventing us from going down to Kura Valley and walking to Baku. Kars and Ahilkelek are blocking our road to Kazakh and Ganja. You must pull away to one side and give way to us. This is where our main argument is. We need two broad paths for our armies to advance and to defend. The Kars-Ahilkelek-Borchali-Kazakh road, which will take us to Ganja is one of them. And the other one is the road to Kura Valley via Sharur-Nakhchivan-Zangezur. You, can stay between these two roads, that is around Nor-Bayazit and Etchmiadzin.”

We pointed out the following three points that Wehib Pasha was not taking into account:

- A) The piece of land left for Armenians is too small to satisfy the Armenians, even to the smallest extent,
- B) The Armenian question is an international problem and it cannot be eliminated this way,
- C) The Armenian borders drawn by Turkey now, will be an endless source of hostility between Armenians and Turks.

Wehib Pasha replied:

“Armenian lands are small today because many Muslims live with you. Give them to us, then your space will grow. Let’s say the Armenian Question is an international problem and will be taken into account at a general peace conference. We know this very well, but this is the first time that we take on the task of solving this problem and accept the independent existence of Armenia. If we come to feelings of hostility due to the small size of the land, I must say that all countries start from small and grow gradually. The important thing is that we are friends and mutually defend each other. We need proper propaganda of the Armenians, outside the border.”²⁶

Later, we were convinced that Mr. Halil and Wehib Pasha defended the boundaries that they point out irrevocably. Accordingly, the entire Kars periphery, Ahilkelek region, Alexandropol City, Harmanlu-Yerevan Pass, Surmalu region²⁷, half of the Yerevan region and the entire Karakilise- Uluhanlu railway was going to the Turks. We requested them to convey all of our arguments to Istanbul by telegraph and to expand our borders accordingly. On June 2, we received our reply and “in the name of good relations initiated” the Turks were willing to quit the Harmanlu-Yerevan Pass and cross the border through the summit of Mount Aragats²⁸. This new border line, with which we were earning 1,000 square kilometers of land, was starting from Jajur Station, passed through the Alakaya summit and descended towards Vagharshabat [fourth largest city in Armenia]. The Turks did not make any more concessions.

²⁶ This important issue could also be added: An agreement to be signed in Batumi would relax the Armenians of Istanbul too.

²⁷ The Surmali Region is where Turkey’s Iğdır Province lies.

²⁸ An isolated four peaked volcano with a summit at 4,090 m above sea level.

Coming to the political side of our meeting, Wehib Pasha had tried to convince us to sign a military agreement with the Turks, to give them 10,000 soldiers and to attack together to Baghdad.

The originator of this offer was Enver Pasha. We could not have accepted this proposal from any point of view. We rejected this proposal with an excuse that our people were extremely tired. However, Wehib Pasha sadly expressed that such an agreement could solve many misunderstandings between Armenians and Turks.

That day, the former chief editor in chief of the “Kaspi” newspaper and one of the leading faces of the Committee of Union, Ahmet Agayev made a visit to us and sincerely advocated us to get close to the Turks. Agayev promised to support us, but we did not see the result of this. Once the phase of the peace agreement regarding the borders was ready, Wehib Pasha pulled out a cloth from his pocket. This cloth had a red cross over a white background. He said: ***“This is my design for the Armenian flag. You are Christian and are bragging with this symbol. I am thinking that the cross should be your symbol.”***

I must mention that this phase of the discussions, in general flattered the pride of the Turks. They were materializing their own projects, solving the Armenian question in a way that would facilitate their work during the future international peace conference. It is necessary to take into account that Turks were very much afraid of the situation the Armenian Question could portray in the upcoming conference. I had heard about this from Mr. Rauf, Wehib Pasha, Mr. Halil, Enver Pasha and many other Turkish officials. That was the reason why the Turks wanted to solve the Armenian question prior to the international conference.

Later, while we were conducting negotiations in Batumi, I learned that there were very hot debates among the Young Turks Committee in Istanbul, on the issue of how suitable to their purposes an independent Armenia in the Caucasus could be. In the Autumn of 1918, Vizier Azam Talaat Pasha explained this subject to me in the following words:

“Enver Pasha was thinking that the Armenians have been our enemy from the old times onwards and that they should always be considered as such, and since they will not leave our Anatolian provinces safe, they should be completely exterminated from Caucasia as it was from Turkey, and because the borders of Armenia is small inside the Caucasia they would continuously use it as an excuse to expand their borders, and as a result this would be an endless source of danger for the Turks. Me on the other hand...” continued Talaat, “I replied to him saying that this is an impossible project. Because one way or another, there are about two million surviving Armenians, clearing out all of them is impossible, instead it is better to please them because they will never give us comfort, even if 100,000 Armenians are left on this earth. And as a result, by creating a small Armenia we will have solved the Armenian problem and we can present it as such to the international peace conference.”²⁹

Talaat Pasha’s view won and the Turks formed the small Armenia. One day after that Enver Pasha told me, boasting; ***“I solved a very difficult problem; I created Armenia, satisfied the nationalistic aspirations of the Armenians, but I did it without compromising even a handful of Turkish soil.”***

When I was signing the peace agreement with Karabekir Pasha in Alexandropol in 1920, I saw the same type of thinking, that the existence of a small Armenia is essential, from the point of view of Turkish interests. The Turkish motives can be summarized in the following three items:

²⁹ This explanation has been penned after all concerned parties who can be contacted for confirmation have passed away. Enver Pasha, Jamal Pasha, Talaat Pasha and other high-ranking statesmen were assassinated by Armenian Terrorist Groups ASALA and JCAG in all world capitals, with almost no punishment.

- A) They wished to have influence over Caucasia, if possible, they desired establishment of four states (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and North Caucasia) in alliance with them and under their support. This way, Turkey would be distanced from its scariest enemy, Russia.
- B) Turks were taking into account, the international character of the Armenian question. And they were hoping to please the international community even in a minor amount, by creating a small Armenia.
- C) By giving a piece of land to Armenia, Turks wanted to kick out the remaining Armenians outside the borders of Turkey and collect them there.³⁰

During the Lausanne Peace Conference, İsmet Pasha had repeated 22 times in four months, with various pretexts and to various people that the Armenian question was finally resolved by establishing the Republic of Armenia. This was the strongest argument of the Turks. I have heard it from many Turkish politicians. To all the objections like the land size of today's Armenia being very small, that it does not have an exit to any seas, that it is not large enough to feed its people or to settle down the immigrants; the Turks were responding by saying that all these problems would be solved in the future by establishment of "friendly neighborhood relations".

Returning to our negotiations in Batumi, I need to state that 12 more subjects were discussed besides the borders, like; railway lines, consular rights, commitment to have no protection force, etc., etc. Three annexes were added to the agreement, on the following topics: (1) transit passage, (2) trade in the common border areas, (3) mutual respect for religions and religious institutions.

On the evening of June 3, all documents were ready and at 12:00 o'clock noon the next day was set for the signing of the treaty. I conveyed this information by phone to General Korganov in Kars, with the purpose that he would convey it in turn to Yerevan, General Silikian, Dro and to our army. Both parties were present the next day,

³⁰ This looks like Khatisian's own idea?

with full staff, wearing ceremonial outfits. Munir Bey, the Secretary of the Turkish Delegation, a legal advisor at the same time, who had later attended many other conferences following this one, like Alexandropol, London and Lausanne, turned to me and said: ***“This is how the history of the states are completed. No need to be upset, nothing is everlasting, and treaties are also temporary.”***

Both sides signed the agreements and its supplements. After the signing, Mr. Halil and I gave speeches of celebration and thanks, and shook hands.

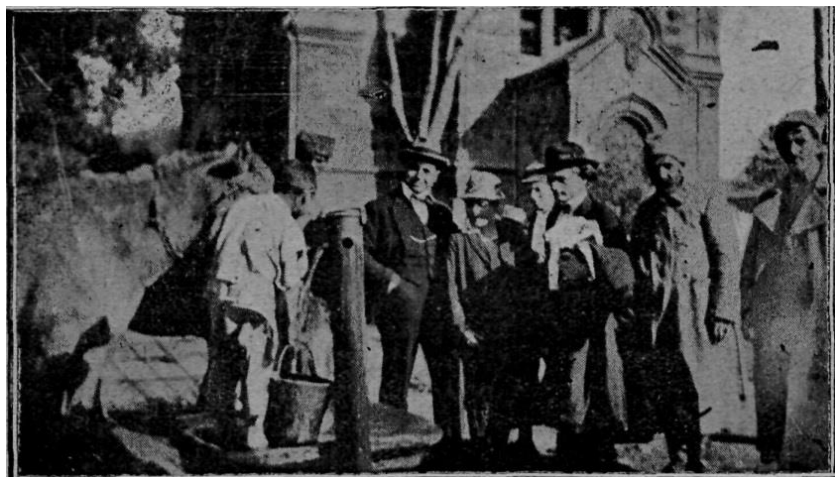
Our agreement was the first one in the chronological order. Georgians and Azerbaijanis were not hurrying up due to some hesitations. The Azerbaijanis signed after us on the evening of June 4th, the treaty of the Georgians was still not signed then. At 11 o'clock in the evening, Wehib Pasha's military officer came to me suddenly and said that Wehib Pasha wanted to see me for a very important unexpected job. I told him that I was ready to accept him. At midnight, Wehib Pasha came to me and said:

“I feel like I owe to inform you, because you have signed the peace agreement and because peaceful and friendly relations have been established between us. We need to either receive the Georgian delegate's signature under the peace treaty with the conditions that we offered, or at 6 o'clock this morning, our soldiers will start action towards Tbilisi passing from the village of Varantskova (Bortchali region) and arrive in Tbilisi in the evening. The directions have been given already. For sure you can understand the level of confusion that will take place in Tbilisi where 200,000 Armenians live. We gave the orders not to harm the Armenians, but in spite of this, it would be better of you to speak to the Georgian delegate's chief immediately.”

It was obvious that Wehib Pasha wanted to put the Georgians under pressure from both sides; by threatening to occupy Tbilisi and by threatening to create a new Armenian massacre in Tbilisi. At 1 o'clock at night, I went to the Georgian Delegation Chairman, Noe Ramishvili and informed him about the conversation I had with Wehib Pasha.

Ramishivili was very sad. He had received his government's final order not to sign the treaty unless the Turks gave some concessions on the borders. And since it was too late at night, it was not possible for him to discuss this with Tbilisi. He did not want to allow the invasion of Tbilisi by any means. Finally, at 3 o'clock at night, he sent a private letter to Wehib Pasha, saying that he was willing to sign the treaty by asking the Turks to make some concessions on the border voluntarily.

The following day, the Turkish-Georgian Treaty was signed and the Turks spontaneously left Abastuman to the Georgians.



In Yerevan – at the Fountain

On the evening of June 5, the Turkish delegation invited us all to a magnificent feast. A large number of officers, statesmen and journalists from Istanbul with all the Caucasian delegations were present. It was determined to approve the treaties, one month later, in Istanbul. All delegations left Batumi, on June 6. We returned to Tbilisi, with the text of the treaty. The original of this treaty is now stored in the Etchmiadzin Museum with its one-on-one prints in three languages: Russian, French and Armenian.

With the Peace Treaty on June 4 in Batumi, we signed a special treaty with the Turks and our Caucasian neighbors, regarding the sharing of the railway properties in accordance with the lengths of each country's railways. In fact, this treaty gave almost all railway properties to Georgians, Tartars and Turks because the Georgians had about 500 versts, the Turks and Tartars together had 700 versts, but we, only had 13 versts of railway lines.

This treaty could not come into effect as a result of future events.

Another treaty on the exchange of prisoners was also signed.

When the Transcaucasia Republics signed a treaty with Turks, the borders between the newly established Republics immediately became the subject of agenda; Lori, Kazakh, Zangezur, Lake Sevan, Karabagh, Nakhchvan and other troubled border problems came afore. The Turks wanted to reward the Armenians against the Georgians and offered assistance in the solution of the border problem that arose between us and Georgians in a way suitable to us. Azerbaijanis who had problems with the Georgians about the area of Zakatata and part of Borchalu region also had hopes that the Turks would help. However, the Georgians, with a special demand, requested the Turks not to interfere in the border disputes between the Transcaucasian Republics.

On July 7, German General von Losov informed the Georgian Government that:

“the German Guard Units were ordered not to take hostile attitude towards the Turks, absolutely remain in their places, and to explain to the Turks that they were there due to the orders of the German High Command.”

Thus, Germany placed the Georgian borders under its own support and defense. And the Mission of German General [Siegmond Georg Freiherr] von Kress that had reached Tbilisi in mid-May, turned into the real power of Georgia.

A German mission had gone to Yerevan also, but it consisted of only four soldiers.

When our delegation returned from Batumi to Tbilisi, the Armenian National Council immediately embarked on the establishment of the Armenian government. There were three people as candidates for prime minister, but due to a series of hesitations, it was unanimously decided to elect H. Khatchaznoui as prime minister. The other two candidates (Karchikian and I) entered Katchaznoui's cabinet as ministers; Karchikian as Minister of Finance and Public Works, and I as the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Katchaznoui's cabinet was accepted by the Armenian community with great sympathy. Katchaznoui was an acceptable person, especially because he was respected by the other parties too. **General Korganov, who received an offer to enter the cabinet as the Minister of Military Service did not accept the offer, and suggested General Akhvertov. General Akhvertov entered the cabinet. The General, who was definitely bound to the idea of independence of Armenia, unfortunately, did not know the Armenian language. In the same way, General Silikian and Nazarbekian also did not know how to speak Armenian.** And there is no doubt that this was a major flaw, but its correction was no longer possible to fix.

After the establishment of the government, the parties started to think about the establishment of a temporary assembly. Parliament was decided to be established in the same way that the Armenian National Council was established, that is, with the consent of the parties and to a certain degree of numerical balance.

Katchaznoui was against the establishment of both the cabinet and the parliament, in Tbilisi. He thought this problem should be settled in Yerevan, with the inclusion of the Yerevan politicians into the cabinet and the parliament.

Until this organizational work was completed, Turkish soldiers were going to Dilijan and Kazakh passing through Karakilise, and from there they were heading towards Baku. A local power was established in Baku, which did not want to recognize the Batumi Treaty and got its power from the Bolsheviks. On the other hand, Antranik was getting stronger in Zangezur, and he had decided not to allow the Turks to reach Karabagh. This way, the Batumi Agreement had not been successful to

solve all problems of Caucasia, and in addition, it had created hostility and new opportunities for conflicts. The most important problem was the occupation of Baku, the Turks sent 15,000 soldiers against this.

The military conflicts between Turks and us, around Yerevan and Alexandropol ceased after the signing of the Batumi Agreement.

Halil Pasha, commander of the Mesopotamian Front, had come to the Turkish Front in Yerevan to check the condition of his soldiers. Upon hearing this, General Nazarbekian informed him, about his desire to go visit the enemy, whom he had defeated near Dilman on the Iranian Front.

Hearing the desire of General Nazarbekian, Halil Pasha requested his messenger to tell him:

“Halil Pasha never accepts the visit of a person who constantly defeats him before he visits him first.”

And indeed, Halil Pasha came to Yerevan to visit Nazarbekian himself. He also had a meeting with Aram, whom he personally knew for a long time. He left, leaving Mehmet Pasha as ambassador in Yerevan.

The connection between Tbilisi and Yerevan was very weak. The Turks had occupied the railroad, and it was very difficult to get a pass. The telegraph line was broken, and not working, and the railways had almost stopped. Until the Katchaznouni Cabinet arrived in Yerevan in August, Armenia was ruled by the Yerevan National Assembly and the army.

Our delegation which was sent to Berlin with the participation of Dr. Hamo Ohanjanyan and Arshak Zohrabian, managed to create some favorable conditions for us in the German Government. As a result of these efforts, it was decided to hold a conference in Istanbul on June 25, where all Central European States, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria could attend. The Transcaucasian Republics were also invited to this conference. Von Kress officially informed the Armenian National Council President A. Aharonian about this subject, with the request to make the necessary arrangements for participation in the conference. On the evening of the same day, an Armenian National

Council meeting was held with the participation of the members of the Katchaznouni Cabinet. The telegraph had created a proper mood, the general idea was that Germany wanted to renegotiate the Batumi Treaty, and change it in accordance with the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. A delegation consisting of A. Aharonian, M. Babajanyan and I were selected to go to Istanbul. We were instructed to make every effort to expand the borders of Armenia. We took General Korganian and two secretaries with us as military advisors. We went to Batumi with the Georgian Delegation on June 14, and from there we headed for Istanbul the next day with the German Ship “General”.

We were in Istanbul three days later. They welcomed us at the port with a delegation led by Mr. Muhtar.

CHAPTER-6
(PAGES 79-95 in the original book)

**FOUR MONTHS IN ISTANBUL
(JUNE 15 – NOVEMBER 1, 1918)**

When we reached Istanbul, by the time our ship's ladder was dropped down on the port, the ex-ambassador of Turkey to Greece Mr. Muhtar, who was assigned the duty to be our guide, came on board the ship, with three officers. He greeted us in French on behalf of his government, congratulated us for reaching safely, and presented the officers accompanying him; Mr. Nuri and Mr. Ahmet. Mr. Ahmet was of Arabic origin.



Tokatliyan Hotel³¹ in Istanbul

Mr. Muhtar explained that we are the guests of the Turkish Government and Tokatliyan Hotel³² was allocated for our stay. We conveyed our gratitude for this friendly attitude of the government and went to the hotel. We paid attention to the faces of the people in the crowd alongside the harbor but we did not see any Armenians, none of them had dared to openly meet the delegation of the Republic of Armenia³³. The incident was very new and frightening. The war was not over yet, and the outcome was doubtful. As we learned later, the arrival of the

³¹ Pls see pp 131-134 for the story of this historical hotel.

³² Just 4.5 months before the Mondros Treaty, the Ottoman Government is hosting the Armenian Delegation at the hotel of an Istanbul Armenian.

³³ From whom and why should they be afraid of? The truth is rather, the Istanbul Armenians were not interested in the delegation of Armenia.

representatives of the Republic of Armenia was a dream for many; In everyone's mind the terrible images of the great disaster were still fresh, and which Armenian would believe that he could see the ministers of the Republic of Armenia after all this horror?

I came back to Istanbul two years later. Several women told me then, that at that time, they were secretly and sincerely praying in their homes for our health and well-being. They were afraid that the Turks would someday kill or poison us.³⁴

A good table was prepared for us at the hotel in advance. After having a meal and resting a bit, we agreed with Mr. Muhtar to make our first visit to Mr. Halil, who was the head of the Turkish delegation during the Batumi Conference and is now the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Halil greeted us very sincerely, and the subject of our meeting was the agenda of the next conference and the measures to be taken immediately to improve the situation of the Armenians in the Caucasus. Our basic idea which we expressed in some way during our meeting to Mr. Halil was as follows; ***“If Armenia is going to survive, give it the appropriate borders, if not, all these talks are in vain.”***

I must say in general that the overall subject of our efforts and meetings during those four months could be summed up in these three topics:

- A) Borders suiting the aim of creating a permanent Armenia,
- B) İstanbul Conference,
- C) The unbearably poor status of the Armenians' in the Caucasus.

We constantly talked about these issues with all the officials and non-official people that we had the opportunity to meet in Istanbul. If I had written all our conversations and talks with the many people that we met in Istanbul, it would create a very large volume. I will focus on the

³⁴ How much of this was true? If all of it was true, was she speaking for all Armenians in Istanbul?

issues that are more important than others and divide them into three groups:

- A) Our relations with the Turkish Council of Ministers led by Talaat Pasha and Enver Pasha,
- B) Our relations with the foreign ambassadors: German Ambassador Kont [Johann-Heinrich] von Bernstorff, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador Marquis von Pallavicini, Bulgarian Ambassador Kolchev and Ambassadors of neutral states like Iran and Sweden,
- C) Our relations with the Young Turks' Committee, influential Turkish statesmen and press members; among many others included Mr. Ahmet Rıza, Mr. Hüseyin Jahid who was the lead writer of "Tanin" and Mr. Rauf the Minister of Marine.

In addition, we had a meeting with the Sultan; Enver Pasha introduced us to him. The subject of our meeting was the Armenian problem.

Our views on Armenia's borders being quite weak, were responded by the Turks with the answer that all states started with a small piece of land and a small population in their early days. They were giving Greece as an example, saying that it only had a population of 400,000 people at the beginning. They pointed out that Belgium had 6 million people living on 30,000 Km². We needed statistical information and real data to nullify the Turks' objections accordingly, and to present our view in a more convincing way. For this purpose, our first job was to prepare a report on how much land we needed to protect the existence of the Armenian people. In addition, we were providing comparative data on the population and lands of the three Caucasian nations. This work was prepared under the leadership of military expert General Korganian, Professor of Economics Bunyatian and my brother Gevorg Khatisian who is an expert on Caucasus ethnography. Our aim was to demonstrate our indisputable rights over Ahilkelek, Lori, Zangezur, Karabagh and Nakhchevan. These were lands that our neighboring countries claimed for themselves.

The Turks knew our projects and initiatives very well, but they did not want a living Armenia to exist. They did not want Karabagh and Zangezur to become part of Armenia because they wanted to have open roads to Baku. Likewise, they did not want Ahilkelek and Lori to be given to us either, because they wanted open roads to Kazakh and Ganje too. We were constantly arguing by hiding the facts from each other and avoiding to open all our cards. When we eventually presented to the Turks the map where our borders were drawn, we saw that Azerbaijanis and Georgians had included a number of Armenian lands within their borders. A dangerous internal dispute was appearing, which was temporarily suppressed today but could possibly stem again tomorrow in one way or another and later emerge openly as Armenian-Georgian, Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts.

Every messenger that arrived from the Caucasus was conveying to us, horrible news about the situation of the people in Armenia. The Turks were taking necessary living materials out of our country and the Armenians were left with starvation and epidemics.

We were thinking that the Conference that we were fully prepared for, would start by early July. But it did not begin, the start date was continuously assigned but always postponed. The main reason was the failures on the war fronts. As these failures increased, the Turks and Germans started to avoid talking about the Conference.

We waited for four months, but in the end the conference did not take place. In addition, our diplomatic work in Istanbul was limited to discussions with Turkey's ruling staff and the ambassadors of their allied countries.

On the same day towards the end of June, after meeting with Halil Bey, we accomplished a visit to Talaat and Enver Pashas. Talaat Pasha accepted us at the [Sublime Porte] Bab-ı Ali. He tried to disown any responsibility on the subject of the Armenian massacre in his first speech. He was laying all responsibility on the military power, the Kurds and the local administrators. He was saying: ***“You will see with your own eyes how the officers arbitrarily change the orders coming***

from above.” He told us that on the first days of the war, he had requested from Vartkes, a member of the Ottoman Parliament to side with the Turks, but Vartkes had responded to his request in silence.

Talaat was saying:

“When our enemy the Russians held their guns towards our soldiers and fired at them, the bullets were touching our soldiers’ feet. But when the Armenians of Turkish citizenship, the traitors that were betraying their homeland started to shoot, the bullets touched our soldiers’ hearts.”³⁵

This perspective was a real torture for us. Aharonian made a fiery speech by giving details from the past, while [Mikael] Papajanian and I tried to draw the topic of our discussion to the current urgent issues.

I must mention that we split the roles among us, prior to the meetings, and each one of us spoke on certain subjects accordingly.

In his speeches, Talaat Pasha was specifying his approval of our requests, but he was saying that the Conference had the authority to seal the decision on all issues. Talaat’s outside appearance was not leaving a positive impression suitable to himself; his arrogant attitude, unpredictable appearance, obese body and his voice were conveying a fake friendship image, and this was not a positive impression. Finally, he requested the Armenian demands to be submitted to him in writing so that they could be presented to the Council of Ministers and he promised to speak to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We made our third visit to Enver Pasha. He accepted us at the building for the Ministry of War, located in Beyazıt Square. When we passed into the big hall used for Reception, an Arabic inscription in gold letters hanging on the opposite wall caught our attention. On it was written;

³⁵ An experienced statesman like Khatisian who included this paragraph with Talaat Pasha’s rightful complaint in his book should also have added a proper comment on it. What he calls a “perspective” is the reality itself. Why should it be a “torture” for the Armenians?

“You will find your peace under the protection of the swords.”

Enver Pasha accepted us immediately. He was of medium height and handsome. From the first minute onwards, he left the impression that he was an open and restrained person with his remarkable attitudes. His face was solid and calm, his eyes were penetrating and thoughtful. In general, his outside appearance was appealing. ***Upon looking at this person, it was difficult to believe that he might be suitable to throw hundreds of thousands of people into the lap of death with a calm heart.*** The Turks’ appearances were so deceiving; therefore, Europeans were easily fooled by their sweet and attractive attitude.

While with Enver, we mentioned the urgent problems that directly concerned us, the immigrants, the borders and then we moved on to the conference. Enver Pasha, responded in utmost self-control:

“The external considerations restrict us from allowing the free return of immigrants to the regions we occupy. The Muslim residents do not want to see them, I cannot guarantee their lives. Give it some time, the situation may change then. Besides, aren’t the Armenians still fighting a war against us?”

“They established an army in Baku and they are in a complete mood of war, Antranik is continuing the war against us in Zangezur.”

He had later given that same answer in response to the German Ambassador Kont von Bernstorff and General Commander Hinderburg. We had also seen this in the telegraphic correspondences between them.

Coming to the subject of borders, Enver Pasha expressed a view which had obviously set roots deep in his brain. He said:

“We cannot consider the issue of widening your borders because I have succeeded to turn into reality a vital necessity for Turkey. My friends and I have created Armenia. With this we have satisfied the nationalistic feelings of the Armenians and solved the Armenian problem. At the same time, we

achieved this outside the borders of Turkey, on Russian soil and we were successful in two subjects;

(A) We have created Armenia,

(B) We protected Turkish territory unscathed. And we did this only at the expense of accepting the existence of the Republic of Armenia. How can it be possible for you now to ask new territories from us? Well, can we do this without touching the old and new territories of Turkey? Kars, Ardahan and Batumi have just recently reached the bosom of their old mainland.”

Enver Pasha responded to our objections about the territory of Armenia being quite weak currently and about the historic land rights of the Armenian people by saying:

“Ohhooo, I am a person who knows very well that the people after tasting independence once would never give it up.”

Our first meetings did not yield any positive results in general. Our subsequent meetings with Mr. [Ahmed] Nesimi the Minister of Foreign Affairs and with Mr. [İsmail] Canbolat the Minister of Interior Affairs contributed little to our previous impressions.

All Turks constantly emphasized the following thought in their speeches; England and Russia are breaking up the relationship between Turks and Armenians, by making two neighborly people fight with each other, they are fishing in turbid water. The explanations of Mr. Huseyin Jahid and Mr. Rauf are especially interesting.

When we realized that our conference was facing postponements, we were trying to show to the Turkish community leaders that coming to agreement with Armenians would be beneficial to the Turks as well and we were struggling to keep the main thoughts of the Turkish society on our side. Our arguments were as follows:

Without denying our propaganda carried outside and activities carried out everywhere by the Armenian-lovers [Armenophiles], we were explaining that unless the Armenian problem would be solved in a

satisfactory style, it would continue against the credit of Turkey. On the other hand, we were promising moral support to Turkey's rebuilding and showing that existence of independent Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan would provide dependable borders for Turkey in its unstable Northern Front. Our arguments were leaving some effect on the Turks, but it could be felt that their thoughts were working in another direction. Their failures on the Western Front had caused them to turn their gaze to the East. [The author has accidentally used the word 'Eastern' instead of 'Western' in his original manuscript.] Upon losing the Balkans and the Arabic lands, supposedly in return, they had hopes to gain living power and land in the Caucasia, Turkistan and Iranian Azerbaijan. I can argue that [Aleksandar] Malinov, the prime minister of Bulgaria presented this prediction to the Turks in Brest-Litovsk, in a very realistic form of opportunity. Kolchev, the Bulgarian Ambassador in Turkey, whom I had the opportunity to meet with dozens of times, told me this.

Thus, two main projects were occupying the main idea of the Turks, at that time. The first was to add Caucasia to Turkey relying on the Muslim majority and to minimize the power of Armenians and Georgians to the lowest level, to spread out again to Turkistan and Iranian Azerbaijan via Maku [city in West Azerbaijan]

The Turks' second major project was to create an effective alliance of the Caucasian States in Caucasia and thus to create a powerful buffer-zone between Turkey and Russia, its hundreds of years of enemy. Some of the Turks were attempting to combine these two plans. Mr. Jahid was an example to this; he wanted a strong Caucasian alliance under Turkey's support. I had not met the Ankara Government's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Bekir Sami [Kunduh], at that time; he later mentioned the same project several times.

We went to Mr. Huseyin Jahid [Yalchin]³⁶, together with Armenian political writer Dikran Zaven. His house, his maids, the order and furniture and his attitude were in European style; a tall man with a smart

³⁶ editor in chief of Tanin. He was exiled in Malta by the occupation forces from June 1919 until April 1921

appearance, well dressed and speaking French perfectly was leaving a very pleasant impression. We told Mr. Jahid our demands and he told us that he was not a member of the ruling party but an opposition member, thus it would be difficult for him to help us actually, but as a social politician he considered it necessary to please the Armenians. He said: ***“You need to do your own calculations, and also understand the national demands vital for us”*** and he started telling us theirs. He brought the map and started to explain his view that a little over 6 million Turks were left after the war. ***“We need vital powers and the Armenians should not block the path to our brothers”*** he said.

Then he showed us the two roads that led him to his brothers; the first was the Zangezur-Karabagh path, the second was the Ahilkelek-Borchali line.

He summarized it by saying: ***“Either one of these should be left open for us, but in return you need to gain satisfaction on some issues.”*** And after that, Mr. Jahid started to show the lands that Armenians could be happy with.

After Mr. Huseyin Jahid, we held a meeting with Mr. Rauf [Orbay]. He had assumed the duty of the Minister of Marine following [Ahmed] Jamal Pasha. At the time, Mr. Rauf was not the head of power, but following the British victories, upon strengthening of the British stream among the Turks, the Ministry of Marine was given to Mr. Rauf. Mr. Rauf was known as someone with mild views; he promised us to talk to Enver Pasha especially in favor of our immigrants. He kept his promise, however his mediation did not yield any results.

This man who did not show any sympathy to the Armenians during his prime ministry days [July 22, 1922 - August 4, 1923], was showing us a warm sincerity during our days in Istanbul, when he was not in power. The disaster of Izmir and the Istanbul terror days happened during his tenure.

We also visited Wehib Pasha who had withdrawn from office and was living in Kadikoy. He was very sincere. According to him, there shouldn't be any controversial problems between the Armenians and Turks, aside from various “misunderstandings” and immigration

problems. He summarized the subject saying “*A new era of Armenian-Turkish friendship has begun.*”

Typically, all Turks that we had discussions with in a fake or genuine manner emphasized the necessity of Turkish-Armenian friendship for Turkey. I had to think that they were sincere, because at the upcoming Peace Conference they thought that the Armenian problem was their hardest issue. The Armenian victims’ blood was still fresh and the smell of Mosul oil could not have completely erased the great disaster.

One day a Young Turk, who is now the editor in chief of the Vakit newspaper Mr. Emin [Ahmet Emin Yalman] came by us. Later he was exiled to Malta and returned to Istanbul to continue with his publishing activities. Mr. Emin was in search of new paths for Armenian-Turkish rapprochement. He presented our demands in his newspaper defending in good faith, by using words like “*however, it should not harm the Turkish interests*”.

Other Istanbul media outlets for example *Tasvir-i Efkar* and *Aksham* were displaying a feverish standing against us. The *Tasvir-i Efkar* published my interview with them by arrogantly adding ideas like “*Armenians themselves organized the carnages by provoking the Muslims to take their fair revenge.*” I was forced to respond with a denial in writing and the newspaper had to publish it compulsorily.³⁷

We also held a meeting with Ahmed Riza. His outside appearance was more sympathetic than all other Turks; something that we had hardly seen in Istanbul. Ahmed Riza was impressing everyone as soon as he started speaking, due to his tallness, white beard, soft gaze and noble stance. Upon the fall of Talaat Pasha from power, he was the first person among the Turks to explain on the Senate floor, the number of Armenians and Arabs killed. He complained to us by saying that the understandings that the Young Turks put into action were bad and that he at one time had fought along their side for the same. He deplored the falling of the ideals of unification and equality and said that all our

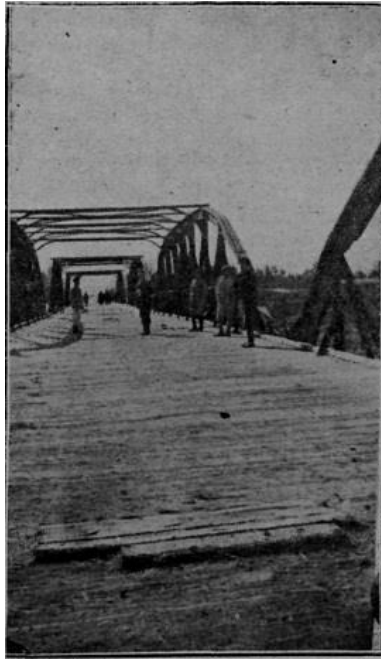
³⁷ It is unbelievable that a pro-Armenian text of denial which was sent in the year 1918 would be published “compulsorily”.

efforts would be left in vain as long as Talaat and Enver remained in power.

The Turks were grinding their teeth to us but on the other hand, they were talking to us smilingly and with a sweet appearance. Especially, the opinion of Mr. Azmi who was the Istanbul Police Director was a typical example. Once, Aharonian and I were sitting in Talaat Pasha's reception hall waiting for a meeting with him. Talaat Pasha was holding a meeting with the Austrian Ambassador. He offered us coffee and sent Mr. Azmi to keep us from getting bored. Mr. Azmi explained to Aharonian that he admired his writings especially those which pictured the suffering of the Turkish-Armenians. He screamed "*Oooo, those writings are deeply poetic and nice.*"

After the Turkish ministers and politicians, we also visited the Austrian and Bulgarian Ambassadors. In fact, our first meeting was with the German Ambassador Kont von Bernstorff, who was at his flat on the Bosphorus. I must admit that the German Embassy which we visited more than twenty times, showed us a very attentive attitude and actually helped us. They offered us a direct telegraph line between Istanbul and Berlin, and we contacted our comrade Dr. Hamo Ohanjanyan a couple of times. German couriers were taking our letters to Berlin. The Secretary of the German Embassy, von Dikov was ready to send our telegrams and letters to wherever and whenever we needed.

Kont von Bernstorff personally listened to us carefully, he admitted that our demands were fair and sent them to his Government. In the book published by Lepsius, named ***Germany and Armenia***, many telegrams were published proving his benevolent attitude towards us. To defend our demands, besides the applications he made by telegraph, the German Ambassador personally visited Talaat Pasha a couple of times. But as usual, they did not yield any results. It is necessary to mention that the Turks began to treat the Germans with disdain in general, at that time and they also tried to get rid of German tutelage.



Aras Bridge and the Armenian Guards

I think it will not be an overstatement to mention at this stage that while we were in Istanbul, the situation of the Armenian people in the Caucasus had turned more severe. Especially the situation in Akhılkelek region was very disappointing. Almost all of the 80,000 Armenian inhabitants of this region had to leave their homes under rain and snow and take shelter in the Bakuriani region of neighboring Georgia, which was 6,000 steps high. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that this mass suffered enormous losses due to typhoid, cholera and hunger. Within three months 25,000 people died there.

At that time, the situation of the Armenian immigrants gathered in Bakuriani region, was occupying the minds of the Armenians more than anything. Newspapers were continuously interested in their condition and the national governments were concerned about this subject. The Turks occupied the Ahılkelek region and did not allow Armenians to return back to their old locations. We had applied to the Turkish Government many times on this subject.

The representatives of Germany in the Caucasia, had appealed many times, regarding the extremely severe condition of the Armenian immigrants. In Berlin, Hamo Ohnajanyan had appealed to the German government on this subject. German Ambassador von Kress in Georgia demanded his government to take strict measures to put an end to this situation with a series of telegrams depicting the terrible situation the Armenian immigrants were in. The Berlin delegate of Vatikan in the name of the Pope, also appealed in favor of the Armenian immigrants, and by a private telegram he demanded from the German Government that it should aid ***“to the Christian people with Armenian and Assyrian-Chaldean origins in Turkey and Iran”***. We had made a call in the same direction, to the Pope’s representative in Istanbul, Cardinal Dolche. On July 15, Hamo Ohanjanyan and Arshak Zohrabian submitted a detailed report to the German Government about the situation of our migrants in the Caucasus. General von Kress did the same on July 16, from Tbilisi.

In order to express the mood of the Turkish people, I am giving as an example, the edict published by Wehib Pasha on June 4th on the occasion of the Batumi Conference. See what is written on this edict:

“In order to revive the railroad transportation between Ganja and Yerevan, private trains containing Turkish soldiers will be included in the cycle. These officers will have Wehib Pasha’s edict and they will read it to the Turkish Tartar people. They will announce everywhere that peace has now been reached, hostile treatment of Armenians is forbidden, and from now on, killing of Armenians is forbidden.”

This sentence is typical. Maybe the previous killings of Armenians were permitted.³⁸

All our applications yielded the following three results:

- A) As German soldiers were sent to Georgia, a question arose about sending Austrian soldiers to Armenia,

³⁸ Those sad events were rather unexpected by Turkish governors and they happened at a time during World War-I, when all security forces were involved in the defense of the country. So, no police force could be spared for internal conflicts.

- B) The German General Commander made serious demands to Enver Pasha,
- C) German Ambassador Kont von Bernstorff asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to reconsider its attitude towards Armenians and the political situation of Armenia.

The Austrian Government had originally intended to send soldiers to Armenia, but it gave up this idea after its defeat in the Western Front. The Bulgarians, Austrians and Germans sent special delegations to Armenia and they too wrote reports to their governments in our favor. Hamo Ohanjanyan had specifically gone to Vienna to meet with the Austrian Government. Also noteworthy was Hamo Ohanjanyan's meeting with Talaat Pasha in Berlin.

Talaat Pasha had promised to announce by November 1, in a magnificent manner in Istanbul that they will retreat to the 1914 borders by leaving to the Armenians the lands they occupied in Russian Armenia.³⁹

We learned that an agreement between Georgians and Germans was reached on the same days. The Germans were forced to accept the independence of Georgia and they made Russia accept this situation too. In return, the Georgians gave privileges to the Germans in the Poti Sea Port as well as the operation of its forests and manganese mines.

While we were holding meetings with official people in Istanbul, Baku fell and during the occupation of this place, Turks killed 30,000 Armenians committing a terrible slaughter. Armenians of Karabagh also faced a serious danger. A general situation of sadness was prevalent among the Armenians. We decided to meet with the Young Turks Committee. A major named Mr. Rıza accepted us at the committee building. Rıza invited us to the meeting room where Dr. Bahaettin Shakir and Dr. Nazım were waiting for us. Aharonian and I spoke to these gentlemen for two hours. We conveyed our grief about the Baku massacres taking place at a time when we were signing a peace treaty with the Turks. We requested the Young Turks Committee to

³⁹ There is no proof of such a statement – that he will give Kars and Ardahan to the Armenians.

intervene with their government in favor of peace and fulfilling our reasonable demands.

Bahaettin Shakir and Nazım threw all the blame on the Turkish soldiers' fatigue, which caused them not to be able to prevent the crimes committed by the local Tartars and stated that only 300 Armenians, not 30,000 were killed during the street clashes. They said that Armenians fought against the Turks everywhere and aided Turkey's enemies. They informed that the only suitable solution would be an unconditional Armenian-Turkish cooperation.

*They said: "You are doing things against us everywhere, you are provoking all of Europe and America against us, you are relentlessly diminishing our reputation. If we are physically destroying you, you are killing us morally, which is much heavier for us."*⁴⁰

The people that we were speaking to, asked us to completely forget the past, to immediately quit any negative-propaganda against the Turks and to cooperate with the Turks in every way.

When we talked to them about our demands and our boundaries, their words took an ambiguous and unstable situation. After two hours of talking, the Committee members pledged to discuss our demands with Talaat Pasha. While we were going out from the meeting room, we saw that Talaat Pasha was sitting in the waiting room. He was waiting for our conversation with the Committee members to end so that he could discuss with them.

The next day, we were with Talaat Pasha⁴¹. He made the same explanation about the Baku massacre. In fact, there was a general

⁴⁰ They said very true facts.

⁴¹ One of the three leaders of the Young Turks. From 1915 onwards, he held positions of Minister of Internal Affairs, Minister of Finance and finally Grand Vizier. He was assassinated while walking on the streets in Berlin at day-time, by a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation named Solomon Tehlirian. This was the start of a plot campaign called "Operation Nemesis". They shot many Turkish government members including Enver Pasha and Jamal Pasha. Like the other assassins, Soghomon Tehlirian was set free due to intense Armenian propaganda, and spent the rest of his life in America.

internal agreement between the Turks about talking to us in this way. When we transmitted to Talaat our complaint that the Turkish soldiers were preparing to attack Karabagh, Talaat picked up the phone and started talking to Enver. He said to him; ***“Armenians are requesting an order [from our side] not to attack Karabagh.”*** In fact, Enver was denying such an attack.

Laughingly Talaat replied to him: ***“Enver, do not forget that who is talking to you is not a foreign ambassador. It is Aharonian and Khatisian who are sitting here, they know everything very well.”***

After this discussion, Talaat explained to us that he guarantees that there will not be any kind of attack against Karabagh.

After Talaat, we felt that we had to pay a new visit to Enver Pasha. Enver convinced us that he had ordered Karabagh not to be occupied, but when the subject came to Baku massacre, he gave the following explanation which is still fresh in my memory:

“You are calling it a massacre, but aren’t people killed during wars? Doesn’t a much greater flow of blood occur in wars? Aren’t the people erecting monuments of their commanders for these things? Actually, isn’t the topic the same? In a battle, they kill with guns and rifles, and here with swords and bayonets. The result is the same - killing of the people. Why are we showing hypocrisy? Turkey is receiving a death threat from the Armenians; death of the Armenians is the same as the death of our enemies during the war.”

As for the return of the Ahilkelek immigrants, Enver replied that this was not possible from the military point of view.

Turkish politicians were responding to our visits in a timely manner. Return visits of the Turks became more frequent, especially when the defeats of the Germans in the Western Front escalated in October. Their attitude towards us became more sincere and their explanations more careful.

They were in such a situation that one day they told us that they invited us to be present at the Selamlık to be introduced to the

Sultan. Following the religious ceremony, Enver Pasha introduced us to the Sultan in the Mosque. Aharonian gave a speech on behalf of the Republic of Armenia and expressed his hope that Armenia and Turkey would become good neighbors from now on.

The Sultan responded by saying that he was very happy that the “centuries long friendly” relations between Armenians and Turks was now turning into a political friendship between Turkey and Armenia.⁴²

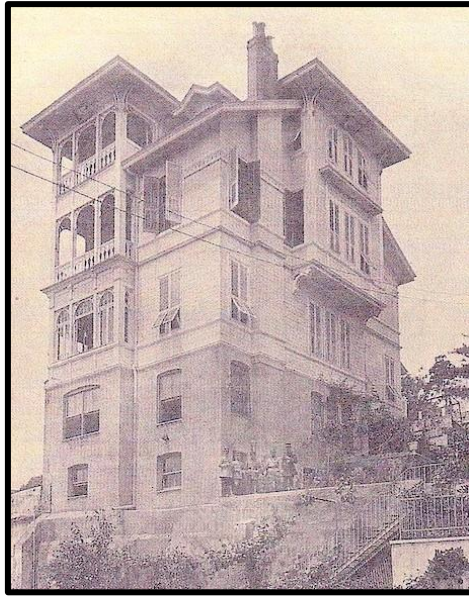
The Sultan expressed that he was hoping that we would convey the Sultan’s good wishes to the Armenian people, on behalf of all of Turkey, upon our return to Armenia.

After the Sultan, they introduced us to the Crown Prince in his palace. He had the appearance of a perfectly intellectual person and was leaving a very sweet impression. He told us that he himself never supported the persecution of Armenians and expressed his wishes for Armenia to be happy.

Next to the Crown Prince, we were introduced to Turkey’s former Ambassador to London, Tevfik Pasha. He told us that he personally foresaw the war’s catastrophic results, and that he expressed the view that Turkey faces a misfortune, at times when Turkey fights a war with England.

A few days later, Enver Pasha invited us to his house for dinner. All the splendor of the East was opened in front of us. Enver’s mansion was full of gold, silk, carpets and all kinds of valuable goods.

⁴² Armenian-American Prof. Hovannisian has written an entirely different version of this conversation in his 1967 book, ***Armenia on the Road to Independence 1918:*** *“In September, during an audience to felicitate the enthronement of the Sultan, Aharonian expressed thanks for Vahideddin’s good wishes and again promised that Armenian Government would not forget the Ottoman charity which had allowed the Republic to be created.”*



This was Enver Pasha's residence overlooking the Bosphorus.

It was used as offices by the
British- French occupation forces during 1919 – 1922.

German General [Johannes "Hans" Friedrich Leopold] von Seeckt who has now become the Commander of the General Army of Germany was invited as well. Also invited were Talaat and Izzet Pashas and three Caucasian delegations. The subject of the speech at the dinner table was the future of the newly established Caucasian Republics.

Enver Pasha said: ***"It would be better if Armenia chose an Austrian prince, Georgia a German prince and Azerbaijan a Turkish prince as their king. Thanks to their dynasty, these three kingdoms could get very strong."***

After the meal, the guests began to carefully study an oil painting reflecting a scene from the Tripoli War. Enver Pasha said that his military career started on the field of war and added ***"I have not had a life outside war and I do not understand of anything else."***

Thus, the weeks passed one after the other, neither a conference was held, nor any tangible results stemmed from our meetings. A fatal break, on the major fronts of the war was being experienced on the outside. The fate of the war was treacherous to Germany and its allies. Although there was intense censorship in the press, it was felt to a certain extent that the flow of events changed fundamentally. Hamo Ohanjanyan informed us from Berlin that France's success was accepted as a probability by the Germans. British planes began to be seen more frequently over Istanbul and they were dropping bombs.

Out of nowhere, Talaat Pasha went to Berlin, in the middle of October.

Armenians began to act more courageously; they were approaching us in the church and trying to chat with us. The Greeks were speaking boldly about the successes of the French. We went by the German Ambassador to get some information, and Kont von Bernstorff told us that the Entente States were winning. We saw General Otto von Losov next to him, he was very upset. Von Losov said to us: ***"Our people are tired, our enemies have three powers; the open sea, planes and life supplies. We do not have any of these and we are defeated."***

The changes in the front line had an impact over the Turkish Government's way of administration as well. They brought to us, 60 Armenian prisoners from the Russian Army. While handing them over to us, they said: ***"These are now citizens of the Republic of Armenia, and for this reason we are delivering them to you so that you send them to Armenia."***

Talaat Pasha came back from Berlin, barely escaping the danger of falling captive in Bulgaria due to the ceasefire with the Entente States. **He announced to us that Turkey was ready to give back to Armenia and Georgia the lands belonging to them prior to 1914.**⁴³

Foreign Minister Mr. Nesimi personally came to us at the Tokatliyan Hotel and explained that everything was fine and the Turks would evacuate the Caucasus in a short time.

⁴³ This is hard to believe.

Rumor in Istanbul was that the Talaat Pasha Cabinet would lose power. If I remember right, on October 20, around 4:00 in the afternoon, Talaat Pasha greeted us standing up and said:

“In a few hours, I will leave power, we are defeated, I envy you, you are among the winning armies, but we are on the side of the losing ones and we are losing too much. But let me tell you something, never forget that the future is uncertain and who knows what we can still encounter. I am a believer of fate, you are young diplomats, always wait for the last minute, never sign a document in the evening that will be conveyed the next morning. Who knows what might happen at night?”

I remembered these negative⁴⁴ words of Talaat several times in Lausanne. Who would think that five years later, this devastated Turkey would dictate the conditions of peace to the victorious Allied Powers?⁴⁵

In the evening, the cabinet of Talaat Pasha fell and Izzet Pasha was appointed Vizier. The next day British General [Charles Vere Ferrers] Townshend, who was captured by the Turks in Mesopotamia and remained captive in Heybeliada appeared in our hotel. İzmir Governor Mr. Rahmi was with him. Later we learned that they were preparing the conditions for the ceasefire with the British Admiral.

Late that evening, around 11 pm, Mr. Rauf’s military aide came by and asked us to go to the Ministry of Marine. Upon our arrival, Mr. Rauf greeted us with this speech:

“Tonight, I will go beside the British Admiral, to sign a truce, and I am offering you to accompany me over there. Let the British see that we have made peace. Isn’t it important for the Conference that it be known that there is no conflict between Turks and Armenians anymore?”

⁴⁴ Why is it negative?

⁴⁵ “Question: Who would think?” “Answer: Mustafa Kemal Pasha.”

I remembered the strict attitude that Mr. Rauf had held during the Trabzon Conference, and forwarded him the question of how our borders would be

Mr. Rauf replied: *“the boundaries of 1914, with a correction in favor of Eleşkirt Valley.”*

We really couldn’t have given our approval. The Entente States had won the war, and our hopes were tied to their victory. So, we did not go. We returned home and waited in excitement all night long, without any sleep, for the announcement of truce.⁴⁶

The next day Mr. Rauf and Mr. Hamit came to us. They looked very sad. They had brought the conditions of the ceasefire with them. Upon examining the conditions in question, we immediately realized that the independence of Armenia was not achieved. Occupation of Armenia by the Entente soldiers was not being requested in the Truce, Turkey was not going to be unarmed and was going to have all these unfortunate possibilities that would become realities in the future.

After the ceasefire was signed, we had nothing left to do in Istanbul. We should obtain an order from Prime Minister Izzet Pasha addressed to Sukru Pasha, about the evacuation of the Caucasian borders. We were to take the captive Armenian soldiers with us, and **return home to render new preparations to attend the Grand Conference.⁴⁷**

Izzet Pasha handed in a closed envelope the order addressed to Sukru Pasha that he should evacuate Alexandropol and Kars⁴⁸ on December 6.

After making farewell visits, we were prepared to leave on November 1st on board Reshit Pasha’s ship. An officer came to wish us a good trip on behalf of the Sultan. Our captive soldiers sang the anthem “Our

⁴⁶ Their mind is on Kars and Ardahan, and even on Erzurum, as Aharonian would claim in San Remo Conference on April 23, 1920.

⁴⁷ During those days in America, Pasdermadjian was writing his book intending to influence the Paris Peace Conference, 1919.

⁴⁸ Immediately after the Mudros Ceasefire Treaty was signed Kars was given to the Armenians, thereby scrapping the Batumi Treaty.

Motherland”, Turkish soldiers stood to salute, and at 12 noon the ship started to sail towards Batumi.

At the last minute, Enver’s uncle Halil [Kut] Pasha got on board the ship. On the way, our ship stopped several times due to lack of coal and for several other reasons.

We landed on the port of Trabzon and made a visit to the Governor. We asked him about the condition of the Armenians there and learned that about 200 Armenian women were staying in Turkish people’s homes.

And at one time, an English minelayer stopped us, to take Halil Pasha off the ship and to take him back to Istanbul. Later we discovered that Halil Pasha was on the list of Turkish statesmen to be exiled on the Island of Malta.

Batumi was in the hands of the Turks in its entirety, the breath of defeat had not reached there yet. For this reason, they posed some difficulties to us.

We arrived in Tbilisi at 9 pm on November 14th. There, we had consultations with the Georgian administration. **They were demanding Borchaly and Ahilkelek regions to be given to Georgia claiming that since we were going to get the six Armenian provinces from Turkey and so would not need any more lands.** We portrayed an abstaining attitude.

On November 15th, we received a rush telegram from Yerevan stating that Kharchikian was killed. This news made us very uncomfortable so we decided to go to Yerevan as soon as possible.

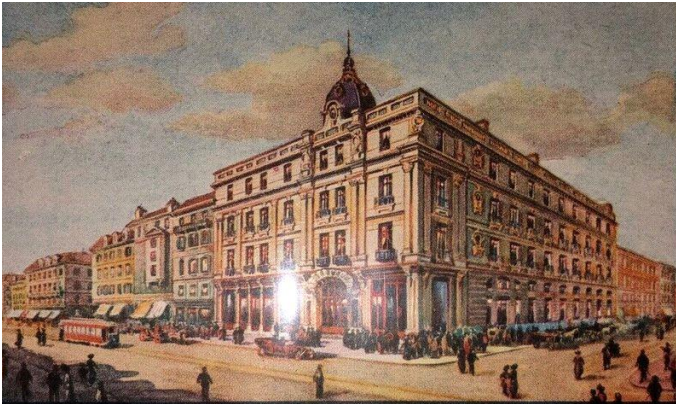
On November 20, Aharonian, Papajanian and I went to Yerevan together with ministers of Democratic Party.

ATTACHMENT:

Tokatliyan Hotels (Wikipedia)



Quiet during the Day



Popular at Night

The **Tokatliyan Hotels**, founded by Meguerditch Tokatliyan^[4], were two prominent hotels located around Istanbul. The hotels were regarded as luxury hotels where many famed individuals such as [Leon Trotsky](#) and [Mustafa Kemal](#)

[Atatürk](#) stayed.^{[2][3][4]} They are considered among the first European-style hotels to be built in Turkey.^[5]

History

The Tokatlıyan Hotels were founded by Meguerditch Tokatliyan, an [Ottoman](#) citizen of [Armenian](#) descent, who moved from [Tokat](#) to Istanbul in 1883 and adopted the last name Tokatlıyan meaning "from Tokat".^{[4][6]} Meguerditch Tokatliyan eventually settled in [Nice, France](#), where he lived the rest of his life.^[7]

Beyoğlu Branch^[edit]

Meguerditch established the first Tokatlıyan Hotel in 1897 on the Rue de Pera (modern [İstiklal Caddesi](#)) in Pera, [Beyoğlu](#). The hotel was first known as *Hotel Splendide* but the name soon changed to Hotel Tokatlıyan.^[8] It originally had 160 rooms and its furnishings were brought from Europe.^[9] The hotel contained high-ceiling halls and rooms and it also had its own [coat of arms](#) made with silver which was placed all around the hotel.^[8] The Hotel was one of the popular venues of the Istanbul high society for a long time. Many famed individuals such as [Leon Trotsky](#), [Josephine Baker](#), and [Mustafa Kemal Atatürk](#) were guests of the hotel.^{[3][10]} Atatürk considered it his favorite hotel.^[4]

During the [First World War](#) and the [Armenian Genocide](#), the hotel was vandalized and its windows were broken. It was eventually passed down to the [Serbian](#) businessman Nikola Medović in 1919. One of the most notable events in this period was on 4 November 1922, when [Ali Kemal](#), the liberal newspaper editor and former Minister of the Interior was kidnapped from the barber shop at Tokatlıyan Hotel, and was carried to the Asiatic side of the city and lynched by Republican forces.

Subsequently the hotel came into the ownership of the [Turkish](#) businessman İbrahim Gültan, who changed the hotel's name to *Konak*.^[3] By the 1950s, due to lack of maintenance, the hotel was run-down and in a deteriorating

state, after which the Üç Horan (Holy Trinity) Armenian Church bought the property and attained ownership.

Today, the building still stands at its original location next to the [Çiçek Pasajı](#). Its lower floors are used as a hotel, while other rooms are now shops and banks.^[9] Many of the upper floors, which replaced the structure's dome, are now off-limits.^[9]

Tarabya Branch



After the success of the first Tokatlıyan hotel, Meguerditch Tokatlıyan opened another hotel at [Tarabya](#) in 1909. The hotel consisted of 120 rooms and was situated on the banks of the [Bosphorus](#).^[7] The hotel became popular immediately.^[7] However, on April 19, 1954, the hotel was heavily damaged due to fire. In 1964 the hotel was reconstructed and its name changed to the Büyük Tarabya (Grand Tarabya) Hotel.^[7] The hotel was used as a setting for numerous Turkish movies and TV shows such as *Cici Gelin*, *Acele Koca Aranıyor*, *Arım Balım Peteğim*, and more.^[7]

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9. ^ [Jump up to:](#)^{a b c} Ziflioglu, Vercihan (2010-12-27). "[Landmark Istanbul hotel threatened by stall on restoration](#)". *Hurriyet*. Retrieved 4 January 2013.
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COMMENT BY THE EDITORS

Obviously written by an Armenian who uses the familiar anti-Turkish DIASPORA jargon, this WIKIPEDIA article contains several incorrect pieces of information. We left it as is. Sadly it is the only article on the hotel in English available on the internet.

CHAPTER-13

(PAGES 216-259 in the Original Book in Armenian Language)

WAR WITH THE TURKS, ATTACK OF THE BOLSHEVIKS AND LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE ARMENIAN REPUBLIC

(1920 Autumn - until December 2nd)

I left Armenia at the end of June 1920. I was away from the country for four months. I had left Armenia, after the outbreak of the Bolshevik rebellion and when I returned, I found the country in a state of war.

Our country had reached the peak of its power and territorial expansion during that four-month period.

During that period, the government was continuously in the hands of the Armenian Revolutionary Dashnaktsutiun Bureau and under the presidency of Dr. H. Ohanjanyan. The first deed of this government was suppression of the Bolshevik action.

Following the suppression of the rebellion, the Government set out to materialize its second aim; demolition of the cells which were not accepting the power of the government and bringing the people of those regions to an obedient state. Those cells were Zengibasar, Büyük Vedi and some regions of the Kars Province. This purpose was also accomplished successfully. There was no longer an open enemy left against the power of the Government in the Muslim regions. Our soldiers occupied Büyük Vedi, Gayli Drunk and Baş Noraşen, on July 12 and 15.

After the rebellion was suppressed and obedience of the rebellious regions was achieved, the Government turned its attention to the supply of food for the people. Hunger was threatening the people. For this purpose, telegrams were sent to the Paris Delegation with the request of providing opportunities to send flour and seeds. One of these telegrams is provided below:

“To Atabekian, the Armenian Consul in Batumi,

“I request you to please inform the President of the Paris Committee Aharonian, via Tahtajian, about the following information: around 1 million poods [= 16.4 million Kg = 36 million lbs] were planted, almost 8 million harvests are expected. Three or four million poods are missing. Only eighty thousand tons were purchased through the American Committee, sixty thousand of which was used in Armenia, eleven thousand were spent for transportation, and ten

thousand were sold to the Armenian Government by the Committee. The flour sent via "River Araks" was received. In short time, I will inform you by telegraph about our needs that can be met with the five-year loan offered by the Scandinavian Government."

Dated: July 8, Issue: 45000.

From: Ohanjanyan.

At the same time, the Government, which was preparing to sign the Sèvres Treaty and felt itself compelled to enter the establishment of the League of Nations authorized the Committee of the Republic of Armenia to sign the Treaty of Sèvres, and to make a statement to the League of Nations.

Those power of attorneys sent by telegram are as follows:

"To the Consul General of Armenia in Batumi.

"I request you to please urgently send a telegraph to the High Counsel of Paris Allies, with a copy to Aharonian, the President of the Delegation of the Armenian Republic. In addition to the powers given to the President of the Delegation of the Armenian Republic Mr. Aharonian by the Government of the Republic of Armenia on December 7, 1918, with this correspondence, the Government of the Republic of Armenia, on behalf of the Republic of Armenia, grants to Mr. A. Aharonian the authority and legal right to sign the peace treaty with Turkey by the Entente Powers"

Issue: 3743. Date: June 20.

Signed: Chairman for the Cabinet Ministers of the Republic of Armenia, H. Ohanjanyan."

Power of attorney sent by private courier:

Government of the Republic of Armenia, which ordered its Paris Delegation to sign the Sèvres Treaty, is at the same time concerned about the exit to the Black Sea via Batumi.

As it is well known, this problem has become a hot discussion topic in San Remo, but no results were achieved. For this reason, the Government gave special instruction about Batumi with a separate telegram. The telegram sent via transceiver over Basra is as follows:

“To Aharonian, Paris;

“The Government of Armenia, by taking into account that the conditions have changed, finds it necessary to draw the following borders between Georgia and Armenia in the Batumi Region. The proposed border starts from the Black Sea coast at the port of Batumi a part of which should be owned by the Republic of Armenia, continues through the Coruh Valley [Çoruh in Artvin] and the İmirhan and Ardanuç [Bulanık] rivers that are flowing there, then climbs into the Ardanuç Valley; and thus, reaches the gate of Alagöz by closing this piece of land which is cut by the Batum-Ardahan road. This territorial demand arises from the necessity to have a sea exit, which is promised to the State [by the Allied Powers], and can be realized soon. This exit is provided by the Çoruh Valley.

“The requested territory of the Batumi Province accommodates 15,000 Armenians, 25,000 Turks⁴⁹ and other Muslims, and the number of Georgians in here is only 5,000 people.”

I have deliberately included all these telegrams and writings here to show how fast Armenia's state life has developed both in terms of the interior and the outside world. On the one hand Armenia was developing internally, on the other it was included in the

⁴⁹ Obviously, Turkish people are the majority in the requested lands.

international movement, and it was regulating its economic life through borrowing loans.

That is how the months of June, July and early August passed by. But in mid-August, clouds began to gather over Armenia, and our enemies emerged from both the north and the south; From the south, Kemalist Turks, and from the north the Bolsheviks who wanted to Sovietize Armenia at all costs, in other words wanting to join Armenia into Russia. The Russian-Turkish, or rather Kemalist-Bolshevik agreement, which had been in preparation for a long time, started to bear its actual fruits.

This moment is very important in the history of the Republic of Armenia and it should be emphasized for a longer time. Within the framework of this problem, many legends have been created, many things have been written, but the last word has not been said yet. Because the diplomatic history about this period has not been published yet, neither by the Turks nor the Russians. Of course, when it is released, we will learn the very bitter realities and see the disappearance of the stories about the “savior” role of the Bolsheviks.

The star of the Republic of Armenia began to sink in these three and a half months from mid-August to December 2, and darkness fell on December 2.

This period was depicted by many before me and I do not want to fall into repetition here. However, I do not consider it an excess, to remind the following:

The Turkish-Bolshevik friendship was created with a special treaty. A copy of this treaty was sent from Istanbul to Yerevan by a secret agent of the government of the Republic of Armenia. Russia and Turkey were extending their hands to each other, from over the heads of the Caucasus States.

Azerbaijan handed over its power to the Bolsheviks, due to its politicians like the Architect Mamed Hasan Hachinski, who was an ex-member of the Baku City Council. With this, he was hoping to receive

the mediation and assistance of the Turks in the problems that may arise in their expected relations with the Bolsheviks. Very influential Azerbaijani politicians personally told me that they sincerely believed that Azerbaijan could preserve its independence through Turkish mediation. For this reason, while they wanted to help the Turks, they opened the path to the Bolsheviks. This is how Azerbaijan became Sovietized.

Georgia had signed a treaty with Russia on June 7, 1920 through Urucadze in person⁵⁰. With this treaty, Russia was guaranteeing Georgia's independence and immunity. For this reason, calculating that it was somewhat safer from the Russian-Turkish threat, Georgia was following its neighbors in the north and south more calmly. Georgia, having experienced no major misunderstandings with Turkey, was not too much afraid of the Turks, but was afraid of the Russians.

The subject was slightly different for Armenia. First, Armenia faced danger that would come from Turkey. That danger was further intensified after the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres. Turkey, openly wanted to disrupt the conditions of the Sèvres Treaty with the power of arms. Turkey's attempt to suppress Armenia stemmed from here. The Bolsheviks on the other hand, wanted to throw a bridge toward the Turkish front through the Caucasus.

Even though Armenia was afraid of Turkey, it had not yet lost its hope from Europe, the Allies, Paris Conference and the USA. The reason that Armenia did not see any urgent need to start negotiations to find any point of agreement with the Turks can be explained with this. The treaty signed by the major states and giving Karin [Erzurum], Mush, Van, Trabzon to Armenia could not become a subject of discussion again between the Armenians and Turks alone. Such was the real and psychological situation.

Armenia, which was preparing to enter the League of Nations, that had recently signed the international Treaty of Sèvres, and had received arms and military supplies from the UK (worth about £1 million

⁵⁰ According to other sources, the date is May 7, not June and the name of the signee is Grigol Urutadze not Urucadze.

pounds) for its army of 40,000 men, decided to defend its rights by using weapons, in times of necessity.

Upon seeing that Europe is tired, that the Bolsheviks of Italy did not permit sending of troops to Armenia or to Caucasia in general, that the British laborers demanded austerity and strengthening, Turkey, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, started to establish a national army. Its aim was to protect Turkey's interests. It must be admitted that the leaders of this movement have displayed a great deal of energy and talent.

The initial information about the Turks getting ready for an operation began to be received by the intelligence units of the Armenian Government in August. They passed on this information to the representatives of the Allies with the aim of preventing possible incidents. The information reached all the way to Paris, but no special attention was paid to them.

The Turks were near Sarikamish on September 21 and 22. Combat operations began. At the same time, diplomatic correspondence between the Governments of Armenia and Turkey also began. At the parliament session of Armenia, dated November 11, Prime Minister Ohanjanyan announced all the information that took place in the correspondences that took place between the two governments starting from the last half of September and the days the war began; that is to say from November 2 to the 11th.

In these correspondences, the situation was as follows: the Turks had offered the Armenian Government to reject the Sèvres Treaty and accept the Batumi Treaty instead, that is to say: to accept 9,000 square Km instead of the 180,000 square Km. And the Armenian Government had firmly rejected this offer. Later, the Turks had requested to convene a conference in which the Batumi Treaty would be accepted as the basis of negotiations. To this, the Armenian Government had responded by saying that it would not be possible to even consider the Batumi Agreement, after the signing of the Sèvres Treaty.

At this point, I find it necessary to give below, the correspondence between us and the Turks.

- 1) The appeal of the Ankara Government's Foreign Affairs Commissioner, Bekir Sami Bey, dated July 24, 1920:

"To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yerevan;

"Since the establishment of the Government of Armenia to our day, our Turkish Government has protected its friendly relations with Armenia and has continued to select this as an attitude for itself. Our Government has demonstrated this actively, despite your ongoing attacks. Our Government has always remained with amicable warnings against your policy of repetitive attacks and crimes against the Muslim peoples who are in the territories under your occupation but have constituted their National Council by deciding with their own sovereignty.

"The friendly notice sent to your Armed Forces Command three days ago by the Commander General of the Eastern Front, regarding the combat operations carried out by your regular military units against the Oltu Muslim people for a few days, has remained unanswered until now. And on the contrary, your attacks on Oltu have increased and intensified since yesterday. Our nation wants to maintain friendly relations with the Armenian race with all its might. The Armenian interests do not conflict with Turkish interests. On the contrary, consensus can be reached and relationships can get tighter. If you can judge impartially, I hope you will confirm that the process you have been carrying along is incompatible with your real national interests.

"We are sure that the British have always been trying to provoke bloodshed between neighboring races who had to live along with each other. As your nation becomes a toy in the hands of the British, we think that it is very dangerous

for your Government and your nation, to engage in hostility against our Government. Your delegation is holding talks with the Soviet Russian Government in Moscow, and we too having initiated political relations with the Soviet Government are trying to end the war peacefully together with them; your attack in spite of this, is absolutely a surprising and sad situation.

“By leaving all responsibility of the continuation of the attacks to the Armenian Government, at this time, as the Foreign Affairs Commissioner of the Turkish National Government, I request from your highness to give urgent orders to your military troops to end the hostile operations.

“Waiting for your reply, I ask for the acceptance of my deepest respects.”

June 24 1336 – 1920

Foreign Affairs Commissar of the Turkish National Council
Bekir Sami

- 2) The response dated June 30 of the Government of Armenia, to this recourse:

“To Colonel Mirimanian, in Sarikamish, with the request to deliver this telegram to the address below via the Ottoman 15th Army Commander Kazım Karabekir Pasha.

“To the Turkish Grand National Assembly’s Deputy Foreign Minister Bekir Sami Bey in Ankara;

“Since the day of its establishment, the Republic of Armenia has tried to establish mutually good neighborly relations with its neighbors, to live together peacefully with all the local peoples, and it still is working this way. The Muslim Community in Armenia has always enjoyed and is still enjoying equal rights with the other citizens of the state. Likewise, the life and property of loyal citizens are always

protected by the Government of Armenia, against all kinds of malicious attempts and against bandit attacks most of which are coming from outside. These are creating a mess and anarchy in the peaceful life of the local people.

“The latest military operations of the Armenian soldiers in the Oltu region were intended to free the Armenian land from anarchist elements and were definitely not targeted at the civilian Muslim population. A Muslim administration has now been appointed to the Oltu region.

“Since the old days, the Armenian nation has been making great effort to sincerely leave behind the bleak past and to establish good neighborly relations with Turkey. The re-establishment of bilateral good-neighborly relations between Armenia and Turkey depends entirely on the attitude of the Turkish leadership; and this can be achieved by their recognizing at once, all of the borders which are eternally justified to the Armenian nation, and to put an end to the activities of its agents on the borders of the Republic of Armenia.

“When your Grand National Assembly in Ankara recognizes the right of independence of Armenia within the mentioned borders and at Tajikistan’s Armenian Provinces, the Armenian Nation will find a basis, to establish regular bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia.”

Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Armenia, Ter Hakobyan, June 30, 1920.

- 3) Bekir Sami Bey was responding to the Armenian Government with the telegraph below on July 8:

“To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan,

*Engürü*⁵¹, July 8, 1920.

“I am honored to reply to your letter dated June 30, which was written as a response to my letter dated 24-6-36.

“Contrary to the warnings made by the Commander of the Eastern Army Kazım Karabekir Pasha and by us, regarding the cessation of attacks in the Oltu Region which have no legal basis, and the recall of your military units; the aforementioned troops have not been recalled yet and even a new attack took place on July 2.

“In the responses of both you and the commander of your troops, it is mentioned that the military operations were carried out at the request of the local Muslim people, no tyranny and cruelty were applied against these people and there was no attack towards the Ottoman borders. The current relations are based on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and the Batumi Agreement which completes it, which were officially recognized by the Republic of Armenia and signed by its authorized delegations, also accepted, and ratified by both countries.

“Oltu Region is also included among the three provinces that are accepted under the terms of the aforementioned treaty, and it constitutes a definite gain to the Ottoman State in accordance with the voting performed by the free will of the people.

“The temporary absence of the Ottoman officials or military forces in the mentioned regions for any reason, cannot be used as an excuse to exterminate the Ottoman government from these places either in real or legal terms.

“If any, the disputes arising from the entire conditions of the Batumi Treaty will be resolved peacefully, as expected, in accordance with the principles of law and justice. The

⁵¹ One of the ancient names of Ankara

attacks on the Oltu region by the Armenian military troops, clearly hinder the sustainability of the desired friendly and neighborly relations, and at the same time turn our absolute rights into a trampling ground.

“As for the invitation and demand of the Oltu Muslim people, this is not a demand for the attack in question. Even if it is accepted that such a request has been made by the aforementioned people, then this request permanently takes the responsibility of the crime.

“As I mentioned in my first article, our Government and the Turkish Nation are not enemies of the Armenian Government and the Armenian people, and they wish to establish a connection to protect mutual interests. If my views are examined impartially and intelligently by the Government of Armenia, I hope that the sincerity of the impressions I have expressed and the friendly feelings that my nation carries towards your nation will be believed.

“In conclusion, I request from you again to withdraw your troops as soon as possible, and I complain about the operations carried out, based on the Batumi Treaty which is in practice from the real and legal point of view and applicable to both parties; and I also hold responsible those who caused the damage of the Muslim population.

“I request for the acknowledgement of my reverence, while waiting for an answer that suits our mutual interests.”

Commissioner of Foreign Affairs for the Turkish Grand
National Assembly, Bekir Sami

This telegram is the exact copy of the original.
11th Army Seal and Signature.

- 4) The Armenian Government replied to Bekir Sami on July 28, with the following telegram:

“To Colonel Mirimanian, Sarikamish. I request you to send this telegram to the following address through Kazım Karabekir Pasha, the Ottoman 15th Army Commander.

“To the Honorable Bekir Sami, Clerk of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Ankara:

“Without involving the main party of the problem, suiting to the fact that the Brest-Litovsk and the Batumi Treaties were both signed by the Government of the Sultanate which is not recognized by your government, I consider it an honor to reply to your letter dated July 8, 1336.

“Just like the Brest-Litovsk Treaty that Armenia has never participated nor signed, neither has the Batumi Treaty been ratified by the Parliaments of either parties, so they cannot have any legal sanction power for Armenia.

“The fact that you are taking as your basis the Brest-Litovsk and Batumi Treaties which do not recognize the existence of Armenia that has the opportunity to live, causes great pain for us due to the loss of all our hopes in reaching an agreement with you, because you continue to be guided by the terms of this treaty which is based on the efforts of the German Kaiserizm and the imperialist counter-revolutionary Government of the Sultanate and which rejects the sovereignties, rights and justice principles of nations in terms of both administrative and internal relations.

“The Armenian nation, which is sincerely trying to establish good neighborly relations with Turks and other nations, regards both sides recognition of the historical, ethnographical, and economical rights of other nations as a real basic and indispensable prerequisite for these relations.

***“The Armenian nation which takes the legal rights of each nation as basis, naturally cannot renounce the indisputable rights owned by Tajikistan over the Armenian provinces, so, in line with the peace treaty imposed on today’s Tajikistan by the Entente States; the borders of these rights will be decided by the President of the United States who is the high judge of this treaty.*”**

“Signing the said treaty, Armenia really intends to stick to the decision of the high mediator. Waiting for this, Armenia does not consider taking steps to cross the former Russian-Tajik borders. Armenia especially has the right to hope that Tajikistan will not intervene in these problems which are related to Armenia’s internal affairs. From this point of view, your demand for clearing the Oltu Region (which is an indisputable part of the Republic of Armenia) from the Armenian military units and the offensive operations of your soldiers in that region are completely incomprehensible to us and they cannot be allowed.

“The Armenian nation loyal to peace is ready to extend a hand of friendship to any nation that recognizes its historical, ethnographic, official and legal rights, and the attitude of the Armenian nation towards these nations depends on the attitude of the other nations towards itself.

“Please accept my respects.”

Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Armenia, Ter Hakobyan, July 28, 1920.

As can be understood from the above-mentioned interactions, both sides were speaking from different perspectives.

There was among others, a painful detail in this formulation of correspondence exchange as I was told later in December 1920 by Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Bekir Sami in person, he and his friends were severely hurt. The subject was this; Replies of the Armenian Government to the letters of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Bekir Sami were not signed personally by the Foreign Minister H. Ohanjanyan but by the Secretary General of the Ministry, Ter Hakobyan. During the translation of these letters, the Turkish officer translator of Kars had translated the word "General Secretary" as "clerk". This event had caused the Ankara Government to think that the Armenian Minister gave the signature authority to his "secretary" in order to insult the pride of the Turkish Minister.

This was an obvious misunderstanding, but the Turks benefited from this to entice the thoughts of those around them.

Turks approached Oltu on September 22nd. At the same time, on September 22, Azerbaijani Soviet forces approached Aksibara. Simultaneous offensive began in the direction of Kars and Surmalu on September 29. Military operations developed in Kars Province in October, and this led to panic and retreat. The Turks advanced in the direction of Kars. Armenian soldiers withdrew. To see the status of the front and to increase the morale, the Government sent the ministers S. Vratsian and Dr. Babalian to Kars.

At the same time, negotiations had been started with Legran, the representative of the Soviet Government who was sent from Moscow to Yerevan. These negotiations resulted in a draft agreement dated October 21. This agreement aimed to protect Armenia from Soviet attack.

The main clauses of that agreement are below:

- 1) The entire Province of Yerevan, Kars Province, Zangezur Region, Kazakh and Lori were being left to the Republic of Armenia.
- 2) By evacuating Russian Armenia, Turkish soldiers will withdraw all the way to the borders of 1914.

- 3) Turkish soldiers will withdraw from the 1914 borders and from the Trabzon, Erzurum, and Mush extensions; only the Turkish administration will remain here.
- 4) After all this, only with the help and support of Russia, negotiations will begin between the Enguru and Armenian Governments in order to reach a final conclusion on the borders.
- 5) Russia will give oil and money to Armenia. (The amount is not finalized.)
- 6) Russia will hand over to the Government of Armenia several Armenian cultural establishments located in Russian cities together with all their assets, such as Lazarian College, libraries, and the like.
- 7) In return for all these, Armenia will grant Soviet Russia the right to transport (transit passage) for weapons and military materials. 25 percent of them will be left to Armenia, the remaining 75 percent will be deployed on this side of the line specified in article 3. In no case, should these weapons and military equipment be used against Armenia.

Legrans would take this agreement to Moscow, until then the agreement was going to be imposed on Azerbaijan. But Baku and Moscow refrained from ratifying this agreement.

Thus, the Armenian Government was on the one hand conducting war against Turkey and on the other hand it was carrying negotiations with the Soviet Russia; and at the same time, it was trying to raise the morale of the population to collect soldiers.

It is necessary to remind the following activities among those that carried psychological character; the speeches made at the extraordinary parliamentary meetings that were held twice, the public calls, and the meetings.

The most important of the actual steps taken was to recruit soldiers among the people that were up to 37 years old. The number of the army personnel had reached 40,000. There was not enough time to train the recruits.

The Government printed flyers with “Come to the front line” written on them. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation Bureau issued a call to its “comrades”. At the end all political parties, the Democratic Party, the Social-Democrats, the Social Revolutionaries, Hunchaks; In short, all colors of the Armenian political ideas, issued calls addressed to the people.

To complete the picture, it is necessary to mention that the Bolshevik Red Army which in the meantime had occupied Karabakh, advanced to Nakhchevan via Zangezur. The negotiating policy of the Bolsheviks had only one purpose; **to gain time and to put our awakening back to sleep**. Armenia was day by day squeezed between the iron yoke of the united Turkish-Bolshevik forces.

In order to shed light on the events, we do not think it is too much to mention here, the few diplomatic notes and posts sent by the Republic of Armenia during that time:

- 1) To Aharonian, Paris, from Tehran, on May 15.

“Turkish-Kurdish forces are gathering in Nakhchevan, by passing through Maku, and are preparing to carry out a powerful attack on Armenia. I have sent notes of protest to Alliance representatives and to the Government of Iran. You too please protest strongly and inform us of the result. I hope you will obtain a suitable result on the issue of the Bakuba immigrants. My communication with the government has been cut-off for two months. Please inform us about the situation of the country. The condition of the immigrants is severe. They are requesting help from everywhere. Because we do not have enough capabilities, I request loans from you if possible. Armenian Representative Arghutyan.”

2) Sent to the Representatives of the Alliance.

“Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Armenia, in Georgia.

July 10, 1920, Tbilisi.

“To Your Excellency,

“According to the information received from the Government of Armenia, the Bolshevik soldiers invaded Karabagh and have moved towards Zangezur, despite the assurances of the Board of Trustees of the Soviet Russian Republic. They occupied the city of Goris [located in South of Armenia] on July 5, and they intend to continue their expedition towards the South. This way they will realize the project of uniting the Soviet soldiers with Kemal Pasha’s National Army by passing over the land of Armenia.

“The army of the Republic of Armenia is resisting within its strength and its means, however if the Alliance Countries do not provide a realistic and immediate assistance to it, it does not have the means to prevent the Soviet soldiers from uniting with the Turkish National Army.

“By informing you of the aforementioned things, I request your esteemed self to pass on the contents of this write-up to your government and at the same time to please inform me what initiatives your government will take to send emergency aid to Armenia.

“I request your excellency to accept my high regards.”

Diplomatic Representative of Armenia, T. Begzadian”

3) Paris, Delegation of the Republic of Armenia,

“In order to refrain from the false information about the ceasefire that we have arranged with Soviet Russia, it is necessary to explain and to underline that it is essential to follow the ceasefire, with the final agreement in Yerevan.

The pieces of land taken from the Russian Soviet soldiers remain to be a subject of discussion between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Armenia continues to defend its rights with all its might.”

August 12, Issue: 378.

Diplomatic Representative of Armenia, T. Begzadian”

4) Telegraph from Yerevan to Paris,

“On September 28, a sizable Turkish military unit attacked our troops in Kars. Under the pressure of the enemy, we evacuated Karaorgan, Sarikamish and Kagizman. The battle is continuing. All the people of Armenia are defending their homeland like a single body. I request you to take the necessary steps to obtain real help. Urgent.”

Issue 5260, October 1, Ohanjanyan

5) Telegram from Yerevan.

“The Kars front is relatively calm. On October 27, the enemy attacked Igdir from 4 directions and captured the Karakale Bridge. The battle is continuing. 83 and 84 categories have been called.”

Issue: 6101, October 28, Ohanjanyan

The result of all these applications made to the representatives of the Alliance Countries in Tbilisi, was as follows; British High Commissioner Colonel Stocks moved towards the Kars Front and found this place very robust (perhaps he said so, to the Armenian governments). No other aid was provided to Armenia, from the ruling powers of Europe, in the Caucasus.

The appeal made in Paris to the great states sparked controversy in the League of Nations, Dr. Nansen [of Norway], the British

representative Balfour, French Minister Vivian delivered great speeches there. To bring the Armenian-Turkish war to peace, an international commission from leading European politicians was elected. And Morgenthau, the former American Ambassador to İstanbul, would go to Armenia for this purpose. However, until the commission was prepared to take this step, everything came to an end in Armenia.

Thus, the whole weight of the situation laid on the shoulders of the Armenian people, Armenian army, and the government. The government was doing its best, but the Armenian forces were insufficient to eliminate the terrible danger. Turks were advancing and approaching Kars.

On October 18, the government sent the Minister of Military Ruben Ter-Minasyan, to persuade the Georgian Government to agree to unite with the Government of Armenia against the dangers threatening Armenia and Georgia. According to this the Turkish front was going to be handed over to the Armenian Government, while the Georgians were asked to repel the Bolshevik threat. British High Commissioner Colonel Stocks was also participating in these meetings and he had summoned the Armenian and Georgian Ministers, by his side. The Armenians had based their proposal on the future threat that would head towards Georgia, following the possible fall of Armenia. The Georgians were faced with a dilemma and were unwilling to abandon their neutrality.

The result was this; Georgians did not accept our Government's offer. Ruben Ter-Minassian's mission was not successful. Georgians did not expect a Turkish attack against Georgia, and they thought that the agreement they signed with the Bolsheviks was reliable and inviolable.

Thus, the last hope of foreign aid was also dashed, and Armenia was literally left alone against its big enemies. It is necessary to describe this situation clearly and precisely, only this way can it be possible to analyze the events objectively. These facts cannot be denied today either. These prove that the Turks had a clear and definite purpose about Armenia: not to allow the implementation of the

Treaty of Sèvres and strengthening of the Armenian State. The Bolsheviks were helping the Turks in accordance with their understanding of “International Revolution”. “If prominent politicians told them that one million Armenians had to be sacrificed for high international revolutionary purposes, they would be sacrificed.” After this, it is laughable to hear from naïve people the idea that the Bolsheviks liberated Armenia from Turkish occupation in 1920.

The tension between Armenia's internal forces had reached a very high level. Everywhere, the words "everyone to the front, everything is for the front" was being heard. Recruitment efforts for the military were unlimited, party politicians and the press were working at full speed. But all this was not enough to avoid the danger that arose. Moreover, the Bolsheviks were helping the Turks, but not giving fuel [for burning] to the Armenians, and our trains could hardly be moved. Our steam engines had to be quickly converted to work with firewood. At the same time, winter was approaching.

In order to fully reflect the picture, I am giving below a document showing how a Turkish source presented the situation of events.

The official “Anadolu Agency” reported the following in its bulletin on October 23, 1920:

“Anadolu Agency deems it a debt to report to the world community the following statements about the battles between the Turkish National Forces and the Armenian Dashnak Groups in the Caucasus.

“Following the establishment of the Republic of Armenia, the Yerevan Government aimed to destroy or force to migrate the Turks who constitute half of the population living in the country. This policy which is carried out stubbornly and with a systematic project, aims to enlarge their national lands by placing the Armenians who immigrated there, in places emptied by the Turks who died or fled. Taking advantage of the inability of the Muslim population to make their voice heard in the Western world, the Dashnaks have been continuing this

destructive work of theirs non-stop for two years. According to the official statistical information prepared by the Yerevan Muslim Union and presented to the representatives of the Alliance States in the Caucasus and Istanbul, until the end of 1919, 199 Turkish villages were burned in the regions within the borders of Armenia alone, and the vast majority of the population reaching 135,000 people were massacred, only a very small part managed to escape to Azerbaijan.

“In here, the Assembly of the Musavat Party voted for a loan of 250 million rubles in defense of them. This amount can give an idea to understand the brutality of Dashnaks, the number of victims and deprivation.

“Dashnaks did not suffice with this massacre, that they had applied within the borders of the Republic of Armenia. Armenian groups entered Azerbaijan and burned about 20 Turkish villages in the Karabagh province by massacring all their inhabitants. The Government of Azerbaijan officially sent information to all Alliance States, on these crimes. This ongoing massacre program has likewise been implemented in neighboring regions of the state. Turks living in the Kars region refuse to accept Armenian reign, in accordance with the reality that the Alliance states had accepted the sovereignty right only because they themselves supported it. Last year, Commander Adamyan had given an ultimatum of 24 hours for the acceptance of this sovereignty. Since most of these villages lacked communication means prior to the allowed duration, they were burned down with Armenian artillery and 40 villages were destroyed, without even being aware of the ultimatum.

“The Dashnaks, with the aid of the weapons and military equipment which were procured in large quantities by the imperialists of Europe and Armenia in the name of Christianity, managed to spread their massacres and thefts all the way to the Ottoman borders. As a result, thousands of our brothers with whom we share the same race and religion, started to flee towards our borders. The inhabitants of our border provinces

that had gotten upset and angry due to these major crimes, succeeded to deliver aid to their brothers, only a few months ago. The precautionary measures taken by the government had prevented the Turkish National Forces from giving a hard lesson to the Armenian bandits, at that time. But the Dashnaks, after accomplishing their work from the other side of the border, found the courage to enter the Ottoman country and implement their destructive projects inside there too, and thus, by waiting for the Wilson Decision, they had tried to create a fait-accompli there. On September 24, an unexpected attack was performed on our border guards. Our soldiers repelled these attacks and followed the attackers to the Sarikamish region where the population composed only of Turks. The documents that we obtained show that the Armenian attack was planned carefully, with the aim of capturing Erzurum. Pursuit of the Armenian gangs, who brought death and destruction to our villages too, after massacring our brothers on the other side of the border is a legal act of self-defense and constitutes a traditional right for our people. The Turkish people do not feel aggression towards the Armenian people or any other people. The responsibility of the spilled blood falls on the Armenians who pursue a project to destroy the Turkish nation and the imperialists who support them.”



Chief of staff Sepuh, Deputy Chief of Staff Mkr. Mkryan

In Alexandropol, I got my first personal impression of the state of the front and the morale of the people. My impressions were pathetic. There was no morale. All the people that I contacted from the administrative circles and high command staff did not personally believe that our victory was possible. We listened to the reports of two commanders from the Kars- Alexandropol region. They informed that our attempts to attack the Turkish forces in the direction of Kars were unsuccessful. And our troops had been withdrawn.

We continued our way to Yerevan and arrived there on October 20, late in the evening. The city looked usual. Rail transport had slowed down because priority was given to military trains.

On October 21, I first met with the head of government, he told me about the results of his visit to Europe. The subject of change was unwillingly pushed to the back burner. Indeed, the war and the frontline had taken priority. On the same day, I handed over to the state treasury, all the money that I had brought with me and the gold which was allocated to the “gold fund”; and received proof of delivery documents for all of these that I handed over, and I still am keeping these documents. I attended the government session at 3 o’clock, the representatives from the military command delegation, and the chief of Parliament had also attended the meeting. The subject of consultation was the state of the war and the state of the front.

Agriculture Minister S. Vratsian, who had just returned from Kars was also present at the meeting. The subject of the best option to continue the war against the Turks was brought to discussion. Generals Nazarbekian and Hakhverdyan, gave the information that the attack on October 14 was not successful, but the defense power of the Armenian army was sufficient. S. Vratsian conveyed his personal impressions he had gained in Kars; the soldiers were pretty good, and their morale was strong.

When the Head of Government wanted to learn my opinion, I asked for permission to ask a few questions to the representatives of the high command who were present at the meeting. I asked Generals Nazarbekian and Hakhverdyan how long Kars could last as a fortress according to their opinion.

Upon consulting with each other immediately, the two generals answered together:

“In our opinion, if our soldiers do not lose their morale, which is in good shape right now, Kars can last for two more months.”

Then, I asked the generals about the number of enemy soldiers and the condition of their military equipment. After receiving the answer to this question, **I expressed my view in favor of continuing the war.**⁵²

The board approved a series of administrative measures. With these measures, the government was increasing the self-defense capability of the country and instilling pretty good morale. An obvious comfort was reigning on the Kars Front. Dro’s troops were holding the enemy on the Surmalu Front. In Kars direction, the Turks were holding some positions located across from Kars.

The government was eagerly conducting negotiations with the Soviet Government, to create the conditions that would support Armenia’s interests. The main issues were:

- 1) Armenia’s demand regarding independence,
- 2) Assurance for the unification of the Turkish Provinces to Armenia.

And Russia was demanding all types of transition rights through Armenia.

On the Moscow Side, the negotiations were pursued by Legran and military consultant General Bobrishev. The Armenian side was continuing the negotiations with [Leven] Shant, his friends [Hambardzum] Terterian and [Levon] Zarafian.

Another week passed by. On October 27, I presented a report, in the Parliament hall, open to public, about my trip to foreign countries for

⁵² This way of reasoning has not changed: The Generals say “Kars can last for two more months,” they do not say “We shall win”. Khatisian, with this information opts for more war and finally the Armenians lose the war, just like in Karabagh 100 years later.

borrowing purposes. A large crowd was present. In my report which lasted for four hours, I described my journey and emphasized especially on the four issues mentioned below:

- 1) All Armenian political parties among the Diaspora⁵³, welcomed the Republic of Armenia just as warmly and accepted its special official with extraordinary attention.
- 2) As we understand from all the hints, the borrowing business may end with a brilliant success.
- 3) The Diaspora Armenian bourgeoisie is afraid of the socialist understanding of the government in power, especially from the land and monetary perspectives.
- 4) The Ramgavars are pretty strong among the Diaspora communities, especially in Egypt and Paris.

When the report that I presented was heard among the Armenian Diaspora, it was well received. However, the borrowing business was paused. Later, about 3 million Francs worth of money, collected in İstanbul and Egypt was returned to those who signed the loan.

The fate day of October 30 was approaching. But before proceeding to this point, I will allow myself to quote in here, the memoirs which very accurately depicts the general situation of that period, written in August 1920, by Tigran Begzadian, the diplomatic representative of Armenia.

*The Diplomatic Representative of the
Republic of Armenia in Georgia, Tbilisi*

*Secret
August 1920*

⁵³ Armenians who have settled outside their country like in France, USA.

By the Order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

From the moment the Northern Caucasia and Azerbaijan were occupied by the Powers [Bolsheviks] with overwhelming majority, the necessity to organize their foreign relations with their neighbor Soviet Russia arose in front of two Transcaucasia Republics, Georgia and Armenia. Prior to this the Soviet Government, through the representatives of Armenia that happened to be in North Caucasus and Georgia's representative Urutadze who was holding talks in Moscow with the Soviet Government on behalf of Georgia had many times given the information that Moscow would consider these proposals appropriate in case Armenia approaches in person with a peace proposal to the above-mentioned government under the condition of their acceptance of independence and sovereignty.

On May 5, an Armenian delegation went to Moscow to start the talks in question. My government is honored to inform you about this topic. This delegation arrived in Moscow on May 20 and was authorized to hold talks based on the recognition of Armenia's independence and sovereignty by Soviet Russia, and the principles of Russia's non-interference in the internal and external affairs of Armenia. These negotiations, which started on May 28, have not yielded any results until our day.

Without going into details, I allow myself to draw your attention to a series of facts and events that were noticed during our delegation's stay in Moscow for two months; The facts which, on the one hand caused the conclusion of the negotiations to be continuously postponed and on the other hand endangered the realization of the agreement of the two sides that would benefit from the other, like Armenia's vital interests and the Entente Countries' interests in the East.

These events can be divided into two classes, political problems, and economic problems. The basis of these problems in general is the open Turkish-Tatar agreement, the main articles of which are being realized on one side:

I. Regarding Turkey and Azerbaijan:

- 1) The Kemalists' effort; To obtain Turkey's peace treaty and the necessary aid for the war that they started against the Entente Countries, by connecting with Russian Soviet powers and Azerbaijan through Armenia.*
- 2) To declare a crusade in the East and in all Muslim countries of Asia, against European states, with the help of the Majoritarian Russia.*
- 3) Demolishing of the independent Armenia, which is a state that prevents the above-mentioned bond and prevents the creation of a homogeneous Muslim mass starting from the Mediterranean to the borders of the Indian Ocean.*

II. Regarding Russia:

- 1) After establishing a connection with them, to fully exploit the Kemalist powers in subjects like: spreading Russia's influence in line with its general purposes in the East and in Asia; to reach all of the purposes that it has been carrying in order to wage a war against Europe's influence; and at the same time in order to apply pressure on the negotiations that are continuing between Soviet Russia and the Entente States.*
- 2) To improve its economic situation by entering Iran through Armenia, and*

- 3) *To deal a fatal blow to European interests and European capital by organizing a majoritarian movement in the East and in Asia.*

Considering that Armenia constitutes a main obstacle for the realization of the above-mentioned projects, it is clear that the initiatives of the Azerbaijani Turks on the one hand and some initiatives of the powers with majority numbers on the other, have somehow come to the fore recently. For this, Kemalist and Azerbaijani soldiers are gathering in the Armenian border regions by waging special wars. On the other hand, Russian majoritarian forces, on the pretext of taking preventive measures against an international conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, supposedly due to disputed territories, initially occupied Karabagh and Zangezur regions; and now, just the same way, they occupied Nakhchevan, where the Kemalist and Azerbaijani forces had entered. However, this situation of the country did not last long because the Red forces were repulsed with great losses on August 5. Later, the Red Army received assistance from the Karabagh Soviet Army. To these, Kurdish cavalry from the North East of Zangezur, from the area called Hajhi Samlu, were added.

In these harsh and unsuitable conditions, the Armenian soldiers were able to withdraw across Bazar Chai [Creek] towards the borders of Sharuri with difficulty. Here, the Armenian soldiers were again subjected to a combined attack of the Red Army, Kurds, Tatars and Malakans; Dro's small troop had no way to fight against these forces.

Meanwhile, the Soviet forces were gathering on the Kazakh sides. From there, on August 2, they started their movement towards the regions that were undisputedly Armenian lands and they occupied Aksibara, Tarakhlu and other villages. This operation was threatening to cut off Armenia's rail transport, thus neutralizing the country.

All these facts were conveyed to the Georgian Government for information purposes and the dear Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia presented his protest for the aggressive steps of Soviet Russia against Armenia.

The Government of Armenia, fearing the force of the above, mentioned events and that Bolshevism may infiltrate to Sharuri and Kazakh regions which are undisputedly Armenian, instructed its delegation, which was negotiating with the Russians (with majority) in Tbilisi to speed up the signing of the ceasefire. The Russians were demanding three disputed areas to be occupied by Russian troops as a precondition for the signing of the ceasefire. The Armenian delegation had to comply with this request as there were no other options, but could succeed to hold the Shahtaht-Sultanbeg transportation line which was to the east of Bazar Chaii and to keep the management of the Shahtaht-Julfa railway line.

With the acceptance of the above-mentioned conditions of the truce, the Armenian Delegation had underlined that they reserved the right that the final sharing of the regions taken from the Soviet powers had not been decided and that Armenia would continue to demand these regions from Azerbaijan, and that Armenia would hold this right during the establishment of the agreement which was to be signed in Yerevan in between the Government of Armenia and the Soviet Representative Legran who was in Armenia.

Eight days later, Legran went to Armenia. In the meantime, it was necessary for our delegation which was headed by Levon Shant to return from Moscow and restart interviews regarding the final peace negotiations.

Armenia thinks that it is not possible to give these regions as concessions to Azerbaijan and definitely hopes that an agreement can be reached with the other party by making some concessions. But if Azerbaijan does not give any concessions to Armenia by relying on its allies and

supporters and if an armed conflict becomes inevitable; Armenia which has been wounded by the hostile activities in the last two years cannot be held guilty of raising its arms again to defend its right of independence and the security of its borders.

Armenia hopes that the people will be a little bit comfortable during this negotiation period, and it needs this mostly during the wheat harvest. Thus, with this relief, Armenia will be able to finish the necessary work for general mobilization. And at the same time, they will have the opportunity to train their soldiers, by using the weapons purchased from England. Thus, the Armenian army will be rested, well-armed and ready to continue paying its debts to their homeland, with their families' safety achieved.

However, it is necessary to mention the real and sometimes insurmountable obstacles that emerged in the conditions peculiar to Armenia in the realization of these efforts. These are:

- 1) Lack of financial means,*
- 2) Lack of fuel, and*
- 3) Lack of means of transportation.*

Your Highness and your Government could play an important role in overcoming and rectifying the said difficulties. A few million dollars loan to the Republic of Armenia by your government could save Armenia from an unbearable situation, since it may be necessary to stop suddenly, before deciding on any business of political significance, due to lack of money or any other necessary means; a situation that the Republic of Armenia often faces.

Due to the course of events, such situations that threaten the security and existence of the state have occurred several times. The absence of fuel, wagons, steam engines and means of transport is not the only reason that ordinary human transport trains are often interrupted, which can be

seen as somewhat justifiable; but sometimes it is not allowing reinforcement backing, food and military supplies to be delivered to fighting troops.

It is natural, that in these conditions specific to Armenia, all successes of the Armenian soldiers are the result of the unlimited endurance and superhuman forces demonstrated by the Armenian Army and the Armenian people, being constantly kept tense for two years. My government and even the entire Armenian people have decided resolutely to protect the inviolability and rights of the Armenian borders for an independent existence by all means. For this purpose, the Government declared a general mobilization all over Armenia and initiated mandatory processes to strengthen the army.

By submitting the aforementioned for your information, my Government requests you to please send it to your Government; and at the same time to please inform us what kind of material and diplomatic assistance your Government can provide to Armenia, in their war against the Turkish-Majoritarian forces threatening Armenia's independence.

From its own side my Government finds it quite essential for the Alliance States to apply pressure on the Majoritarian Government. The same way, my Government finds it essential that fuel and credit be urgently sent to Armenia.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that all the measures mentioned above should be taken as soon as possible because Armenia is a small state and cannot withstand to the attacks of its neighbors who are stronger in terms of both manpower and other means.

I am hopeful that you will do me the favor of informing me about the kind of results this letter of mine may yield, thus I can also inform my Government.

Please accept.
T. Begzadyan

This memoir was reflecting clearly both the real situation of the country and the hopes of the Armenian Government; on the one hand the Kemalist-Majority agreement, on the other hand, hopes of European assistance to Armenia's self-defense. All the predictions of the Armenian Government came true, and it became certain that the projects in the above-mentioned agreements had started, but only one thing was important at that time: receiving diplomatic or political assistance. But neither diplomatic nor political aid came.

On the evening of October 29, consultations were held again with the invitation of the Government.

The telegram of the Kars Castle Commander General Pirumyan, stating that the soldiers and the army guarding the castle can protect the castle for as long as possible and that their morale was in good condition was read.

By staying in Yerevan from October 20 to 29, I had the opportunity to see and talk with many soldiers, as well as members of Parliament who had visited the front. I tried to discover the number of the Turkish Army fighting against Armenia, with the highest accuracy, but I must admit that I was not successful. Dro, the commander of the soldiers of the Surmalu region told me personally that there were two divisions opposing him in the direction of Yerevan, that is, about 6,000-7,000 Turkish soldiers; and according to his calculation, the overall number of Turkish soldiers was approaching 30,000. General Nazarbekyan was saying that he calculated the number of Turkish soldiers at around 20,000 men. Later, the general commander of the Turkish soldiers, Gen. Kazım Karabekir Pasha told me in Alexandropol, that they had a total of 8,000 soldiers. Actually, he was trying to elevate his honor after the war was over, as if he achieved such a high success with a small force by showing the number of his army's size less than it was.

However, based on all the information I have received, I think that the Turkish forces comprise of almost 20,000 people, but that all the soldiers were all well trained, experienced and had been engaged in battles previously.

The mobilization announced by Armenia added to the army a total of approximately 40,000 people, including ex-soldiers; this number included the new recruits and reserve soldiers.

But the event did not just comprise of numbers. It should be remembered that in 1922 in the direction of İzmir, only with 80,000 people, İsmet Pasha⁵⁴ poured the Greek Army of nearly two hundred thousand into the sea in nine days.

It was around two o'clock on October 30th when I noticed that an airplane was hovering over Yerevan. The noise of the aircraft's engine could be clearly heard from the city. The plane landed. No one guessed that it had brought a terrible news:

The Turks had occupied Kars on the morning of October 30th.

At three o'clock, I received an invitation to attend the Government meeting. By the time I entered the hall, there were about twenty people there; the Council of Ministers, the Speaker of the Parliament, a few deputies and a few soldiers. A deep silence prevailed. Everyone was in severe depression.

The Chairman, who opened the session reported to the attendees of the meeting that news was received about the fall of Kars. There was no detailed information, only the officer who came with the plane had reported that he had personally seen the Turkish soldiers entering the city from the direction of the station, and the escape of the Armenian soldiers and people from the city. The pilot was obliged to fly to save the plane and notify Yerevan that Kars had fallen.

The next day, when those who had seen the fall of Kars reached Yerevan, it emerged that the Turks had entered the city almost without

⁵⁴ An error like this from someone like Khatisian is unbelievable. It was not İsmet Pasha, but Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who commanded the Turkish Army to the Aegean Sea by saying "to the Mediterranean"...

even firing a bullet. **What the soldiers protecting Kars had done was a complete indecency.**

I have personally listened the story of the falling of Kars from the Kars Governor S. Korghanyan.

Early in the morning, Governor S. Korganyan receives an invitation for consultation from the Castle Commander, General D. Pirumyan. He gets out of the house on foot to go to the Castle Commander. He learns that the Turks have entered the city, from the people that were fleeing on the streets. He returns home right away, and he immediately moves away from the city with his family. He himself goes by horse and his family goes by carriage. General Pirumyan, the officers that were with him, Minister A. Babalian, about 1,500 Armenian soldiers and 150 Armenian officers were captured and taken to Erzurum, where they stayed for more than a year. Later, these officers are released from captivity and only 300 of the 1,500 soldiers return.⁵⁵

The Turks allow chaos, killing and looting in Kars. The groups of bandits that were let inside by the soldiers after the city was taken do most of the killing and pillaging. As always is common in cases like this, it is difficult to quantify the numbers killed but according to accurate information about 3,500 people were killed. Those who flee from the city to Alexandropol, Yerevan or Tbilisi run away leaving all their goods behind, some on foot and some on horse-drawn carriages. The Georgian Government barely allows them to enter Tbilisi, fearing that the city would be overcrowded.

On the eve of the fall of Kars, that is on October 29, after the meal the following event occurs: Valiant Colonel Mazmanian wants to attack the Turks with five hundred people; but the soldiers do not move, despite all of his efforts and advice. In despair he commits suicide right there in front of his soldiers, and the soldiers return to Kars.

Fall of Kars was a terrible disaster from all perspectives. Indeed, starting from that day, Armenia's days of independence were

⁵⁵ Does he mean that the Turks killed 1,200 soldiers or that 1,200 soldiers did not want to return?

numbered. Armenia's days were numbered for the following reason: **military power had ceased to be the defender of the Republic of Armenia.** On the other hand, deprived of the Kars Province, Armenia was stuck within narrow borders again. Local people and immigrants, soldiers who were called for a new expedition partly from the Diaspora communities were supposed to live here. At the stations, I saw families who had newly arrived from Europe with the influence of my speeches. They were sitting on their belongings, desperately, not knowing what to do, whether they should return or settle in new places.

It must be said that anyone who could increase the tension between the people and the means with the forces of the country did so. Bolshevik propaganda was quietly being carried out in the country, and its poison was finding a fertile ground for itself.

At the Government session held on October 30, Prime Minister H. Ohanjanyan, after officially declaring the fall of Kars and explaining the general situation, asked the participants of the meeting what needs to be done. Those who were present began to explain.

I firmly expressed my thoughts in a short sentence: “*It is necessary to sign a treaty with Turkey.*”

After this consultation, the government made the decision to strengthen the front at all costs, to keep the morale of the people high and to bring new vitality to the soldiers. At the same time, it was decided to start negotiations with Turkey in order to reach a ceasefire first and then to sign a peace treaty. A written request was made to Turkey, on November 3 to start negotiations with Turkey. The Turkish Government, feeling victorious and thinking that it had reached its goals, had applied to the Government of Armenia with a similar request on November 2. Both requisitions had occurred independent of each other.

The correspondence exchange took several days. All the correspondences, in their entirety were published in the Istanbul newspapers at that time.

Prime Minister H. Ohanjanyan gave a detailed report by reading all these correspondences at the Parliament meeting of November 11.

The letter of Ahmet Muhtar, the Secretary General of Foreign Affairs of the Ankara Government is below:

November 2, 1920, Ankara 263

“To the Esteemed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan.

“Now, at the time when the victory efforts of our Eastern Army have started to blossom, the Tajikistan⁵⁶ Grand National Assembly wants to repeat the previous peace offer that it had made to the Armenian people; and also wants to reassure them that it did not try to destroy Armenia, nor deprive it of its independence, and in no way did it endanger its rights.

“However, we think we are obliged to demand from the Republic of Armenia to display the same attitude towards us and to stop being an instrument of the British Imperialism, in the East.

“We are sure that the main reason until 1918 for the long-lasting bloodshed wars waged by the Turkish and Armenian peoples against each other was due to the Tsarist ambitions which wanted to spread their power in Eastern Anatolia. After the collapse of the Tsarist Regime and the departure of the Russian troops, Tajikistan brought a period of relaxation, with the calm that it was able to achieve, by the prevention of the terrible massacres committed by the Armenian gangs.

“The peace that we have restored again with such great efforts was violated again when the imperialist Britain won

⁵⁶ The Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry of the Ankara government of the Turks couldn't have referred to his country as Tajikistan!!!

the war and attempted to keep holding Mesopotamia as well as to take over the oil fields of Iran and Baku.

“After serving Tsarism, Armenia this time served the British purposes and opened a new era of hostility against us. This still is continuing to serve the great interests of London financiers. The Turkish people, almost alone, are defending the East against the greed of the capitalists of the West. They cannot allow the Armenians to uninterruptedly threaten their life and the British Armies to attack the eastern regions to reach Mesopotamia and Iran and thereby always trying to destroy the very little independence and sovereignty that is still left in the unfortunate Asia.

“These thoughts and the continuous attacks of the Armenian soldiers have forced us to act energetically for our country.

“However, with the desire to end the bloodshed, in order not to miss any opportunity, we request you to see this program as a finalizing peace offer from the Turkish Grand National Assembly to the Government of Yerevan. For peace to be made, it is sufficient for Armenia to give us real guarantees that from now on it will not nurture any aggressive understanding towards us and will not be the vanguard of the British capitalists in the East. We too are obliged to give the same kind of assurances to the Armenian people and we request that peace negotiations immediately begin on this issue.

“Hoping that our moderation and peace-loving feelings will be evaluated in the best way possible, Mr. Minister, I request you to accept my highest regards.”

Chief of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Muhtar.

We have included this article in its entirety in here, because it contains sentences that Turks like to express against Europeans with their discourse style and falsehood, and sometimes leave an impact on them.

From very prominent Europeans, I have often heard opinions similar to those expressed in this article, about Turks. As an example, I can name the famous Professor Ollarde, who is a member of the General Committee for Defense of Human and Citizens Rights from Sorbonne University, who believed in the motivations in the behavior of the Turks for this reason.

The Armenian Government responded to the above letter by proposing to start negotiations and appointed its representatives. The Armenian Military Command offered a ceasefire to the Turkish Command on November 5th.

On November 6 Turkish General Commander Kazım Karabekir Pasha responded that he accepted the ceasefire; and offered harsh conditions from his own side. The main ones are the occupation of the Alexandropol Castle and the train station by his soldiers, the retreat of the Armenian soldiers 15 Versts [16 Km] from the Arpaçay line and the occupation of the land located 9 Versts [9.6 Km] away from the city of Alexandropol and so on. A deadline was given until 8 o'clock in the morning of November 7 to answer this letter.

The Armenian Government accepted these conditions.

In a special letter on November 8 Prime Minister H. Ohanjanyan reported to the Ankara Government his desire to establish friendly relations with a strong agreement, stating that the Armenians “did not work for either Tsarism or Imperialism, but on the contrary, they only strived for their independence”. Alexandropol was proposed by the Armenian Government as the venue of the Conference.

It was assumed that everything was ready to start the peace talks. But the business turned in another direction. On November 8, the Turkish General Commander Kazım Karabekir Pasha changed the ceasefire conditions by making them much more severe. He explained this by saying that he himself had prepared the first conditions, but the recent

conditions were dictated by the Ankara Government. The new conditions composed of 7 items, they were demanding the occupation of new Armenian lands and the withdrawal of Armenian soldiers deeper inside Armenia.

The Government of Armenia found the new ceasefire conditions unacceptable and with a letter on November 10 offered to convene the Peace Conference in Alexandropol on the basis of the conditions agreed for the ceasefire by the Armenian Government.

On the same day, a reply came from Kazım Karabekir Pasha saying that “the Ankara Government has to resume its combat operations because its conditions are not accepted by the Armenian Government.” On November 11, the Government of Armenia replied by stating that it was deeply saddened by the Turks’ last letter, but still hoped that an exit could be found that would satisfy the “interests and honor of the two peoples.”

Thus, a ceasefire could not be achieved. However, a statement of the Ankara Government was received in Yerevan on the evening of November 10; Here, the Government was presenting not the main points of the cease-fire but the main points of the treaty which was going to be offered between Turkey and Armenia.

These main points were found unacceptable by the Armenian Government because with these, the independent existence of Armenia was being put to an end.

Since these conditions are really interesting, we are presenting them below, in their entirety:

Telegram of Ahmet Muhtar, the General Commissioner of
the Foreign Ministry Affairs.

November 8, 1920, Ankara.

*“To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Armenia, Yerevan.*

1. *The issue of Armenian-Turkish borders is controversial, and it will be the subject of a referendum, in accordance with the sovereignty principle voiced by President Wilson and the Bolsheviks.*

The inhabitants of all disputed areas will be invited to choose their own political future. Without being dependent on anyone, they will be able to decide on their own independent state agency or they will be able to announce that they have chosen one of the two existing countries. We have accepted the protection of the disputed regions by our countries' gendarmerie forces until the full independence of your people is achieved. This referendum will be held within the shortest time possible. The Ankara Government sincerely and deeply believes that such a solution is perfectly fair and in the interests of all humanity and the Armenian and Turkish peoples living in the disputed lands. But unfortunately, we think that the Yerevan Government will resist to such a solution which would be a great insult to the political engineering that has been propagandized and put into action against the peoples of America and Asia, by the advocates of the West, in order to look agreeable to the Imperialists of the West especially to Britain.

2. *Turkey is committed to provide all facilities under its control, to its neighbors, for their development under full independence and security.*
3. *We will help with all our means, Armenia for the creation of its public works and a normal economy within the country.*
4. *Both sides undertake to grant free passage to persons and goods belonging to the other party through their railways and all transportation routes, and not to obstruct the transit of the other party's passage to the seas and other countries*
5. ***Turkey commits to resettle in their own homes the Armenians who had to emigrate from their lands due to***

the World War and to provide them the most extensive rights similar to the ones provided to ethnical minorities in the most civilized countries.

6. *Turkey demands from Armenia to give the guarantees necessary for its security. Our delegates are waiting for your negotiators at Alexandropol. Your negotiators should have the necessary authority to negotiate and sign a peace treaty.*
7. *The necessary ceasefire conditions that are required to stop the hostilities during the peace negotiations, are being sent by our General Commander of the Eastern Front.*

General Commissioner of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Muhtar.

After reading these conditions at the parliament meeting, the Prime Minister stated that “Armenia’s dignity and interests” do not allow the acceptance of these conditions.⁵⁷

The speech by H. Ohanjanyan is given below:

“You are now seeing how the deeds and words of our enemies do not match each other. Whenever we accept and implement the cease-fire conditions offered by them, they put forward new conditions in which Armenia will be shared, disarmed, and become vulnerable from self-defense, if implemented. Together with all these, they do not forget to underline that Armenia should give security guarantees to Turkey; a sign that new demands will be forwarded in the future and probably Armenia will be destroyed. And just for this very purpose, the Ankara Government mobilized its armies towards Armenia.

⁵⁷ Why not?

“Thus, the Armenian people were subjected to a heavy test, they would either have to fight or be killed at the hands of Tajiks.”⁵⁸

“The government, which exhausted all peaceful remedies, took up arms again, because there is no other remedy for the salvation of the country and the people.”

The Parliament accepted the Prime Minister’s speech with applause. **Combat operations resumed, but this time, they lasted only a week.**

By each day, the Military Powers, Minister of National Security, the Government, and the members of the Parliament were becoming convinced that continuing the combat operations any further were useless. **The will and strength to resist had fallen among the soldiers and thus it was necessary to think about peace again.**

To reveal the true situation of the events literally, and from all sides, the government resorted to the following steps:

First, questions were forwarded to our military people about the morale and fighting power of the soldiers, second, preparations were started for peace negotiations with Turkey, and thirdly, in a private consultation, Parliamentary Factions presented a report about the severe panic-situation on the front.

The Factions sent a special committee of four deputies elected among their members to Alexandropol to see the state of the disaster on the spot.

The former prime minister H. Katchaznoui was also on this committee.

During this time, Military Minister R. Ter Minnasian was spending almost all his time at Agin Station near the front and knew that the course of events was close to turning into disaster. All the news about the status of the front was also depressing at the lowest level. The

⁵⁸ Whenever he is angry with the Turk, automatically the Turk becomes a Tajik

enemy was advancing towards Alexandropol. Armenian immigrants from Kars Province had poured into Alexandropol. It was necessary to take a decisive step.

When the Turks had offered harsher new terms on November 10, I was in favor of accepting them, but as the reader saw, the Government and the Parliament were in favor of the war. I remember very well the consultation held at the General Command Headquarters at 3 am on November 10. They woke me up at 2 am and invited me to a consultation, where the Commander-in Chief of the Government, Chief of Staff, Speaker of Parliament, and I were present. The Head of Government reported the new demands of the Turks at the meeting. There was an exchange of ideas, and then the President asked whether we would prefer the Turkish demands to be accepted or rejected. All meeting participants, except me, spoke in favor of the rejection of the terms and continuation of the war. This was the decision that the Prime Minister reported at the Parliament meeting on November 11. With a long speech, I advocated resolutely accepting the conditions and signing an immediate ceasefire. I said more or less the following:

“The soldiers and the people in Armenia are in such a situation that the continuation of the war will further aggravate the situation of the country. The soldiers are not fighting. The people are fleeing; and disappearing due to troubles, cold and hunger. The enemy is approaching Alexandropol, this place will be taken over by the enemy these days. From the other side, the Bolsheviks are threatening. It is not possible to fight on two fronts simultaneously. I think the enemy is approaching Yerevan. Members of the Government and Parliament are leaving the city and the people are remaining vulnerable. Panic and complete destruction is beginning. Better to make unavoidable sacrifices than to lose everything because it is not too late. It is true that the conditions of the Turks are also harsh, but there is no clear information that we can get rid of them.”

A few days after the war operations began, it became obvious to everyone that it was necessary to sign a ceasefire at all costs. November 12, 13, 14 and 15 passed by. Sepuh, the commander of the troops around Alexandropol, tried to stop the advance of the Turks, but he could not succeed. Dro was keeping the Turks on the Surmalu Front but wanted supply of soldiers. Tatars were taking over Nakhchevan side.

Under these circumstances the Government held another debate on November 16 regarding peace and decided to accept the terms of the Turks.

Final negotiations on peace began.

On November 17, the Government took the decision to request me to run the negotiations with Turkey, and I obtained means among the Turkish Military Command to ensure the ceasefire. For this purpose, I chose Minister Sarkis Araratyan, and he was sent to Alexandropol under the guidance of Armenian officer Khan Koturski and a ceasefire was signed on November 18th. The Turks had exacerbated their terms, they wanted cannons with their bullets and mules. All of these were handed over to them on November 22nd.

I accepted the government's offer for me to lead the peace treaty talks with the Turks. First of all, I wanted to find out what kind of assistance we could expect from Armenia's allies, namely Britain, France and Italy. For this it was necessary to go to Tbilisi. On November 17 at 2 o'clock, the Government of the Republic of Armenia agreed with my views and at 6 o'clock in the morning of November 18, I set off with a car towards Tbilisi via Dilican-Karakilise.

It was a cold morning. The entire road was covered with deep snow. In Tbilisi, since I needed to provide a full picture of the military situation of Armenia, I took with me the following exact information, from the Minister of Military Service, R. Ter Minasyan. To those who are interested in the history of the last days of independent Armenia, this information clearly proves that Armenia at the time was chained by its enemies and suffered from fighting under unequal conditions.

Armenia had four fronts, and she was engaged in war on all four of these fronts, namely Kars-Alexandropol, Surmalu, Nakhchevan and Dilijan Cossack.

How were the Armenian military forces divided among these fronts? The following military troops were on the Kars - Alexandropol Front, these were regular units, especially infantry soldiers. The first Regiment (Mazmanian) was here - 1,500 bayonets, 4th Regiment (Mirimanian) - 2,000 bayonets, 5th Regiment (Sağubatyan) - 700 bayonets, one battalion of the 6th Regiment (Ishanyan-Gnduni) - 800 bayonets and the 8th Regiment (Tigran Bagdasarian) - 1,500 bayonets; 7,200 bayonets in total. Other than that, Smbat's gangs were present.

On the Surmalu Front (next to Dro) there were the 9th Regiment - 2,000 bayonets, 8th Regiment (one battalion) - 1,000 bayonets and 7th Regiment (one battalion) - 700 bayonets, the Karabagh special military unit (Guro) - 800 bayonets; making a total of 4,500 bayonets and a small Yazidi troop.

In the direction of Nahchevan the 3rd Regiment with 2,000 bayonets, the 2nd Regiment (two battalions) 1,000 bayonets; with a total of 3,000 bayonets.

On the Dilican-Kazak front, there was the 6th Regiment (Maniyev) with 2,000 bayonets.

These numbers did not include cavalry, artillery, and special purpose troops such as fortification and telegraph squads.

So, we had a total of 16,700 bayonets in all four directions. When the 800 bayonets in Zangezur were also included, the total was reaching 17,500 bayonets.

With the 1,500 bayonets of the 10th Regiment (Halabyan) reserves in Yerevan, the total number of bayonets were reaching 19,000.

If we add the other types of weapons – 6,000 people – the regular forces in the army included in the war amounted to 25 thousand people.

If we add to these numbers those working behind the frontline, the carriers, caravans, headquarters, and medics, the total of the army

became 34,000, and the total reached up to almost 40,000 including the gangs.

In the regular Turkish forces, along the Kars- Alexandropol direction, there were 4 divisions of 3,000 people each, making a total of 12,000. In the Surmalu direction, the 1 Turkish division of 3,000 people were threatening Yerevan. The Bolshevik forces in the direction of Nakhchevan were about 2,000 people. There were Azerbaijanis and Bolsheviks in the Kazakh-Dilican direction. It is possible to count these regular soldiers as 20,000 bayonets in general.

If the number of popular forces such as the Kurds that were not regular and the armed enemy population were added to the total number of enemy forces, then it should be admitted that their numbers would exceed 30,000 in the four directions. Here is the unequal number of warring parties.

At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the isolation of Armenia by the fact that it was deprived of oil and ports (because its only transportation with Georgia and Europe was through only one railroad; which was cut-off immediately). The stock of cannonball was running out. Cold was getting more severe. The inhabitants of the occupied and threatened areas were fleeing to the heart of Armenia.

I arrived in Tbilisi, with this information on November 19 night, towards morning time. On November 19, I visited the British High Commissioner Colonel Stocks, the head of the French Mission Colonel Nonancurie, the Italian representative Colonel Cappa and the Greek Ambassador. We could not get any surprising help from anywhere. Colonel Stocks and other commissars sent urgent telegrams to their governments and asked how they could assist the Armenian Government. On behalf of the British Government, Lord Curzon replied with the thought: ***“It is better to settle accounts with the Turks than to confront the Soviets.”***

Here is the answer sent from Tbilisi Foreign Office, on behalf of the British High Commissioner, on November 29:

“It is clear that reaching an agreement with the Kemalists is impossible for us, but we think that Armenia has no other choice. Because the agreement with Soviet Russia will undoubtedly be a worse way out.”

It was clear that the main idea of this was stemming specially from the British interests. The Georgian Government maintained its neutrality. The Greek Government was content with sympathy alone, Venizelos was no longer the power holder. The Governments of France and Italy declared their sympathy, but they had no means of helping or did not want to do so.

It is obvious that the telegrams sent had rather negative consequences on the other side. Just in those days (at the end of November 1920), the League of Nations convened for the first time in Geneva, and the issue of including Armenia and Georgia in the establishment of the League of Nations was on the agenda there. Recent news about Armenia's severe situation forced the representatives of Britain, France, and Italy in Geneva not to admit Armenia and Georgia to the League of Nations. Thus, in accordance with Article 10 of the Association's charter, they were not obliged to send aid to Armenia and Georgia.

Thereby, Armenia was abandoned at the most terrible and grave instant and was left alone completely. The Turks also saw and understood this, and then, took advantage of every situation to their advantage and at Armenia's loss.

The Turks: their Foreign Minister Bekir Sami Bey and General Kazım Karabekir Pasha have personally mentioned this matter to my face.

Understanding the course of events while in Tbilisi, I urgently returned to Yerevan on the evening of November 20. I was in Karakilise on the morning of November 21. I continued my way from there by car. I arrived in Yerevan at 11 o'clock in the evening. I remember our car driving through snow and mud. I was with Parliament member Levon Zarafyan, I had taken him from Dilican.

A large crowd of people had blocked the road, immersed in deep snow and mud with their household goods and animals. There were those that fell inside the snow, those that died, and froze from the cold.

Soldiers, with rifles and new British uniforms, that had run from the frontlines were leading the migrant convoys. The people were begging for peace. The following words were spilling from everyone's mouth:

“Mr. Khatisian, peace; for Heaven's sake, please provide peace for us.”

I heard these from everyone.

The people had reached the limit of fatigue. On the other hand, a barely felt belief had found its way under the people's subconsciousness that; “Russians” were coming, and they were helping Armenia.

Here, I would like to reminisce an interesting subject I heard from a group of villagers and soldiers on the way.

“Mr. Khatisian, why are these Russians now saying that they turned into other Russians?”

These people with a democratic spirit from birth were comprehending the difference between the Russians with whom we fought together against the Turks between 1914 and 1918, and the Russians who came to fight against Armenia in collaboration with the Turks. Our people were unable to stomach the change in the role of the Russians regarding the East. For centuries, the Russian had been a friend to him and at the same time an enemy to the Turk. Today, on the contrary, he had turned into a friend for the Turk and an enemy to himself. Our people were not believing in this change and thinking the Bolsheviks were “some other Russians”.

Even the Bolsheviks and the Ramgavars who followed them said that the Dashnaks caused the tragic situation that Armenia had fallen into at the end of 1920, and the Bolsheviks came and saved Armenia from the Turks. This was a blatant lie. I was firmly believing in this. I was thinking that when the Dashnaks left Armenia the Turks benefited greatly from it but the real friend in arms of the Turks were the

Bolsheviks and that they gave the Turks the power and opportunity to attack Armenia. This was an undisputable fact. It was also a fact that they had shared Armenia among themselves after they helped each other. The Bolsheviks did this not because of their special hostility towards Armenia, but because of their “world” policies and for this, they saw it necessary to sacrifice Armenia in order to benefit from the friendship of the Turks. The Bolsheviks gave the Turks Kars, Surmalu and Ardahan which they wanted and took for themselves the regions that were not needed by the Turks, that is, where the Armenians lived.

With these impressions, I arrived in Yerevan at 11 o'clock in the evening on November 20th and went to the meeting of the Dashnak faction, because at the Yelenovka Station, a phone call was requesting me to go directly to the parliament. At the meeting, I gave a report on my journey and learned that the ceasefire had been signed, and that two days later it was necessary to go to Alexandropol, the city which was chosen for the peace negotiations.

At the same meeting of the faction, Prime Minister H. Ohanjanyan announced his decision to resign and asked the faction to consider a name for the new Prime Minister. The opinion of the Parliament members was coherent with that of the Prime Minister's; They too believed that the peace negotiations should not be carried out by the same government that conducted the war with the Turks.

We all left, late at night.

The next day on November 21, at the Government meeting, I gave a report within the scope of the preparatory work that was necessary for the Peace Conference. Here I have to say that I was appointed as the head of the delegation conducting the negotiations. There was a lot of preliminary work to be done; It was necessary to decide on the establishment of the delegation, to prepare a task list, to decide on assignments, to decide on the format of the relations, to make preliminary meetings with the Bolshevik representatives. All this took two days between November 21 and 22. And finally, on the night of November 22-23, after everything was prepared, our delegation departed by a private train for Alexandropol at 2 o'clock mid-night.

Regarding this topic, the following telegram was sent to the Paris Delegation of the Republic of Armenia:

“On the 18th of the month, we signed a seven-day ceasefire with the Commander of the Eastern Front of Turkey. Today, our delegation is going to Alexandropol for the conference that will be opened on the 24th of this month under the chairmanship of Khatisian.”

The delegation staff was as follows:

Chairman A. Khatisian,
Abr. Gyulkhahdanyan (Minister of Finance),
Stepan Korganian (Governor of Kars).

The MPs invited as members of the parliament were:

Vahan Minakhorian (Socialist Revolutionary),
Tigran Hovhannisyan (Member of the Secretariat of the
Supreme Court),
Colonel Atayyan and
Captain Khndzoryan .

Assignments had been made for the conduct of the negotiations. At least, the borders for Turkish Armenia had been decided; the Government did not want any more concessions to be made. But, on the other hand, orders had been given to sign a peace treaty in any way.

Such instructions were actually putting the delegation in a difficult position like: protecting some borders during the necessary concessions, but at the same time not being able to carry out combat operations with the power of arms and in spite of all this signing a peace treaty.

Legran and Mdivani had been invited as the representatives of Soviet Russia to the meeting of the Armenian Government, where our delegation members were also present. I personally knew both Legran and Mdivani. I remembered Legran from when he was a student. I had known Mdivani for over two decades since he joined the robbery of the government mail as a Bolshevik. As someone who runs the city affairs of Tbilisi, I had the opportunity to see him later.

We requested from the representatives of Soviet Russia to put pressure on the Turks with ideas favorable to us. We conveyed our desires to Legran and Mdivani and listened to their promises that they would help us.

Meanwhile, Legran asked permission from our Government to allow two regiments of Red Army soldiers to enter the Armenian border from Azerbaijan, thus as he said, “he could find a more realistic power to talk to the Turks.”

Our government did not accept this request because it feared that this would mean the invasion of Armenia by the Bolsheviks. During the meeting, it was decided that the Peace Negotiation Committee and Mdivani would go on separate consecutive trains from Yerevan to Alexandropol.

The meeting ended at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Our departure was set at 2 o'clock the same night. We went to the station on a dark and cold night and our train set off at 2 o'clock at night. Two hours after our train, the train that took Mdivani to Alexandropol was on its way. We were calculating that we would reach Alexandropol late at night. But the subject was: at that time the city of Alexandropol was now almost in the hands of the local Bolsheviks. On the other hand, the presence of the Turks was provoking the neighboring Tatars a lot. We wanted to reach our place without attracting the attention of these Tatars.

Our train reached Alexandropol at 10 o'clock at night.

At that time, the Armenian Revkom (Revolutionary Committee) was established in Baku, in mid-November, under the presidency of Kesyana and with the participation of Avnis Nuriyanian. On November 29, Bolshevik soldiers entered İcavan (Karvansaray) from Kazakh.

When they crossed the border, they declared with a special brochure that, supposedly the peasants and workers of Armenia demanded, their help against the Dashnak Government. The Russian Red Army was approaching from behind the Armenian Bolsheviks. Thus, besides the Turkish soldiers, Russian Bolshevik forces were also standing against Armenia, and they were operating with local Azerbaijani groups.

In order for the picture of Armenia's situation to be fully understood, we have to mention that Georgia, was on the one hand trying to remain neutral in relation to the Turks; on the other hand, did not want any agreement to be reached or signed between Armenia and the Turks regarding the lands that Georgia had an eye on. Below is one of the correspondences showing this situation:

November 11, 1920, Issue: 602.

"To General Areshian, Commander of the Karakilise District's Back of the Front:

"With this letter of mine, as information to you, I am sending you a copy of my letter dated November 11, numbered 600 and addressed to the Turkish Forces' Chief Commander of the Eastern Front operating in Armenia.

General Karalov

"Below is a copy of the correspondence:

"To the Turkish Forces' General Commander of the Eastern Front, Operating in Armenia:

"In your letter dated November 8, addressed to the General Commander of Armenia, containing the terms of the ceasefire; You are stating that combat operations may begin at the Borchalu region of the Province of Tbilisi after the end of the ceasefire period (in item 5), and (in item 3) that the railway transportation between Sanahin and Alexandropol was stopped during the ceasefire. As the military representative of the Georgian President in Armenia, I inform you of my complaint, and that the Georgian Ramgawar Republic considers the neutral zone of Borchalu Province which was included in the former borders of the Province of Tbilisi, as its own territory. In regard to this place, I deem it a debt to declare that this place is undisputedly Georgian in accordance with the agreement signed with Russia, despite the existing debate between us and the Government of Armenia. For this reason, my Government will consider any desire about the Borchalu region and the railway

within its borders as hostile action by your Government against itself.”

Military Representative of the Government of Georgia in
Armenia,

General Karalov

This is the same as the original. Colonel Mikaberidze.

Thus, the Georgian Government was refusing to cooperate with Armenia against external enemies, deemed this controversial field as its “right” based on Soviet Russia’s recognition of it and declared it **undisputedly** its own. This temperamental behavior of the Georgian Government shows that in the face of a deadly general danger, that it has failed to pursue a slightly more proactive policy and is unable to give up the little things in order to protect the great values.



Military Parade in Yerevan – Taking off to Zangezur

ATTACHMENT:

KATCHAZNOUNI WROTE A DIFFERENT STORY

(Excerpt from his Manifesto)

THE TURKISH ARMENIAN WAR (1920)

AND

THE ALEXANDROPOL PEACE TREATY⁵⁹

(DECEMBER 2, 1920)

The Armenian-Turkish war which broke our back began in the fall of 1920.⁶⁰ Would it have been possible to evade it? Probably not. The crushed Turkey of 1918 had recovered during the two years. There came forward, patriotic young officers who formed a new Army in Asia Minor...

...we had not done all that was necessary to evade war. We ought to have used peaceful language with the Turks, whether we succeeded or not; but did not do it. We did not do it for the simple reason – no less culpable – that we had no information about the real strength of the Turks and relied on ours. This was the fundamental error. We were not afraid of war because we thought we would win. With the carelessness of inexperienced and ignorant men we did not know what forces Turkey has mustered on our frontiers. When the skirmishes had started the Turks proposed that we meet and confer. We did not do so and defied them.

⁵⁹ Given on pages 1, and pp 193-211 of this book.

⁶⁰ After the Sevres Treaty was signed. Armenia was going to receive a large territory from Turkey according to this treaty. But Kemalist Turkey did not accept the Sevres Treaty. The war with Armenia broke out at this juncture. Important: Katchaznoui conveniently does not mention the Trabzon and Batum Conferences and Batum Peace Treaty which he had signed and two days later had become the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.

Maybe the Turks needed our arsenal in Kars and Alexandropol. Maybe they wanted to test their military muscle first at a weaker enemy and then turn against a more powerful one?

“That we defied them was a big crime on our part. We did so not because we were sure of our victory but because we thought a compromise with them was impossible. But it was not impossible. Despite everything, our chances of coming to an agreement with them was quite high.

It is important that we remember that in 1920 we were not *a quantite neglieable* as far as the Turks were concerned. The people had rested and regenerated by getting rid of the effects of the cruel memories of the past two years. We had an army equipped with British arms. We had lots of ammunition. A strong fortress like Kars was ours. And finally, the Sevres Treaty was not yet a degraded and useless piece of paper. It was a powerful weapon directed against the Turks.

In short, our position was not like what it was in May 1918 in Batum. We had our hopes because the Turks were defeated...⁶¹

But alas we did not accept their proposal to confer.

What could they have proposed? Most probably starting by the Batum Treaty, they would have come down to Brest-Litovsk, may be to 1914 boundaries. They might even have agreed to give up Bayazit and Alashkert. In September 1920 this was the most we could hope for. **In exchange they would most probably ask us not to recognize the Sevres Treaty.**

How would the Armenian Government accept such a proposal?

Without any doubt she would have rejected it. She would not have the courage to accept it. She would opt for war.

Not only the ARF Government but no Armenian government could accept such a proposal. I wish especially, to underline this and the limit (and the crime) of our Party's responsibility...

The Sevres Treaty had brainwashed everybody and made them unable to see and think clearly...

⁶¹ Not in Caucasia but in Arab territories which resulted in their overall defeat in WW1.

We did not do anything to avoid the war. On the contrary our decision caused the war.

Our inability to assess the real strength of the Turks and to calculate our own combat power were unforgivable mistakes.

The war ended with our indisputable defeat.

LOOKING FOR SCAPEGOATS?

Our army was well fed and well-armed and dressed but it did not fight. The troops were constantly retreating and deserting their positions; They threw away their arms and dispersed in the villages.

Our army was demoralized during the period of internal strife, the inane destructions and the pillages that went without punishment. It was demoralized and tired. The system of roving bands, which was especially encouraged by the Bureau Government, was destroying the unity of the military organization. The instruction of the army, its military spirit, its organization and discipline, and therefore its power for defense had deteriorated to the last degree and that was a surprise to the Government: The Government and the ministers of war did not know their own army.

And then the government made a fatal mistake. Intending to increase the number of troops, it called under arms additional men who were past middle age and tired and overburdened with family and financial burdens. They were made to put on the military uniforms in a great hurry; rifles were put into their hands and instantly sent to the front. These were ready-made deserters which caused additional defections and demoralization in the ranks of the army.

When on November 2 (1920) the victorious armies of Karabekir had reached Alexandropol the Bureau government presented its resignation. It could not stay in power any longer; it was beaten and on account of its defeat it had been discredited.

Then it became necessary to begin negotiations with the Turks and it became necessary that those who negotiated should be new faces. After a short indecision the Government of Vratzian was formed composed of Dashnaks and social revolutionaries...

The Turks had already occupied Alexandropol. In the meantime, the Armenian Bolsheviks at the head of the Red troops entered Itchevan and Dilijan...

On December 1 (or November 30) our delegates signed an agreement with the Turks in Alexandropol, which was not much different from the cruel treaty of Batum.⁶² On December 1 that same Vratzian government resigned and relinquished its power to the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks entered Armenia without meeting any resistance...

NOTES & COMMENTS BY THE EDITORS:

The Alexandropol Peace Treaty with The Government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly was signed on 2 December 1920.

According to Article 10 of the Treaty, “The Yerevan Government declares and considers VOID and NULL the Treaty of Sevres...”

On the same day the Bolsheviks occupied Armenia.

Today, the DIASPORA Armenians and The Yerevan Government claim that the Alexandropol Treaty has never been ratified and is therefore legally not valid.

After the Bolsheviks took over the administration of Armenia, on 2 December 1920 there was no Armenian Parliament to ratify it.

However, on 18 March 1921, Simon Vratsian wrote a letter⁶³ to the Turkish Government and asked for military aid and referred to the Treaty of Alexandropol. He signed the letter as ‘President of the Armenian Republic.’

This means that as far as this letter is concerned, published by the Armenian Information Service as Appendix IV of Katchaznuni. Manifesto booklet, it can be stated without any doubt, that on 18 March 1921 the Treaty was valid.

⁶² He does not mention that he had signed the cruel Batum Treaty!

⁶³ This letter is attached in this book on pp 224 – 226.

CHAPTER-14
(PAGES 260-274 in the Original Book)

**ALEXANDROPOL NEGOTIATIONS AND
SIGNING OF THE TREATY**



Military Ceremony in Yerevan

Our committee reached the Alexandropol train station at 6 o'clock in the evening of November 24. There, we were greeted by Turkish Army Commander Kazım Karabekir Pasha's representative. He saluted us and informed that vehicles were ready to take the delegates to the apartment reserved for their stay. The apartment building was located outside the city, used by army officers.

We went to the building right away, and in order to start the negotiations as soon as possible, we visited Kazım Karabekir Pasha at 10 o'clock the next morning. He was around 50 years old⁶⁴ and spoke French very comfortably like all other Turkish statesmen and diplomats. He had a polite appearance from the outside.

Our meeting with him lasted one and a half hours. I presented my first impressions and all the meeting processes that followed, to the Armenian press of Istanbul in a timely manner with full detail. They were all published in Istanbul during the months of January and February of 1921.

One of our Committee members Stepan Ghorkanian the ex-Governor of Kars had them described in the 163rd and 164th issues of the "Msak" newspaper of Tbilisi dated December 22 and 23, 1920. I have to partially repeat and partially complete the information regarding the Alexandropol meetings, published in the press under the same heading.

After some usual civilized questions like if we are comfortable in the residence we are staying in, Karabekir Pasha informed us about the establishment of their committee delegation and requested from us to introduce the establishment of the Armenian committee delegation. Among the Turkish Committee members, there were two agreed upon as first degree delegates besides Kazım Karabekir Pasha; Erzurum Castle's Commander Halil Begh⁶⁵ and Turkish Grand National Assembly Member representing Erzurum, Necati Begh.

I learned later, that the Turks included the Erzurum representatives in their committee intentionally in order to

⁶⁴ He was 38 years old at the time, not 50.

⁶⁵ Khatisian has typed it wrong. Correct version is: Hamit Begh, who was the Mayor of Erzurum at that time.

underline that the Sèvres Treaty is void in their eyes, because according to this Agreement and the Wilson Arbitration decision, Erzurum was becoming a part of Armenia.

At the beginning of his speech Karabekir Pasha underlined that Turkey had no offensive intention towards the Armenians in any way, that they wished welfare for Armenia and they started the peace negotiations with such feelings. But at the same time specified that if Armenia had acted agreeably to the offers made by the Ankara Government, these meetings would have started much earlier and that the fearsome results of the last war could have been prevented. But, since the past is impossible to change, it was necessary for the two neighboring countries, Turkey and Armenia to adhere deeply towards the signing of a strong peace agreement.

Karabekir said that Turkey is ready to sign a peace Treaty, strong and long-lasting, from its point of view.⁶⁶

I replied that the Government of Armenia and the Armenian people's desires are the same, that it is possible for both sides to lay a strong foundation, together with the same feelings, for two neighboring nations to establish a peaceful relation.

Karabekir, who moved on to the story of attacks said that, at the beginning of the military action, he did not think of occupying Kars, that his aim was to take the Oltu Region. But he had moved a lot more widely, upon seeing how easily the Armenians compromised from their lands under the pressure applied on them. On the other hand, he reminded in a polite manner, how ill-prepared the young Armenian soldiers were. He said that the Armenians did not take advantage of natural defense opportunities, that they made the locations of their garrisons obvious by standing on hilltops in groups. Actually, he was referring to our young recruits who were unable to find a proper training.

Karabekir Pasha, coming to the subject of the style of negotiations declared that the negotiations could be held between the Armenians and

⁶⁶ But the Armenians had not thought of peace, neither in Batumi nor in Gyumri.

Turks, without the attendance of Russian representatives in any way. I am going to emphasize especially on this explanation, because a lot was spoken and written about the Russian effect during the Alexandropol meetings within the framework of how the Bolsheviks supposedly “saved Armenia’s stance”. I wish to clearly state that this one-sided statement of the Turkish side was enough to disallow the participation of Russian Bolshevik representative Budu Mdivani. And he did not attend our meetings, not even once, and he did not have any influence on our discussions. This is an absolute truth and a very important historic phenomenon. I offered the opposite view, fought against it and showed every effort for the Russian representative to attend our meetings, but was unable to change the determined attitude of the Turkish side.

After these preliminary meetings, we moved on to the real issue and determined the following day for the first meeting. Following my visit to Karabekir Pasha, I also met Budu Mdivani - the representative of Russia. He was staying in the same building with us. We met twice and held long conversations. I told him that the Turks are not accepting his attendance to the meetings. He, himself had met Karabekir Pasha and heard the same things from him directly. I asked him what he would like to do, after such an insult. Mdivani replied that he would convey the subject to Moscow, but that his attendance to the meetings was going to be impossible due to the Turks’ not permitting his attendance. Upon this, I requested from him to help us by every means possible. He promised that he would apply pressure on Karabekir Pasha in our favor, outside the meetings.

On this occasion, I think it is necessary to declare that actually, he has obstructed us, more than giving us a helping hand. He obstructed us like this: he organized meetings in Kars just like he did in Alexandropol, gave speeches against us, discredited the Armenian Government and the Committee, propagandized the Bolshevik programs, and this way he was showing the Turks that he was not by us, but against us. As a Georgian himself, he was fiercely attacking the Georgian Menshevik Government, thinking that this government would take Georgia towards extinction, and saw the liberation of Georgia only in Bolshevism. He had held such chats with the advisor of our committee,

Vahan Minakhoyan too. Minakhoyan explained the meeting he held with him in the official newspaper of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party, "Revolutionary Russia". Thus, I can clearly confirm that the Soviet Russia's representative gave no help to the Committee of the Armenian Republic in Alexandropol.

The following day, Karabekir Pasha came to pay a return visit to the Armenian Delegates. During this visit, the Turks gave other very polite, special speeches, but these sayings were not matching the reality. At that time, we had agreed upon holding the first official meeting date for the discussions on November 25 at 5 o'clock day-time, in other words on the day of this return visit.

After the Turks had gone, our committee dealt with the issue of establishing the conditions to be defended during the conference. In reality, if the delegates had focused on the subject of the ones who won and lost the war; at that instance, Armenia was on the side that lost the war, and because the only thing in question was the most modest borders, we were supposed to accept this. Because, defending the borders of the Batumi Treaty was the request of the Turkish side and it had become the cause of war. But our committee was thinking that the Turkish side desired a prosperous Armenia and that this was beneficial from the point of view of their country's interests. In addition, the Turkish statesmen were continuously making statements on this line.

According to the duties bestowed on us by the Armenian Government, we were obliged to defend the borders of Armenia, including all of Russian Armenia, Van, Mush, the entire Van Lake, Rize Harbour, and leaving Erzurum and Trabzon to the Turks. We believed that leaving Erzurum and Trabzon to the Turks, was a compromise from our side.



During those days, President Wilson had announced his famous Arbitration decision, according to which Armenia was supposed to have a surface area of 180,000 square kilometers with the inclusion of Van, Mush, Erzurum and Trabzon within its borders.⁶⁷

I went out for a walk outside our apartment building upon completing the job of determining our demands. There was heavy snow and ice outside. Two images caught my attention. The first one was that young Armenian groups were being sent towards Kars under the surveillance of Turkish soldiers. It must be remembered that the border of Kars province starts just two kilometers outside Alexandropol. The Arpachai River was separating the Alexandropol district from Kars province, and this river was passing nearby Alexandropol. It came out in the open that Turks demanded 10,000 young men from those in power in Alexandropol, with the excuse of their need for workers with the

⁶⁷ Khatisian is not a dreamer like Pasdermadjian or Aharonian. But especially before and during the Lausanne Conference he will demand Wilsonian Armenia four years after Armenia had become a province of Soviet Russia.

purpose of sending them to Sarikamish, Karaorgan and Erzurum railways' construction lines. Meanwhile in reality Bolsheviks were in power in Alexandropol and they were handing over Armenian young men to the Turkish powers. After more than one year had passed since this event, only 230 of these young men could come back. **The rest had died of cold and hunger or were directly killed.**⁶⁸

The second image was showing the theft organized by the Turkish power. They were ripping off windows, doors from houses and taking out the furniture. They were loading these goods to the cars that they took by force from the local people. They were taking all these goods to Kars, in a hurry and they were using those which were not worthy of taking, as firewood.

I returned home, effected by these images and we started to prepare for the first meeting.

We gathered exactly at 5 o'clock. The Turks came with 8 people; three delegates and five officials. Our translator for the Turkish language was Chorbashian – an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We had prepared our explanations and a map showing our draft borders, in French language. This historic map which was always ready in all peace conferences since the Batumi Conference and was showing the borders of Armenia was ready in my hand.

The Conference opened at 5 o'clock. Upon my proposal, Karabekir Pasha took the chairmanship. My proposal was based on the principal accepted in international law, that the conference should be temporarily or permanently headed by the representative of the government on whose soils the conference is being held.

⁶⁸ A typical Armenian assumption: if they did not come back, they must have died or must have been killed. But, after 100 years, they are insistently speaking of "Secret Armenians" still living in Turkey.

SEVRES TREATY WILL BECOME 'NULL & VOID'

As the person opening the conference, Karabekir Pasha officially greeted the delegation and before moving on to the next item on the agenda of the conference, he stated that the first point to bear in mind is Turkey's demands for Armenians' acceptance that Armenia has given up the Sèvres Treaty. Karabekir Pasha declared that in case the Armenian Delegation does not respond to this demand, the conference preparations will be postponed. The Armenian side responded by specifying that they will examine this demand. The session was closed thereupon.

After the meeting, we held a consultation meeting with the participation of the consultants. We concluded that our compulsory and inevitable surrender here is no obstacle, in case the major countries that signed the Sèvres Treaty, which pleased the Armenians, want and succeed to make it a reality. If those countries give up on the Sèvres Treaty on their own – which later became a reality, in such special circumstances, our giving it up today will help us build good neighborly relations with Turkey.

On the other hand, refusing this condition that the Turks put forth as an essential prerequisite for the continuation of the conference would mean termination of the peace negotiations and restarting of war operations. For this reason, we had to avoid this, no matter what. Regardless of this, the Turks postponed the opening of the conference by one day, due to a few hours delay in the arrival time of the train coming from the Yerevan Station which was carrying military equipment to be handed over to Turkey. When this happened, the Armenian Delegates took the decision to accept Karabekir's precondition, unanimously. But taking into consideration the importance of the situation, we decided to ask the Government of the Republic of Armenia, if they agree to this. That day the direct telegraph line between Kars, Alexandropol and Yerevan started to operate.

I, personally spoke with prime minister S. Vratsian. Our conversation took place around 10 at night. S. Vratsian replied at 2 in the morning and confirmed that the Armenian Government accepted it.

We finalized our answer on November 26th and informed Karabekir that our reply is ready. The 27th of the month was set for the second meeting. At that meeting, we read our response clarifying that we gave consent to the refusal of the Sèvres Treaty.

A typical detail; The Turks unofficially knew the contents of our response one day in advance, because our office manager who was authorized to inform them that our response was ready, was also allowed to inform them about the positivity of our response unofficially. There was no thought of hiding it, because the truth fixed the scene. The Turks, after learning how our response was going to be, placed a military band in front of the windows of the building where the negotiations were held and while we were reading our response, their band played the “International” the Bolshevik Party’s anthem.

When the Turks listened to our answer, the President of the meeting said:

“Now, by getting rid of the pressure of the imperialist powers, we can speak to each other freely, as two neighborly peoples.

“But, before speaking in regards to the borders and the conditions of peace, I need to draw your attention to this event; While Armenia was refusing the imperialist Sèvres Treaty, the Armenian Government applied to the British King George V. Here is the radio telegraph that was sent to King George the V from Yerevan, which was caught by our radio station in Kars.”

We took that radio-telegraph and understood its contents right away. The telegraph was not sent to King George V, it was coming from V George and that V Georg was not the King of England, but the Armenian Catholicos. He had sent the telegram to Paris, with the request of food aid to the Armenians. We explained the misunderstanding.

Following this, the two delegations agreed to define the borders and prepare a report on this subject and afterwards to explain to each other their conditions mutually as two sides.

On the evening of November 27, we contacted the Government of the Republic of Armenia, via direct telegraph line, in an effort to learn the course of events. S. Vratsian said it is necessary to obtain the approval of the Bolshevik representative by trying all means possible. I replied by saying that Mdivani had completely distanced himself from us by the Turks' demand and was busy propagandizing against us. Vratsian said on the subject of the borders, he had given us authority in the name of the government regarding the peace conditions that we had brought with us from Yerevan.

On the 27th of the month, we wrote our explanatory report until late night and drew the borders that we demanded on the map.

On November 28th, we received a special file sent by the Government from Yerevan, through a private courier. Inside the file was a radio telegraph message coming from Genoa containing the discussions which took place at the United Nations meeting, regarding the Armenian Question. These had been published in the Russian and Armenian newspapers in Yerevan and Tbilisi.

We sent our terms to Karabekir Pasha on November 28th.

On November 29, Karabekir Pasha requested me to have a private meeting with him. We met and talked for almost three hours. Karabekir Pasha tried to convince me that all countries had left the side of the Armenians, and the Armenians had to get close to the Turks no matter what. He emphasized on the talks which did not yield any results at the League of Nations. He emphasized that Europe had been beneficial to us, but we did not need them anymore. He said that as part of its history, its progress to the south and the warm seas, Russia would overthrow the Caucasus, and that we wouldn't be able to survive without the support and aid of Turkey. Karabekir, speaking about our close neighbors, emphasized on Georgia. The things he said about Georgia were especially striking.

Karabekir said:

“Before starting their military action, the representatives of Ankara; Yusuf Kemal Bey and Ali Fuat Pasha came to Tbilisi in the summer of 1920 and established an alliance with the Georgian Government. According to this, Georgia will remain neutral in case a war starts between Armenia and Turkey, and in return they will take Borchalu and Ahilkelek Cities in addition to Ardahan Region.”

Karabekir Pasha showed to me the map displaying the borders of Georgia, in accordance with the signed alliance treaty on the subject of impartiality.

Later, I told this conversation to Noy Ramisvili, the Minister of Interior of Georgia. Ramisvili denied all of this. But I know that an investigation has been made upon the orders of Mustafa Kemal, about where I may have gotten this information. The investigation duty had been assigned to the representative of the Government of Ankara in Tbilisi.

Karabekir Pasha, by ending this story, made the deduction that in case of a Turkish-Georgia war, (after signing a peace treaty with Armenia) in case Armenia remains neutral, Armenians could get the city of Ahilkelek and the region of Borchalu. Later, Karabekir passed on to our conditions for peace and screamed in excitement:

“Your borders have directly surprised us. While sitting in a defeated position in Alexandropol, you are demanding Mush and Van. What would happen, if you were sitting in Van? What would be left over for Turkey?

“Trust me that we had to hide these demands of yours as a secret from our officers and soldiers, otherwise they would have become very nasty to your delegates. It is impossible to open up these conditions of yours for debate. Think.”

I stated to him that we consider it our obligation towards our people to defend what is necessary for the existence and future of our people. And, I added how important it is for them, i.e., for Turkey to have a wealthy Armenia as a neighboring state.

Karabekir forwarded these objections:

“The Armenians are few in number (because the rest are in Europe, Turkey or Russia) and a small piece of land is enough for these one million people. Isn’t Belgium only 30,000 square kilometers with its population of six million people?”

I replied to him that we are a people involved with farming so land is necessary for the villagers, and that the Armenians are coming back to Armenia from the foreign lands. He responded to me saying that he will send me his objections and opposing offers for each item. In addition to others, an explanation that 800,000 Armenians would return to Armenia from various countries was added to our conditions. Inspired by the following inference, we had made this calculation like this: Fifty percent from some countries (Bulgaria and Romania) thirty percent from the remaining places (Georgia, Russia, and others). A special measurement was taken for each country.

During our conversation, Karabekir Pasha said that the negotiations need to be finished in short time, otherwise he would be forced to advance his forces towards Yerevan. I went back to our apartment and told my friends about this conversation.

On November 30, the Turks sent the drafts of the Treaty text containing the borders. According to their draft, only 27,000 square kilometers were left to Armenia. The Province of Kars and the Surmalu Region were left inside Turkey, Nahchevan and Zangezur were given to Azerbaijan’s control. Armenia’s right was limited to 1,200 soldiers, 20 machine guns and 8 cannons. The number of gendarmes were limited. Fortresses were remaining, but only small sized cannons were allowed. Allies’ representatives were to leave Armenia.

The Turks did not publish the true contents of the Treaty. But now, I must say that its closest contents (almost word for word) are published based on my speeches and memoirs, in the book of A. Pojdebard, named *"les Traités Diplomatiques de L'armenie"*. The title of the publication was like this:

La Transcaucasie et la République d'Arménie dans les Textes Diplomatiques du Traités de Brest-Litowsk au Traité de Kars (1918-1921) par Poidebard, Paris 1923.

For the second time in my life, I was left with the destiny to live heavy moments regarding the borders of Armenia. The first one was in January of 1918, in Batumi and the second one came about in those days in Alexandropol. Again, we saw Armenia squeezed inside iron locks, deprived of Turkish Armenia, the Kars Province, Nahchevan and even Surmalu.

In the Appendix section of the Treaty, the Turks had opened an argument on the number of Armenians that will come back, by reducing it from 800,000 down to 20,000. They were denying Armenian culture by saying "Armenian music has Turkish roots" and by bringing up similar thoughts.

We sent our reply to the Turkish side on the night of November 30.

The date, December 1 had been set as the third general meeting day and was held at 11 o'clock. The Turks presented the treaty that they had prepared ahead of time, which was in the form of an ultimatum, by demanding its acceptance without any conditions, otherwise we were threatened that Turkish soldiers would be sent to Yerevan.

We objected to the Turks and decided that we needed to at least send the basic conditions of the Treaty to Yerevan and wait for instructions from our government. At 4:30, we informed the conditions of the ultimatum to Yerevan and requested them to send us their reply in an urgent manner. We received the following answer from Vratsian, at night:

“The Government has resigned. Our soldiers faced against Bolshevik soldiers in Dilican and Kervansarai without fighting. A coalition is being formed by Dro and Derderian’s Dashnaktsutium supporters with the Bolsheviks. We are forced to accept the Turks’ terms. You are authorized to sign the treaty.”

We learned that the Bolshevik Commander had sent from Kervansarai to Karabekir Pasha, early in the morning of December 2, the following greeting message:

“Greetings from the Russian Proletariat to the Turkish Proletariat.”

We were expecting a telegraph from the new Armenian Government.

At 6 o’clock in the evening, Dro invited me by the telegraph and said the following:

“I am informing you in the name of the Revolutionary Government that you are free to sign or not to sign the Treaty.”

Under the consciousness of holding the full responsibility of signing or not signing, I asked for the second time:

“Is the Government in favor of signing or not signing the Treaty? We are waiting for a certain and clear instruction.”

Dro replied:

“I gave you my response. Act as you understand. I am speaking in the name of comrade Silin, and myself.”

Silin was the representative of the Bolsheviks.

I called the delegates and the advisors for a general meeting and said: *“Gentlemen, the Revolutionary Government is laying the full responsibility on our shoulders. We are obliged to take this responsibility for our people, I request each one of you to speak your mind.”*

Unanimously everyone reported for the acceptance and signing of the treaty. Everyone's way of thinking was similar.

The fourth and last meeting of the Peace Conference was held at 8 p.m. After the meeting started, we announced that we would accept the treaty. After this, it was time to read each article piece by piece. During the arguments, we succeeded to have small partial changes made in our favor, for example: a piece of Agbaba, from the Province of Kars, to be included within the borders of Armenia, increasing the number of Armenian soldiers from 1,200 to 1,500. We also had long debates over Ani, Nahchevan, Surmalu, but the Turks didn't compromise on these.

The Treaty was signed by the two committees at 2 a.m., December 2-3.

The next day, on December 3rd at 8 o'clock in the morning, I informed Dro through the telegraph line that the treaty was signed and if it was possible for the delegates to come to Yerevan, and if their freedom could be guaranteed.

One hour later, Dro responded:

"The Soviet Government representative gives his word for the freedom of the delegates, but he cannot guarantee it."

I invited the whole (16 people) delegation for discussion and asked:

"Gentlemen, the Soviet Government is promising freedom for all of us as the committee members, but no guarantees for this. You have all paid your debt. Now I am asking each one of you, as the leader of the committee to freely decide if we should go to Yerevan, or Tbilisi or somewhere else"

Without any exception, they all decided to go back to Yerevan.

Since I knew that one of us had been receiving heavy threats, especially from the Bolsheviks, I pulled him aside and said:

“I understand you. The sense of obligation outweighs you, but I am taking to be held responsible for your safety. You can go to a safer place. I am taking your family’s care over my shoulders.”

But he replied that he will remain altogether with the rest of us.

Thus, our decision happened to be, to return to Yerevan as full group. We decided to submit in person to the new government, the Treaty that we had signed and to report the conditions of signing the Treaty as full staff.

At 3 o’clock an official banquet was given, during which the Turkish Military Band performed Italian opera pieces, and our return was determined as 9 o’clock at night.

We packed our belongings. **But at 6 o’clock a military officer named Bahaettin Shakir was sent by Karabekir Pasha from his General Headquarters. He spoke in German and told me that, Karabekir Pasha, considering the danger in my returning to Yerevan, was offering me to go to Kars, and from there to reach Istanbul or Tbilisi depending on my choice, to go to Trabzon via Erzurum or to Batumi via Artvin. In addition, he added that all our transfer needs for me and all my friends would be provided.** I thanked⁶⁹ on my behalf and said that we would go to Yerevan.

Bahaettin Shakir was assigned as the Ankara representative to Yerevan by Karabekir Pasha and he traveled on the same train with us.

Once everything was ready for our return trip, Karabekir Pasha came to the train station with his military officers, to see us off. Bolshevik Government was in power in the city. Giving death sentences had become common. On the day that we left, seven people were shot to death. The Turkish Command had declared curfew, in order to avoid any demonstrations while we were passing by. It was dark and icy.

⁶⁹ A few more peaceful words than a simple “thank you” would be expected from Khatisian in this book that he wrote a long time after the wars, regarding this highly humanitarian offer of Kazım Karabekir Pasha. They are signing peace treaties, saying “We have become friends”, but they still lack such feelings. They are stuck in the marshes of Pasdermadjian’s lies. As the current Armenian Patrick Sahak Mashalian said, “they are 100 years behind” the current times.

Three cars took us to the train station through empty and quiet streets. Our train took off towards Yerevan at 10 pm.

At 6 o'clock in the morning, at the Ararat Station, my bodyguard told me that the military personnel officers and soldiers standing at the station wanted to see me. I put on my clothes and got outside. I was greeted with "Hurray!" The high-ranking officer said that almost all government ministers, the mayor of the city, majority of the parliamentarians had left Yerevan the day before, and reported that some had gone to Tbilisi and the rest to Zangezur. The soldiers and officers told me to go outside the borders of Armenia, under their protection, because they were worried about mine and my delegation members' security. I was influenced by their sensitivity and thanked them, however I told them that my responsibility obliged me to go to Yerevan.

The train moved towards Yerevan. We reached Yerevan at 10 o'clock in the morning. From a distance, I noticed the red flag at the station. There, Shahumian, assistant of the city mayor was waiting for us with a car.

I came home and called Dro on the telephone. I requested from him to set a day of government meeting for them to listen to the delegation's report. 12 o'clock the same day was set for the presentation of our report. We went to the government building with all our members. Dro and Silin greeted us. We presented a detailed report. Dro said that we had done the right job by signing the treaty, and indicated that, the reserved answer he gave (via telegraph while we talked with him from Alexandropol) should be understood the same way as we had understood. It was obvious that the Revolutionary Government did not want to take the responsibility of signing the treaty, neither towards the Turks nor towards the Armenian people. The new Yerevan Government wanted the Treaty to be signed; but not with their hands, just ours.

I turned in all the documents to Dro and took his signature saying that the delivery was made under his testimony. The contents of the document are given below (in Russian language).

“Received from A. Khatisian:

- 1) Treaty with Turkey (in French language)
- 2) Copy in Tajik [Turkish] language.
- 3) Three maps attached to the Treaty.
- 4) Account statement on expenditures of the money given to the delegation.
- 5) A. Khatisian’s report.

Signed,

Commander in Chief of all Armies of Armenia S. Kh. H. Dro
Yerevan, December 5, 1920.

I submitted this report on December 4th and the documents and calculation of expenses the following day, on Dec 5th.

I thought that my duty was completed upon delivering to Dro and Silin, all documents, agreements and maps. I gathered all delegation members, advisors and attendants in my apartment, thanked them for their efforts and sacrifices and announced that the duties of the delegation were completed. After that, we had become ordinary citizens.

A few more words regarding the Treaty.

At the Turkish press, the third article of the Alexandropol Treaty had become a special issue. I want to say a few words about this, because a lot was written on this matter in the press of Tbilisi and Istanbul. The Turkish Delegation had included the sub-article under the third article of the draft Treaty as given here:

“As much as Turkish statistics, Russian and all World statistics as well as all other data show that within the Turkish Empire there is no location where the Armenian population constituted the majority.”

Our Delegation announced in a determined way that they would not sign unless this item is removed from the Treaty, because they had felt and seen that the Turks desired to create a legal evidence in order to leave the demands of the Turkish Armenians unfounded. Seeing our

determination, the Turks had removed this item and it was not included in the Alexandropol Treaty. In spite of this, the Turkish newspaper “Sabah” published the Alexandropol Treaty with the inclusion of this item.

By taking it from the “Sabah” Newspaper, other Turkish newspapers of Istanbul published the Treaty the same way, and from there this item passed on to the Armenian newspapers. I in person and our delegation faced rather hard criticisms for having signed such an item. Towards the end of December, I mailed special letters to the editorials of the newspapers, in which I tried to reveal the truth that the mentioned item did not take place in the Alexandropol Treaty.

The original of the Alexandropol Treaty is in Yerevan, the Soviet Government. Let’s see those who have the power and the means to change the conditions of this Treaty. And we, as the individuals who signed that Treaty would be the first to congratulate. But several years have gone by, unfortunately, no change has been recorded.

CHAPTER – 17

(Pages 294-302 in the Original Book)

LONDON CONFERENCE

(FEBRUARY 21 – MARCH 13, 1921)

AND

THE TURKISH-BOLSHEVIK MOSCOW AGREEMENT

(MARCH 16, 1921)

The London Conference is the result of the resistance Turkey showed against being subjected to the conditions of the Sèvres Agreement.

There were two paths to be taken: either the victorious powers were going to force Turkey to accept the conditions of the Sèvres Treaty, or they were going to choose the path of coming to agreements by compromises. In the second scenario, the compromises needed to be in line causing minimum response.

Which interests could be sacrificed? Where could the concessions be given from? And could the defeated Turkey seriously show Europe that it did not consent to the conditions.

All of these questions were quite important, because their answers predetermined what happened in Paris and Lausanne after the London Conference and everything that has happened so far.

Five aspects need to be taken into account in order to better understand the state of the political environment of that time.

The first is the exhausted state of the European peoples after the war and their general thirst for peace.

Second, the historic rivalry between France and England in the East from which Turkey has also benefited.

Third, Turkey's alliance with Russia and the resistance power that it earned thanks to its alliance during the war and also its provocative and conspiratorial activities in the Asian and African colonies of the European states.

Fourth was the situation that the civil war in Russia was now over, thus Russia's voice started to be heard stronger in the East, especially in the Caucasus. For this reason, the European States had to be more careful about the regulation of the situation of the Caucasus Republics, especially Armenia.

The fifth was the defeat of Greece, after which all articles of the Sèvres Treaty regarding Izmir had lost their meaning.⁷⁰

Motivated with all these signals, Turkey calculated that declaring that it is not willing to accept the conditions of the Sèvres Treaty would be a more favorable condition for itself. Especially because now, it had ownership in realistic terms, not only of the Turkish Armenian region but over the province of Kars and the Surmalu District⁷¹.

The Delegation of the Republic of Armenia frequently applied to the British and French Governments and asked them whether they were going to continue to defend the legal demands of the Armenians. And their answer has always been positive.

The reply from London, usually said: ***“Britain does not intend to change the terms of the Sèvres Treaty.”*** The French were saying the same, even though they were not determined as much.

In this course of events, the first conference related to the Orient Question after the signing of the Sèvres Treaty was planned in London. I arrived in London on February 28th, a few days after the conference had started.

President of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia A. Aharonian, our representatives from England, Italy and America Gen. Bagratuni, M. Varandian, G. Pasdermadjian and Sepuh had already come to London. A few days later, Armenia’s former Finance Minister S. Araratian came. Apart from these, National Delegation President Boghos Nubar also came to London. Finally, Hovhannes Khan Masehian, advisor to the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia was also in London at that time.⁷²

From the Greek side, Prime Minister Gounaris, Foreign Minister Baltatzis and Gen. Kalogeropoulos had arrived in London. The British

⁷⁰ Typical Armenian approach. He is not mentioning the Gyumri Agreement that he himself signed on December 20, 1920.

⁷¹ Area covered by the Iğdır Province.

⁷² A delegation comprised of a total of 9 people. Obviously, somehow, they could afford their expenses.

representative was Foreign Minister Lord Curzon, while Foreign Minister Briand was present on the French side. He was accompanied by Marshal Foch and the General Secretary of the Ministry Berthelot. Italy was being represented by its Foreign Minister Kont Sforza.

On the Turkish side, Bekir Sami Bey was representing the Ankara Government. At the same time, Tevfik Pasha was representing the Turkish Government of Istanbul, but both delegations were always operating in solidarity. In the meantime, it should be mentioned that a special Turkish delegation under the leadership of Yusuf Kemal [Tengirshenk] also held talks with the Soviet Government in Moscow. Of course, the Soviet Government was aware of all that was happening in London. Thus, the Turks had secured themselves against anything that could become a threat in London.

In principle, the main subject of the London Conference was the re-discussion of the terms of the Sèvres Treaty. British Prime Minister Lloyd George chaired the conference.

Bekir Sami Bey, the representative of Ankara, demanded on February 2nd **return of the European borders of Turkey back to the year 1914 borders** as well as the return of Izmir and Cilicia, and said the following in a determined fashion regarding Armenia and Kurdistan:

“We think that a careful examination of the territorial problems, especially regarding Armenia and Kurdistan, will lead to a fair solution to be found in the main articles.”

On February 26th, Armenian representatives Boghos Nubar Pasha and A. Aharonian were heard at the Conference. In solidarity, they both demanded the protection of the terms of the Sèvres Treaty without any change. They highlighted a number of reasons for their demands.

The [Armenian] representatives said that the Turks attacked Armenia with the provocation and help of Soviet Russia, and that the main reason for this was their aim to destroy the Sèvres Treaty. A very large number

of immigrants (about 300,000)⁷³ from Turkish Armenia were waiting for the appropriate moment to return to their home, Armenia.

On the same days they also stated that as a result of the revolt that took place in Russian Armenia on February 18, the Soviet power was destroyed, and as a result Armenia regained its full independence. This revolution was very important in terms of defending Armenian interests in London, because it was reconstructing the core of the United and Independent Armenia.

However, there was doubt as to how solid and continuous this situation would be.⁷⁴ In addition, Armenian Delegates wanted autonomy for Cilicia.

Lord Curzon pointed out the difficult situation of the Conference with respect to Armenia; the Turks had actually occupied de facto all the provinces that were supposed to pass to Armenia and even part of the Russian Armenia, and so the European States were unable to send troops there. And even though it was liberated from the Soviet yoke, the Russian Armenia was under new threats of attacks.

From the French side, Berthelot explained that Cilicia did not have a special organizational code (status) in the Sèvres Treaty, therefore it is currently difficult to issue new rights for this place, and the French Government will support the Armenians living there as a “minority”. Nubar Pasha stated that the Armenians in Cilicia are not a minority, but they constitute the majority.

A. Aharonian explained that the Alexandropol Treaty pointed out by Bekir Sami Bey was made by force, was signed under threat and pressure, and that this agreement has not been ratified yet.⁷⁵

On March 4, the Conference listened to the reply of the Turks. The Turks took good advantage of the situation of the European

⁷³ He, himself had given this number as 400,000 to Rauf Bey in Trabzon.

⁷⁴ Pls see Vratsian's letter dated March 18, 1921 on pp 224-226 of this book.

⁷⁵ If Bekir Sami Bey was informed about Vratsian's letter, he could have given an appropriate reply to Aharonian who is acting as if the Gymru Treaty is also considered void by the Armenians like the Batumi Treaty is.

representatives and once again emphasized their original demands. In his reply, Lord Curzon emphasized once again that there was no reason for the Allies to abandon their decision on the establishment of a United and independent Armenia.

The Conference announced its decision in the form of a 10-point proposal to Greeks and Turks on March 12, after listening to all interested parties. The Conference also stated that its proposal is an indivisible whole and must either be accepted or rejected in full. These offers were including a number of concessions to the Turks.

Article 9 was about Armenia; it was arranged as follows:

“9. Armenia: the current liabilities with regard to Armenia can be arranged under the condition if Turkey recognizes the existing rights of Turkish Armenians as a National Hearth over Turkish Asiatic lands within Turkey’s Eastern boundaries, and if Turkey would accept the decision of a committee to be assigned by the Council of the League of Nations, with the purpose of researching, on location, the subject of lands which may be seen as justifiable to pass on to Armenia.”

As the readers can also see, the words of **“free and independent state”** used in the 88th article of the Sèvres Treaty was now replaced by a vague word: Hearth [Homeland]. What was Hearth, where did it come from?

It was said that this retreat was offered personally by Montgomery, who was among the American Missionaries who in the same way happened to be in London at the time. Hearth was thought as a legal means that could enable the formation of autonomy for the Armenians under the auspices of Turkey. **In fact, this was a major concession given to the Turks.**

The League of Nations unanimously announced on September 21, 1921, that this Hearth should be absolutely independent from Turkey.

In Lausanne, on January 6, 1923, the chairman of the Committee related to the Armenian Question, Montana declared his thought that this “Hearth” was a Turkish land on which Armenians could congregate as

well as freely form and develop their “*language, traditional teachings and civilization*”.

The Turks and Greeks who received the above-mentioned proposals had to submit them to their parliaments for discussion. The Greeks were less inclined to accept the offers of the Allies, because the important articles related to them in these proposals were further strengthening the borders and influence of the Turks in Izmir and the Balkans. They thought they could “*push the Turks towards Ankara in two weeks*”.

Seeing this course of events, the Armenian delegates had become really sad. The delegation of the Republic of Armenia found the mentality of Hearsh as hostile, and the delegation thought that it was obliged to continue to defend the ideal of independent and United Armenia like all Armenians. On the other hand, **The National Committee was at peace with the idea of “Hearsh”.**

After making their offer to Greece and Turkey, the London Conference ended their work on March 12. I returned to Paris on March 13. The other Armenian delegates returned two days later.

French Foreign Minister Briand and Turkish Foreign Minister Bekir Sami [Kunduh] Bey signed a separate draft treaty in London, on March 9. With this, the French were narrowing their impact zone within Syria in favor of Turkey and in return they were receiving a series of concessions, such as to obtain various monopolies in Cilicia, Diyarbakır and Sivas. Later, on June 11, 1921, Briand announced the motives for this agreement. However, the presence of the phenomena of such an agreement, was now pointing that the French policy had turned in favor of Turkey. And this policy, because it was going towards a friendly path with Turkey, was against the Armenian interests, in this form. The London Agreement was in short time followed by a visit from Franklin Bouillon to Turkey, which ended with the well-known Treaty of Ankara.

On March 12, the Italian Foreign Minister Kont Sforza too, signed a separate draft treaty with Bekir Sami Bey. With this, Italy

pledged to accept all demands of the Turks to sign a final peace treaty, and this was now a direct betrayal of Armenia.

On March 16, Britain also, signed a treaty with the Soviets. With this treaty, the Soviets were committing to cease propaganda activities in the British colonies, and the British Government was committing not to support the newly created states from the former Russian Empire countries. **This was the first blow to Armenia, because Britain was now committing not to help Armenians in their struggle to regain their independence.**

As we had stated, at the same time with the London Conference, a conference was being held in Moscow between Soviet Russia and Turkey. Those meetings were finalized with the Russia-Turkey Treaty on March 16, 1921; the same day the British-Russian Treaty was signed.

With the Moscow Treaty, Kars Province and Surmalu Area were going to Turkey⁷⁶, Nakhchevan Area was going under the management of Azerbaijan, and Batumi was “being given as concession” to Georgia with some of its autonomy rights. Russia, on its side was pledging to “take steps” for the Transcaucasian Republics (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) to accept and ratify these conditions. And this was realized within short time with the signing of the Kars Treaty between Soviet Armenia and Turkey on October 21⁷⁷, 1921. With the power of these two treaties, Armenia was being deprived of Kars, Ardahan and Nakhchevan, and was restricted within the borders constituting the current total area of 29,000 Versts [around 30,000 square Kilometers].

The European States restricted by such treaties, initially withdrew a little, answering ambiguously to the questions of the Armenian representatives about the state of Armenia’s borders. But later, they started to say more and more obviously that **“Under the arising**

⁷⁶ These lands had already been passed on to Turkey with the Treaty of Gyumri. Since the Moscow Agreement was confirming the Treaty of Gyumri, it has de facto confirmed that the Sevres Treaty was accepted as “VOID” by the Armenians.

⁷⁷ Wrong. Correct date is October 13.

conditions, it is not possible to seriously consider fulfilment of the responsibilities that Europe had undertaken.”

I had a meeting with Bekir Sami Bey in Paris, during his transit stay from London to Ankara. The meeting was held at the house of a common acquaintance, a prominent politician in the North Caucasus, on March 23, 1921. During our meeting, Bekir Sami Bey emphasized that only the tight unity of the Caucasian Republics could ensure the success of these republics, especially that of Armenia's. Bekir Sami Bey said that, Turkey would never give concessions to Armenia alone, neither from the Kars Province nor from Surmalu or any Turkish Province, because it would mean giving concessions to Russia which had currently entered the establishment of Armenia. He added, ***“However, if the unity of the Caucasus Republic which can turn into a powerful organ can be established, then Turkey may add power to it by giving minor concessions from some unimportant pieces of land”***

After Bekir Sami [Kunduh] Bey's return to Turkey, upon his report to the Ankara Government and the Turkish Grand National Assembly about the drafts of the agreements to be signed with France and Italy and the conditions offered by the London Conference; it became evident that, the Turks did not think that the concessions granted so far by the European Governments were enough. The same way, Turks listened to Yusuf Kemal [Tengirşenk] Bey's report as well and learned the conditions of the Russia – Turkey Agreement; their stance was further strengthened. The aid of Soviet Russia gave the Turks more wings. The Grand National Assembly, besides not endorsing any of the London draft Treaties, did not accept the London proposals.

The Greek Parliament also did not approve the London proposals.

Under these circumstances, the London Conference proposals lost their significance in the real sense, and the problem remained open again. But the Greeks naturally had to solve the problem using military force, as they rejected the conditions proposed in London. And they started an offensive, following the minor successes they obtained all through the month of March, they were forced to retreat. The Greeks embarked on a new offensive on July 10, but the Turks stopped this attack near

the Sakarya River in late August. France offered mediation to the warring parties, but this was not accepted. The war continued, but the parties were temporarily standing in their positions.

Thus, the issue of signing a peace treaty with Turkey was postponed until the result of the Greek-Turkish War would gain certainty. Naturally, the development process of the Armenian Question was also delayed with this.

Even after the Bolsheviks entered Yerevan, the Independent Government of Armenia, which continued its existence by first crossing to Zangezur and then to Iran, was greatly increasing the credit of Armenia. The British and French Governments were carefully following the Armenians' war for their independence with great care. When the last efforts of independent Armenia collapsed in Zangezur and power was taken by the Bolsheviks, the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia became the only valid spokesperson of independent Armenia, in the eyes of the European States. As such, the Delegation signed a "declaration" on June 10, 1921, together with the representatives for Europe of Georgia, Azerbaijan and the North Caucasus. With this, the representatives of the four Caucasus republics were stating that they thought it was necessary to be in close union with each other in both economic and political fields. Discussions had to be resolved through arbitration. Customs, borders should be canceled. A military defense treaty had to be signed and a general foreign policy had to be determined. Sides that had collaborated according to the 7th special article, were committing to help with all means possible in deciding the Armenian borders "within Turkey's territories" meaning that our neighbors in Caucasia would contribute to Independent and United Armenia's demands.

With another article, it was reported that the Red Army soldiers were requested to leave the territories of the independent Caucasus Republics. The entire declaration consisted of 10 articles. There were several purposes with the publication of this declaration.

First and foremost, the representatives of the Caucasian Republics demonstrated that they understood the necessity of mutual solidarity, taking into account the old mistakes in mutual discussions and conflicts.

Second, the Caucasus was presented to Europe as an economic integrity. The natural riches of the Caucasus; Baku's oil, Georgia's manganese, Armenia's cotton, all these were passing through the port of Batumi. Transit trade was through Iran via the Tbilisi-Yerevan-Julfa line. Baku's oil lightened the entire Caucasus. In short, the Caucasus Republics were connected to a common economic network with a large number of threads.

Likewise, the Union was providing some guarantees of security and solidarity in accordance with the view of a new attack from the north and south.

The publication of the declaration was met with various reactions in the press. The Bolsheviks saw this as the creation of an anti-Soviet front against them. The Ramgavars, having made peace with the reality of the establishment of the Soviet power in the Caucasus, met this with suspicion and even with hostility. Only the Dashnaks accepted it with sympathy as an expression of the solidarity of the Caucasian nations.

Thus, at the end of 1921, a solid and stable Russian-Turkish Treaty, which was established by the treaty of March 16, 1921, was standing out. Although this seems unnatural from a historical point of view, it still continues to this day. This agreement greatly hampered the development of the Armenian State and still continues to be an obstacle. With the support of the Soviet Government, the Turks not only occupied the territory of Armenia, but also prevented the economic development of Armenia, for example by banning the intake of water from the Aras River and making Armenia's irrigation work difficult.

Turkey, relying on the Soviet aid showed the courage to stand up to Europe without making concessions to Europe.

ATTACHMENT:

VRATSIAN'S LETTER GIVEN AS ANNEX IV TO ↓

THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION

(DASHNAGTZOUTIUN)

HAS NOTHING TO DO ANY MORE

THE MANIFESTO

Of

HOVANNES KATCHZNOUNI

First Prime Minister of the Independent Armenian Republic

Translated from the Original by *Matthew A. Callender*

Edited by *John Roy Carlson (Arthur A. Derounian)*

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ous acts against its integrity and totality by imperialists until complete peace is established and the two parties will forbid the official and unofficial agents of imperialist (Entente) powers from causing any damage or disturbance inside the Republic.

13. The government of the National Grand Assembly can take temporary military preventive measures in Armenia against attacks that may threaten its territorial integrity on condition that such measures do not disturb the rights of the Republic of Erevan conceded in this territory.

14. All treaties signed by the Republic of Erevan with any country that relate to Turkey or are harmful to the interests of Turkey, the said Republic agrees to consider absolutely null and void.

15. Commercial relations between the two parties will begin and ambassadors and consuls will be exchanged upon the signature of the treaty.

16. Regulations for telegraphic, postal, telephone, consular and commercial relations will be established by mixed commissions according to the provisions of this treaty. Meanwhile Turkey will be authorized by the State to resume telegraphic, postal and railroad communications between Armenia and occupied territories as soon as the treaty is signed.

17. In accordance with this treaty, concerning Armenia, by the provisions of the special treaty for the evacuation of territories under Turkish occupation and the repatriation and exchange of prisoners, the determination of the frontiers of the Armenian Republic will immediately be put into effect. The civilians and notables held will be delivered. The exchange of prisoners will be effected by a mixed commission.

18. This treaty is subject to ratification within a month. The ratified copies will be exchanged at Ankara. The plenipotentiary high representatives have signed this treaty of peace and frontier demarcation. This treaty, being in two copies, has been constituted at Kumru-Alexandropol on the date 2/12/1336*. In the case of any dispute agreement can be arrived at by reference to the Turkish text."

* December 2, 1921. The Turkish year 1336 corresponds to 1921 A.D.

APPENDIX IV

Armenians look upon former Turkish regimes as Jewry looks upon Nazi Germany. Some Armenians, as do some Jews, believe that their former tormentors "will never change." Apparently not so with Dashnag leaders. Though the Turks had just bled the nation white and the Anatolian deserts were still strewn with the bleached bones of a million martyrs, Dashnags sought help and protection from Turkey as provided in the Treaty of Alexandropol. This shameless act placed the ARF on record as willful collaborators with the assassins of their Armenian brethren in return for the mere promise to govern an "independent Armenia" under Turkish tutelage.

In a final effort to displace the Soviets (to whom they had surrendered Armenia on Dec. 2, 1920) and occupy the country with Turkish help, the Dashnags on February 18, 1921 staged a well-planned counter-revolt

against the Bolsheviks. But soon finding themselves in urgent need of help, Simon Vratzian the last prime minister and symbol of Dashnag failure and chicanery, sent the following desperate note to Behaeddin, representative in Erivan of the Turkish high command.

"Please forward the present request promptly to your high authorities, and as I have explained to you, urge them for an immediate answer.

The fight of Armenia against the bolsheviks, and for its own freedom and independence, serves, as we are convinced, not only Armenia itself, but also the interests of all the nations of the Near East.

For this reason, Armenia hopes, that during this fight she will receive help from her neighbors, and first of all the interests of the Turkish people also require that Armenia should come victorious out of this fight and remain independent.

Relying on this conviction, the Armenian government requests the government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, that, in the name of the mutual interest of the two peoples and as speedily as possible, it:

1. Return the Armenian war prisoners that are now on the war front of Erivan.

2. Give the Armenian army some ammunition under certain conditions; first of all cartridges for Russian three-lined rifles and for Turkish mausers; or else rifles of the Russian and Lepel system.

3. Communicate with us, if the government of the Grand National Assembly finds it possible to send military aid to Armenia, and if able to do so, to what extent and when?

In making this appeal, the Armenian government relies on the friendly relations that have been established with the treaty of Alexandropol, and which were disturbed during the bolshevik rule."

Respectfully,

SIMON VRATZIAN

President of the Armenian Republic

Erivan, March 18, 1921.

Distrustful, the Turks refused to help their Dashnag allies. The Soviets finally ejected them from Armenian soil in April, 1921.

APPENDIX V

The highly complex sequence of historical events which preceded the formation of an independent Armenia on May 28, 1918 may be delineated as follows.

Following the October, 1917 revolution the Bolsheviks relaxed their interest and withdrew from the Caucasus region, turning over to the Armenians their munitions, and leaving them in possession of a relatively large territory including the vilayets of Trebizond, Moush, Erzeroum and the regions of Kars, Ardahan, Karabagh and Nakhitchevan—a total area which later became known as "Wilsonian Armenia."

The Caucasus was then governed by a Trans-Caucasian Federation composed of Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijan nationals, with a representative assembly, the Seym. In December, 1917 Turkey signed

CHAPTER-18

(PAGES 303-308 in the original book)

ANKARA AGREEMENT (October 20, 1921)

PARIS CONFERENCE (March 1922)

AND

DEFEAT OF THE GREEKS

(August 25 – September 9, 1922)

Armenian demands were getting complicated due to the new situation that emerged thanks to the “**Armenian Hearth**” project that emerged as a result of the London Conference. It was not possible to completely ignore this project, likewise it was not possible to abandon the goal of United and Independent Armenia. A dilemma arose.

The members of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia carefully maintained the immunity of the demand for an independent and sovereign united Armenia, but they were facing difficulties in its implementation. The difficulty was the current state of the demand of an independent, sovereign and united Armenia, in the eyes of the European States, which was nothing more than a request for a member of the Soviet Union to expand its borders. And whenever we insisted strongly on the principle of United Armenia, which we demanded, we were asked the following question:

“Could you be wanting the expansion of Soviet Armenia so that new lands could be taken over by the Bolshevik government?”

We were against the Bolshevik power, but we wanted the borders of Soviet Armenia to expand. A contradictory situation was forming, and there were three ways out of it: either the expanded Armenia had to be ruled in the hands of the Bolsheviks until a regime change, **or the connected territories (for example the Province of Kars or parts of the Turkish provinces)** had to be ruled by a special governance under the supervision of the League of Nations or any state, or as a result Turkey should remain in name only, as the ruler over these lands.

But Turkey was opposing to each of these projects in a very determined manner. The Allies on the other hand, wanted to come to peace with Turkey at any cost. In particular, France wanted their hands to be free as soon as possible, in order to be able to close their accounts with Germany. The plan of sending deputy Franklin Bouillon to Turkey was born from this. Bouillon went to Turkey in the autumn of 1921. Before his journey, in Paris, I saw him and the French Consul Laporte who was guiding him. Franklin Bouillon promised that he would consider the Armenian interests too during the negotiations.

But he also said that in order to defend the interests of the Armenians, it is necessary to make peace with the Turks and gain their trust. At the same time, he requested me to give reference to the Cilician community for him and also to give a reference letter to the Cilician Catholicos. I did not fulfill any of his requests, because I knew that he was a chronic Turkish lover. And it was certainly clear, that he would come to an agreement with the Turks, at all costs. As always, the Turks knew this, and for this reason they were more persistent in their demands.

The French Government initially said that F. Bouillon's visit did not have an official character, and that he went there on his own initiative. However, as Bouillon showed with his later course of actions, this was not true and this attempt resulted in the signing of the Ankara Agreement. As a result of this treaty, Cilicia was evacuated and more than 150,000⁷⁸ Armenians were forced to flee to Syria and Greece. The Ankara Agreement had tragic results from all points of view on Armenian interests.

In comparison to the London offers, the Ankara Agreement was a new step in favor of Turkey. According to the London agreement, the people had to be disarmed and French officers too had to participate within the Turkish police force. But there was no such a condition in the Ankara Agreement. In fact, even the defense of the interests of the Christians had disappeared and Turkey was seen on an equal footing with European states on the subject of defense of minority rights.

Publication of the Ankara Agreement created an indescribable sadness and panic among the Cilician Christians. No assurances given by the Turkish Government, no statements made by Hamit Bey and Muhittin Pasha were successful to comfort the public, because the people knew very well the worth of Turkish assurances and did not believe them even in the slightest form. Moreover, the winter was approaching and the Cilician Armenians would face enormous difficulties if they wanted to make any migration attempts. Telegrams that we received from Cilicia

⁷⁸ This number is around 250 thousand.

Source, US Archive Documents (NARA T 1192 R2. 8601.01 – 395)

But, in the next page, Khatisian will give 120,000 instead of 150,000.

were begging for the postponement of the evacuation of Cilicia until spring. The Delegation of the Republic of Armenia and the National Delegation appealed to the Government of France, the influential Senate and Parliament circles, to postpone the evacuation at least until spring. As a special delegation established among the members of the National Delegation and the Republic of Armenia Delegations, with the participation of M. Papajanian, A. Chobanian and myself, we went to the French Senate Foreign Affairs Commission and made a statement. We explained all the reasons, and requested a postponement if it is not possible to cancel the evacuation of Cilicia based on these reasons. They listened to our statements with great attention. Some of the Senators; Deschanel (former president), Victor Berard, and others raised a number of additional questions. Then we approached to influential MPs, to the members of the Socialist Party Bureau, to Bouelle, Renaudel, Paul Föiard, and Mute⁷⁹. Likewise, we applied to the Government of France also.

The result of all these appeals was the following: First, the Government of France paid great attention for the evacuation, and secondly, they gave permission for the Armenian immigrants to enter Syria from Cilicia. However, there was no change in the discharge arrangement.

The Armenian population also left, at the same time with the departure of the French soldiers from Cilicia. About 120,000⁸⁰ Armenians had gone. Cilicia was deprived of the Armenians. A large number of aid organizations (Near East Relief, Denmark, Germany, Armenian Philanthropic Unions, etc.) offered a helping hand to them in their difficult times.

* * *

We saw the same mentality at the next Paris Conference held in March 1922, following the exchange of military notes. The conference was

⁷⁹ The Turkish translator Yavuz Aydın's note: Mute is the Armenian transcription. Its French spelling has not been found.

⁸⁰ In the previous page, he had stated that 150,000 Armenians were left in Cilicia, not 120,000.

attended by Foreign Minister Poincare on the French side, Foreign Minister Lord Curzon on the British side, and Foreign Minister [Carlo] Schanzer on the Italian side. Armenians were not invited to this conference.

On March 22, the three ministers offered the Greeks and Turks to sign a ceasefire; and on March 26, they offered peace proposals to both sides, containing new concessions to the Turks. The concessions were four in number and were quite significant.

First, Istanbul was given to the Turks in absolute form; This was considered an assurance for the fulfillment of the conditions of peace by Turkey.

Second, a portion of Eastern Thrace was given to the Turks.

Third, it was promised to return, to the Turks, all the lands between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea up to the borders of Transcaucasia, Iran and Mesopotamia.

Fourth, it had become uncertain where the “Hearth”, in the promise given to the Armenians in London in 1921 as “Armenian National Hearth” would be located within “Turkey’s eastern borders”.

In relation to the last article, it is necessary to say that according to the opinion of Britain, “Hearth” should be in Cilicia and according to the viewpoint of France it should be in the Eastern provinces. The article on Armenians was written as follows:

“Special attention should be paid to the situation of the Armenians due to the responsibilities assumed by the Allied Powers during the war, and the terrible persecution these people suffered. As a result, apart from the protection provided to the minorities as required by the situations mentioned above, the assistance of the League of Nations is requested in establishing a National Hearth, in order to satisfy the desires of the Armenians coming from the past.”

Upon comparing this decision of 1922 with the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) and the text adopted in London in 1921, we see a gradual decline in the

documentation of the conditions regarding Armenians and Armenia. Despite this, the only positive item in the Paris Conference was the invitation to the League of Nations to intervene in the Armenian Question. As for the great states, they openly admitted that they had no power⁸¹.

* * *

So, what did the League of Nations say and do? There were strong solidarity and ties between this body and us. It was as if the representatives of that League of Nations also wanted to show that, apart from the instructions of the administration, they could independently discuss the most political problems and mobilize their means of solution and defend their personal and more humanitarian principles.

At the second plenary meeting of the League of Nations, three studies were conducted on Armenia and Armenians. The Board now knew about the London Conference held in March 1921 and the understanding of the National Hearth decided there. This situation affected the decision adopted. Decisions were made on the following three issues:

- 1) National Hearth,
- 2) The status of the Armenian women and children in the harems in Turkey,⁸²
- 3) Hunger in Armenia.

About the first issue; hearing the offer and speech of the English Lord Robert Cecil, a friend of the Armenians, the General Assembly of the League of Nations adopted the following decision on September 21, 1921:

⁸¹ Against whom did the great nations have no power? Against the army of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

⁸² According to American Prof. [Dr. Grigor] Suny of Armenian descent, it is 200,000 Armenians. (Source: *Müslümanlaştırılmış Ermeniler* (Islamized Armenians) Hrnt Dink Foundation, 2013)

“Taking into account that;

“At the first General Assembly Meeting held on November 18, 1920, the Board was assigned the task of protecting Armenia’s future,

“On February 25, 1921 the Board, upon seeing that the situation in Asia Minor became unsuitable for any action, gave the Secretariat the responsibility to follow the course of events in Armenia in a way that would allow the Board to take new decisions,

“At that time, the Supreme Council proposed that the idea of establishing a National Hearth for Armenians should be taken into account during the review of the Treaty of Sèvres,

“There is a serious understanding that a peace treaty will be signed within short time between the Central Powers and Turkey;

“The Congress proposes that the Council compulsorily defend against the General Assembly that it is necessary to find opportunities to protect the future of Armenia in the treaty to be signed, and especially to give Armenians a National Hearth independent of the Ottoman Rule.⁸³”

To address the problem of women and children, it was decided to establish a “Children’s House” in Istanbul and to allocate money for the rescue of women and children suffering in harems and houses.

For those who are starving in Armenia; a decision was taken to “announce in Soviet Armenia a desire to deliver aid, to Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.”

As the readers can see, a request for a Hearth **“completely independent from Turkish rule”⁸⁴** was added in the decision of the League of

⁸³ In 1921 Ottoman Rule did not *de facto* exist anymore.

⁸⁴ A minor Armenian State within the Turkish State!

Nations' Second General Assembly. This decision was sent to all governments.

It should be reminded that the French representative Léon Bourgeois announced a reservation about the "independence" of the Hearth. However, the decision of the Second General Assembly Meeting of the League of Nations did not yield an actual result. The decision was "taken into account" only during the conference held in Paris in March 1922. For this reason, we applied to the League of Nations again in the autumn of 1922, demanding that the Armenian people be given their rights. The decision below was taken on September 22, 1922, at the Third General Assembly of the League of Nations:

"With gratitude, the General Assembly shows attention to the Council's decisions regarding Armenia and also voices its desire for the necessity of the establishment of a National Hearth for the Armenians, not to be disregarded during the peace negotiations with Turkey. The General Assembly invites the Council to provide all means deemed useful for this purpose."

As understood from the decision, "The Hearth's original feature - its full independence from Turkish rule – was lost from its new formulation this time too". After this Third Meeting of the League of Nations, the Lausanne Conference was opened in November, 1922. Thus, in a political sense, the Armenian Question turned into a National Hearth problem.

CHAPTER-19

(PAGES 309-357 in the original book)

THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE (NOVEMBER 1922 – JULY 24, 1923)

EDITORS' EXPLANATIONS ABOUT CHAPTER 19:

- a. This is the longest section of the book (49 pages in its Armenian original, 60 in its Turkish and 61 pages in its English version.)
 - b. It shows how the Armenians worked tirelessly to propagandize the opponents of Turkey (especially USA, Britain, France) in order to influence them against Turkey during the Lausanne Conference, with almost unlimited financial means.
 - c. None of the part delegates (Aharonian, Khatisian, Noradunkyan, Pashalian) returned home after the Conference. They stayed in France with sufficient financial help from DIASPORA.
 - d. Katchaznoui did not participate in this activity which would finally not bring any tangible solution. He wrote his Manifesto during that time, then returned to Soviet Armenia and died in a Soviet (Stalin) prison (may be in 1938) - neither the exact year of his death nor the location of the prison is known.
 - e. Important documents appearing in this Chapter (in their sequence of appearance) are:
 1. Khatisian's letter to England, France and Italy (Oct 18, 1922).
 2. Answer from France (Nov 17, 1922) and Britain (Nov 13, 1922).
 3. Armenian demands (A, B and C) and information about the number of Armenians presented to the Conference.
 4. Memorandum (Nov 22, 1922)
 5. Notes on the meeting with Ismet Pasha.
 6. Minutes of the Dec 26, 1922 Session.

Noradunkyan's speech

Aharonian's speech

Question-Answer Session
 7. The American Delegations' presentation of Dec 30, 1922).
 8. Meeting with Chicherin and his reply letter (Jan 26, 1923).
 9. Telegraph to the French Government (June 20, 1923).
 10. Telegraph to Mussolini (Feb 19, 1923).
 11. British Delegation's reply to the Armenophile League (Jan 25, 1923).
 12. Complaint Letter to the Allies (Feb 2, 1923).
 13. Letter addressed to the League of Nations (Aug 9, 1923).
 14. Letter of Complaint to the Allies (Aug 8, 1923)
-

When it became clear that the Lausanne Conference would ultimately decide on all the controversial questions that exist between the Turks and the Allied Powers, and in particular the Armenian Question, the representatives of the Republic of Armenia and the National Delegation fervently started preparatory work.

The following works were carried out just before the conference opened:

First: the two delegations reached a full agreement on all the questions that constitute the content of our demands.

Second: for the last time applications were made to the Allied Powers; UK, France, Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece.

Third: all the powers speaking with sympathy to the Armenian people were mobilized to morally influence the Lausanne Conference. They raised their voices from various parts of America, Europe and India.

Fourth: mediators⁸⁵ from people close to the Turkish delegation members were found in order to negotiate with them.

Fifth: once again, an application was made to the Board of the League of Nations.

Sixth: all foreign organizations that were our friends sent their representatives to Lausanne to defend the cause of the Armenian people.

Seventh: applications were made by us, to the appropriate bodies to ensure that our delegation could participate in the Lausanne Conference as authorized members.

All these preliminary works were carried out with personal effort and spirit.

⁸⁵ It would have been better if he had given some names.

As the Armenian Republic Delegation, A. Aharonian and Al. Khatisian and as the National Delegation G. Noradunkian went to London under the guidance of Secretary General Levon Pashalian. The following people attended to the Armenian United Delegation meetings: Yeram and Gümüşgerdan on the side of the National Delegation, and on the side of the Armenian Republic Delegation Garo Pasdermadjian, and an international law expert and Armenolog Andre Mandelstam attended.

Before the delegation went to Lausanne, we made a series of applications to the British and French Foreign Ministers.

On October 31st, I met with Foreign Minister Lord Curzon's representative Vansittart and Secretary Osborn in London. These two persons managed the Middle East Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were particularly concerned with Armenian and Turkish issues.

I based our demands on our rights, our participation in the war and generally on everything created by the Treaty of Sèvres.

They replied that the Turks' stance was not predictable from the standpoint of the Conference's success, and that the Allies today lacked realistic means to pressure the Turks. They explained that nobody wanted war and that the Turks would grasp this situation very well and persist until the last point. They stated that there was no consensus among the Allies on this issue, and some of them gave money and weapons to the Turks.

The demands of the Armenians were not seen as vital problems for the Allies. They were mostly dealing with the Straits Problem. It was difficult for the Allies to disrupt their relationship with Turkey, just for the Armenian Problem. According to Osborn, Britain had decided to use a precise and decisive language against the Turks, but was unsure of the Allies' support in this regard.

To my question about whether the Turks could be influenced through **economic** means, Osborne replied that the Russians were providing economic aid to the Turks and would not serve the purpose of our

economic blockade. When I drew his attention to the severe situation of Armenians and Greeks in Turkey, he replied:

“Yes, this is a shame for Europe. Record all these facts, let’s focus on all of them at the Lausanne Conference.”

Just when we were leaving, I reminded Osborn that Britain had made many promises to the Armenian people. He replied:

“What can we do, we promised the Greeks about Izmir and the Thrace, but we could not fulfill this promise either.”

The next day, I got together with Vansittart. After listening to my explanation, he said:

“I have to say so as not to leave you in a difficult situation, although our sympathy for the Armenian people remains the same, our means to put pressure on the Turks have decreased.”

And with a cold expression, he repeated the words of the first person I had visited. He added, just as his own thoughts, that we were wrong about putting economic pressure on Turkey. Soviet Russia was helping Turkey, today. If the Russians could not continue their economic assistance, Britain would find means to pressure the Turks. But, any effort in this direction would be futile now.

After returning to Paris, I met with Bargeton, who at that time was heading the Armenia-Turkish Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I also met Beretti de la Rocca, inspector of the Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of my visits was to present the demands of the Armenian people and ask them to defend these demands at the Lausanne Conference. Similar requests were made by G. Noradunkian.

In general terms, as in London in here too, they said that the Turks did not have to accept any offer in this direction, that it was not possible to reach any result without using force, and that use of force was not possible anymore, because the people no longer wanted war.

I held a meeting with the French Parliament member Frank Bouillon who had recently been to Turkey. According to him, it was necessary first to sign a peace treaty with Turkey without an excuse, and only after winning their friendship, demands could be made in favor of the Armenians.

Ridiculous offers similar to this, were often made to us.

Apart from these political appeals, we did not forget our Armenian-loving friends who were spread around various corners of Europe, America and even India.

The positive results of our demands were as follows; Our friends applied to the Lausanne Conference to defend our rights with special articles.

In parallel with these efforts, applications were made by two Armenian delegations to ensure our participation on the Lausanne Conference. Thus, we pursued three main purposes only through diplomatic means:

The first one was the realization of a united and independent Armenia.

The second was the establishment of the National Hearth as a temporary tool.

Third was our participation in the Lausanne Conference.

The reader now knows that due to the Sovietization of Armenia, the National Hearth issue had gained urgent and de-facto significance. This situation was especially helping the National Committee, which believed that the Hearth issue could be resolved easily. This was the reason why the National Delegation took the issue of determining and formulating the borders of the Hearth as the sole center of attention.

Before going to Lausanne, we made applications to Poincare, the General Secretariat of the League of Nations, Venizelos and others; We drew their attention to the Armenian Question and asked for their help.

We attempted to find a peaceful path between Armenians and Turks through Armenophile [Armenian lover] friends, but as expected, no positive result was achieved.

Towards the end of August, it became clear that a conference had to be convened in Lausanne to finally arrange the Tajik⁸⁶ and perhaps the Armenian issues. It was clear that we had to work in every way to ensure our participation in this conference with the rights of authorized members. We have applied to the governments of England, France and Italy with the letter below:

LETTER TO GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE AND ITALY

Paris, October 18, 1922

Esteemed President,

With the letter dated August 18, 1922, I was honored to attract the attention of your esteemed self to understand the benefit of the participation of the representatives of the Republic of Armenia Delegation to the preliminary preparation conference intended for the resolution of the Eastern Problems. With your letter dated August 24, you have kindly informed me that only Great Britain, France and Italy will be represented at this conference, that the articles of the future peace treaty will not be opened for discussion and issues concerning the Republic of Armenia will not even be raised there. Mr. President, you therefore do not consider it essential for the delegation of the Republic of Armenia to be present at the Venice Conference.

Since then, the political situation in the Middle East has changed significantly. The Alliance States have applied to the

⁸⁶ He used the word Turks four lines before this one, but he switched to Tajik again. It seems like he can't overcome his feelings to refer the Turks with their proper national name.

Government of Ankara with an invitation letter to send an official without any delay to attend the conference to be held in Venice and attended by authorized representatives from France, Italy, England, Japan, Yugoslavia, Romania and Greece. The aim of this conference is to discuss and ratify the final peace treaty between Tajikistan, Greece and the Alliance States.

With its reply on October 4, the Ankara Government agreed to send its authorized representative to attend the aforementioned conference. Within these situations, the Armenian Question will without any doubt be on the agenda of the upcoming conference as a real part of the Middle East Question. Because the Treaty of Sèvres was not approved, the Armenian people are still subjected to the same persecution. However, this problem has become the subject of attention at the London Conference of 1921 and afterwards at the conference of 1922 held in the presence of three ministers in Paris. The official final report of this conference was published on March 2, 1922 with the explanation:

"Special attention should be paid to the Armenians due to the obvious reason that they were subjected to severe persecution because of their participation in the war. With the help of the League of Nations, necessary mediums will be considered for the realization of the traditional desires and the National Hearth of the Armenian people."

The persecutions recalled in the official statement, have now reached such a level that the postponement of the solution to the Armenian Question again, may forever destroy the future of the Armenian people. The Armenian people have no doubt that at the conference regarding the future of the Middle East, the Armenian Question will be solved; in accordance with the principles of high humanity and righteousness which was the aim of the Allied Powers to get on to the battle scene, and the solemn promises given to the Armenian people many times.

In view of this course of events, I am honored to request your permission Mr. Esteemed President to allow the delegation of the Armenian Republic to attend this conference with a title deemed appropriate by the Allied States.

With this contact, please allow me to remind you of the following: that Armenia was recognized as an independent and sovereign state according to Article 88 of the Sèvres Treaty but this recognition could not be realized due to the non-ratification of this treaty; that the legal status of the Armenian Republic stems from the foreword of the same treaty; that Armenia was classified as an Allied State with that Treaty; that Armenia signed the Sèvres Treaty which was related to the problems of the rights of small states as an independent and sovereign country, and that Armenia signed another treaty in the same way.

Even though it has been the theater of heavy political turbulences for many years, the international status of Armenia as an independent state has not changed. The Armenian people, being confident of the truth loving feelings of the French people are hopeful that the Government of France will consider that the Armenian people's request is fair, and thus will not refuse to use its power for the participation of the Armenian Delegation to this Conference.

Esteemed President, please accept my respects.

Deputy Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia

Al. Khatisian

These applications of ours were answered almost simultaneously by B. Poincaré and Lord Curzon; they were refusing our request due to some reasons.

These documents of important priority were important for us in the following way; These once again provided legal recognition (de-jure) of the Republic of Armenia in written form, but our official participation in the conference was clearly not possible because the power of Armenia was not recognized by the Allies but accepted as the Soviet form of administration.

RESPONSE OF FRANCE

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
November 17, 1922, Paris

Esteemed President,

You have shown us the grace to express the desires of the Delegate of the Armenian Republic to attend at any format to the conference to be held soon with the aim of providing peace in the East.

I consider it my honor to inform you that the Government of France is not in a position to accept your request considering the situation that Armenia has accepted the Soviet style of administration, even though the Allied States have legally (de-jure) accepted Armenia's independence.

The situation of Armenia has been discussed in detail in the conference of three Allied Ministers held in Paris recently; the subject of this conference was the rights of minorities. We do not see any new reason to change the decision taken on this issue, which will undoubtedly form the basis for the discussion of the articles in case the subject comes up in the future peace treaty.

If the opinion of your Delegation will be needed on any subject during the works, the conference may want to send a special invitation to Tajik Armenia and Armenian Delegation.

Mr. President, please accept my deepest regards.

POINCARÉ

After this reply, it became clear that we could defend ourselves in a semi-formal way, not by directly attending conference sessions, but by petitions.

This was the first blow to our rights and interests.

For the history of international relations of the Republic of Armenia, it is an indisputable fact that their Sovietization prevented Armenians from taking their real place in the Lausanne Conference. And the Armenian administrators did not try to join the delegation that came to Lausanne on behalf of Armenia as a party, as did Soviet Georgia attend in the person of Budu Mdivani of Georgians.

In addition to these, the copy of the letter of the British Foreign Secretary, which is almost identical to Poincare's letter, is below:

RESPONSE OF BRITAIN

Foreign Office
November 13, 1922

To Mr. Aharonian

1. *I have been assigned by the Kedleston Marquise Curzon to inform you about the acceptance of your letter dated October 18 regarding the representation question of the Armenian Delegation to the Lausanne Peace Conference.*
2. ***The three main Allied Governments regret that Armenia will not be allowed to participate in the upcoming peace conference or the signing of treaties, due to Armenia's current Government's adoption of the Soviet form although the independence of the Republic of Armenia is legally recognized (de-jure).*** *The situation of Armenia was carefully discussed at the conference held last March, not only in terms of special rights, but especially due to the subject matter of the defense of minorities. The Allied Governments have no information stating that anything that would serve as the basis for discussion during the preparation of the new treaty on this issue was encountered to undoubtedly invalidate the broader conclusions adopted at that time.*
3. *If the Armenian opinion regarding any of these articles will be needed during the works of the conference, the necessary invitation will be made by the conference to the Paris Armenian National Committee, which includes representatives of both the Russian and Turkish Armenians.*

I will remain to be your faithful servant.
Signed by LANCELOT OLIPHANT.

* * *

In early November during the opening period of the conference, naturally, our activity center had to be moved to Lausanne. However, until then, the two Armenian delegations together had to form our demands for presentation at the conference. For this reason, a series of mixed meetings were held in the buildings of each side alternately. A large number of staff attended these meetings and the discussion of the issues took place with great seriousness.

The most challenging issue was in the formulation of our territorial claims, because now Armenia was under Soviet rule. If we were to demand expansion of the borders of that Armenia, we would have taken a dangerous step. This was the weakness of our demands; We, the enemies of the Soviet order would appeal to the Allies who did not accept Soviet power. But we succeeded to earn a high degree of principled importance to the problem.

We were pursuing the logic that the Republic of Armenia was an unchangeable and permanent phenomenon in terms of population and land understanding, and that the Soviet regime was a temporary situation which could change in time. And for this reason, we were demanding the expansion of Armenia's borders.

It is true that the Sovietization situation greatly undermined the strength of our demands, because the Allied States were against this administrative order and were trying to destroy it. But the challenge wasn't just that. Although Soviet Armenia was recognized on paper as an independent and sovereign country, in reality it was included in Soviet Russia (the Soviet Union did not exist then) and this was strictly against British calculations because Britain could give Kars and Erzurum to Armenia, but it never wanted to do this for Soviet Russia, of which Soviet Armenia was a part of.

These were the new obstacles that appeared before us and the Lausanne Conference. We were actually predicting all of this, but we were unsuccessful to make changes to our requests.

Later the representatives of the Allies were asking us, **if we really want the borders of Soviet Russia to expand?** And they were amazed how we, the enemies of the Soviet regime order could come forward with such demands.

On the other hand, the lands we demanded were under the rule of Tajikistan. Tajiks were allies of the Russians and the Russians were defending the territorial integrity of Tajikistan as they did during the war of Tajik campaign against Armenia.

Our situation was very sensitive from this point of view also. We were aware of all this. But we felt strong morally within the limits of our rights and demands. And nobody was denying this, but everyone thought our demands were extremely difficult to fulfill.

We presented our demands to the Lausanne Conference by highlighting in a detailed fashion all of the moral and legal foundations⁸⁷, as follows:

⁸⁷ What could the “moral and legal foundations” of demanding Kars and Ardahan be?

THE DEMANDS THAT ARMENIANS PRESENTED TO THE CONFERENCE

A.

The Delegation of United Armenia requests the following items to be taken into consideration from the Allies:

- 1) *During the Great War, Armenians served the Allies openly, and were recognized as good fighters and an Allied nation.*
- 2) *During this war, Armenians suffered incomparably great losses; 1,250,000 of the 2,250,000 Armenians in Tajikistan were killed, 700,000 migrated to the Caucasus, Iran, Syria, Greece, Balkan States, etc. In the current Tajikistan villages, there are 130,000 people who are ready in a displacement situation and 150,000 people in İstanbul.*
- 3) *The Armenian Question whose birth was very old and started in 1878 (since the Berlin Congress), has an international character. This is one of the sensitive issues and its final solution will affect the peace in the Middle East.*
- 4) *The Allied states have seriously declared the independence of Tajikistan Armenia; As a result, this issue was determined in the League of Nations Statute (Article 22) and all peace treaties.*
- 5) *The main items of this have been voted in the I. and II, Congresses of the League of Nations and establishment of the National Hearth has been decided unanimously.*

B.

Decisions have been taken in three shapes for the establishment of the National Hearth.

- 1) *Arbitration of the esteemed President of the United States of America, who decided on an existing territory for Armenians,*

- 2) *Trying to expand the borders of the Republic of Yerevan over Eastern (Anatolia) regions and sea access,*
- 3) *To add to the Hearth, some parts of Cilicia which was added to Syria according to the Sèvres Treaty and given as a concession to Tajikistan with the Ankara Agreement.*

C.

The claims of the Tajiks that the Armenian Hearth could be formed within the Russian Armenia are baseless.

Tajiks occupied one third of the Republic of Yerevan⁸⁸ (Kars, Surmalu, Ardahan). There is only 26,000 square kilometers of land left, only 9,000 of which is in arable condition. This country can barely feed its own people, whose number reaches approximately 1,260,000. One third of them live thanks to the Near East Relief, Lord Mayers and other charitable organizations. Hunger always prevails in here, and there is no situation in which a migrant can be admitted.

On the other hand, the Asian lands of Tajikistan, which has a very sparse population, shows opportunity to establish an Armenian Hearth in there.

All of the 360,000 immigrants who are in Iran and the Caucasus Armenia are the inhabitants of these provinces and are waiting for a suitable opportunity to return back to their places.

There are very few Tajiks in these provinces, the main percentage of the population consists of Armenians and Kurds. The Kurds are of

⁸⁸ The Republic of Armenia was established on May 28, 1918 as a result of the Ottoman State's ultimatum. He (the author Khatisian) signed the Batumi Treaty on June 4, 1918. Its territory was 10,000 Km² at that time. When he signed the Gyumri Treaty on December 2, 1922, its territory was 29,000 Km². Kars, Ardahan and Iğdır (Surmalu) never belonged to the Republic of Armenia. Armenians had occupied these lands after the Armistice of Mondros, but they lost them all, as a result of the war that they started. Ref: Katchaznouni, 1923 and what Khatisian himself has written in Chapters 17 and 18 of this book.

the noble race, and if they do not become a blind tool in the hands of the Tajiks, they can live a calm and peaceful life with the Armenians.

THE NUMBER OF ARMENIANS IN THE TAJIKISTAN ARMENIA⁸⁹

(The numbers of November 1922)

The number of Tajikistan Armenians, based on the British Representative of Tajikistan and the American Relief Administration⁹⁰ figures, in 1921.

1. Istanbul	148,998
2. Provinces	
Ankara	13,254
Konya	9,994
Kastamonu	5,542
Sivas	14,458
Trabzon	19,927
Diyarbakır	3,000
Harpur	35,000
Van	500
Bitlis	13,000
Erzurum	1,500
Kilikya (Maraş, Antep)	<u>15,000</u>
Total outside of Istanbul	131,175
3. The 18 years old young ones in the Kemalist Army, whose numbers are unknown,	
4. Number of Armenians that have immigrated from Tajik Armenia in 1914:	
a. Syria	75,000
b. Palestine	3,000
c. Mesopotamia	<u>6,000</u>
TOTAL to the South	84,000

⁸⁹ The numbers that Khatisian provides here are in contrast with the source he quoted. Some are shown less, or are missing.

⁹⁰ Note of the Turkish Translator: probably the American Relief Administration.

d. Those that have taken refuge in Russia:	
Republic of Armenia	200,000
Georgia	40,000
Northern Caucasus	60,000
Crimea, Odessa and other Coastal Cities.	<u>60,000</u>
Total to Russia	360,000
e. Immigrated to Amerika and Iran	20,000
Total to the East	380,000
TOTAL that have immigrated	464,000

5. After the September and October events of 1922, the number of Tajik Armenians who migrated (the number of Armenians in the provinces occupied by Greeks reached approximately 100,000; most of them were killed in Izmir and some were destroyed in Kemal's hands in Balıkesir and Biga.

Total of this 5 th item:	
In the Trans-West countries and Makedonia	30,000
Selanik	5,000
Kios and Midilli	7,000
Girit	2,000
Samos	1,000
Atina and Pire	15,000
Bulgaria	10,000
Algeirs, Tunus, Egypt	1,500
France	1,350
Italy	<u>850</u>
	73,700
	817,873

TOTAL NUMBER OF ARMENIANS IN THE ENTIRE WORLD

(November 1922)

1. Tajikistan	
In Istanbul	150,000
Asia Minor	<u>131,000</u>
TOTAL	281,000
2. Russia	
Armenian Republic	1,200,000
Georgia	400,000
Azerbaijan	340,000
Transcaucasia Countries	30,000
Other places	<u>225,000</u>
TOTAL	2,195,000
3. Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia	104,000
Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia	28,000
India, Java, Australia	12,000
Iran	<u>50,000</u>
TOTAL	194,000
4. Greece and Cyprus	79,000
Bulgaria	46,000
Romania, Transylvania, Bessarabia	43,000
European countries (France, England, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Belgium, etc.)	<u>38,000</u>
TOTAL EUROPE	206,000
5. North America (USA and Canada)	125,000
South America	<u>3,000</u>
American Continent Total	128,000
General Total all around the World	<u>3,004,000</u>

We sent this information to the Conference and also posted a detailed memorandum containing our moral and legal demands. This memorandum is presented below.

MEMORANDUM

Presented to the Lausanne Conference by the Armenian Mixed Delegation, November 1922

The independence of Tajikistan Armenia has been one of the reasons of the War⁹¹ for the Allies and the United States. In addition, representatives of the governments seriously declared this issue during the war. The decisions taken on this issue are as follows:

- 1. The Appendix section of Article 22 of the Charter of the League of Nations forms an integral part of the Treaty of Sèvres and all peace treaties adopted by the Arbitration Order of the President of the United States.*
- 2. During the London Conference in 1921, the Supreme Council declared that a National Hearth was essential for the Tajikistan Armenia.*
- 3. During the March 26 (1922) Conference, the Foreign Ministers of three states once again reaffirmed the Allies' obligations to the Armenians.*
- 4. At the General Assembly Meeting of the League of Nations held in 1921, it was unanimously approved that realization of this Hearth is necessary.*
- 5. And finally, on September 22, 1922, the General Assembly of the League of Nations concluded that "the Armenian Hearth establishment should not be ignored during the signing of a trade agreement with Tajiks.*

Article 22 mentioned above, was put into action for Palestine, Mesopotamia and Syria, and they achieved their independence; but the promises given to the Armenians have not been fulfilled, although the situation of the Tajik Armenian people was unprecedented.

Since 1914, more than a million Armenians have disappeared due to massacres, displacement and impossibilities, hundreds and thousands have migrated to foreign places. Add to that the horrible number of

⁹¹ WW1

150,000 orphans who are able to survive through the American Near East Relief or other similar organizations.

It has been officially declared by the League of Nations that 73,350 women and children have been forcibly taken into Islamic harems and are still kept there.

As a result, when the French left Cilicia, the Armenian people who took refuge in there had to migrate to Syria or other countries. Some of the Armenians who were in various parts of Izmir, Bursa and Asia Minor and had to take refuge after the recent events were forced to emigrate again. Later, the Ankara Government gave new instructions for the deportation of the remaining Armenians (about 130,000). In addition to all these, the residents of Zonguldak and Bartın cities on the Black Sea coast were also deported and their numbers were reduced. And finally, thousands of Armenians left Istanbul and went to various places during these last days.

Thus 700,000 Armenians currently live in various corners of the world, deprived of their properties, exiled from their homeland, unable to take refuge and subject to terrible persecutions.

During the war and the ceasefire period, Tajikistan Armenians lost 10 billion Francs with the destruction of churches, schools and various aid organizations.

After this unprecedented destruction, the conscience of the world had demanded as a first duty the establishment of an Armenian Hearth in which the Armenian people could settle in safety and could protect their physical existence by developing their civilization.

Tajiks, themselves had accepted that the Armenian people had the right to be independent. But on behalf of the Ankara Government, it was declared that this problem was solved by the establishment of an Armenian Republic in Transcaucasia, Yerevan. And now, it is expressed that the Ankara National Government is against the division of any of its territory. Thus, the Armenian Republic which is located in Transcaucasia and whose lands were reduced by the Treaty of Kars (1921), has only 9,000 square kilometers of arable land, and it can barely feed only two-thirds of its total population of 1,260,000. The remaining of its population has barely been surviving with the help of the Near East Relief, Lord Mayers and the like. It is absolutely

impossible to settle all the emigrants who have been spread all around Greece, Macedonia, Archipelago (Aegean Islands), Syria, Bulgaria, Iran, various locations of the Caucasus, etc. in such a small and poor country, i.e., the Republic of Armenia.

Conclusion: It is impossible to solve the Armenian Question outside of Tajikistan.

The Ankara National Assembly can neither oppose the Charter of the League of Nations, nor resist the Alliance's support to the Armenians. It is also in the Tajiks' interests to establish an honest sincerity⁹² between the two nations that will ensure a stable peace in the East.

Due to the changes made in the current Eastern policy, our Delegation demands the full implementation of the limits drawn by the esteemed President of the United States, indefinitely.

Our delegation is ready to accept the project of establishing an Armenian Hearth, within the borders⁹³ stipulated by the Arbitration Order of the President of the United States.

Following the decision of the borders of the Armenian Hearth, by providing its sea outlet in accordance with the statutes of the latest peace treaty; the Conference will create a robust and secure assurance to hundreds of thousands of Armenians residing inside Turkey but deprived of their motherland and in a state of poverty which is a limitless contempt for the dignity of humanity.

In any case, contrary to our expectations, if this issue is not accepted, it is necessary to return to the Arbitration decision of the Esteemed President of the United States, taken in 1920; according to which the borders of the Republic of Armenia is expanded with the inclusion of some parts of Tajikistan. This decision will naturally be implemented with mutual concessions, in a way to ensure the accession of the Caucasus Republic of Armenia to the sea. In this case, the Republic of Armenia which is now legally recognized by the great powers will

⁹² The title of the Batumi Treaty was "Peace and Friendship Treaty". The author's signature is on this treaty as the Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia.

⁹³ The area covered by 19 provinces of Turkey in 2020, especially Kars, Erzurum, Trabzon and Van.

provide the necessary conditions, and thus a National Hearth will be established where the Armenian people will live and develop comfortably and safely. All Armenians will be free to return to their homeland.

Otherwise, if the aforementioned decisions are not successful, a second case must be envisaged which is the establishment of the National Hearth in Cilicia in the old Little Haik.

In any case, the adopted resolution should require the Conference to always seek the assistance of the Allies' assistance in accordance with the March 26, 1922 decision of the three ministers. At that time, please allow us to worry that a profitable business cannot be done and especially new delays cannot be avoided. The Conference itself is slowing down the demarcation of the territory of the Hearth and the initiation of its organization.

The Armenian Delegation is always ready to present all necessary statements to the Peace Conference.

We believe that the Allies will decide on the fate of Tajik Armenia at the Lausanne Conference in a final manner; because we think that it is not possible to write without a rightful compensation the last page of the history of the war, that was fought for justice and right and for whose success the Armenian people have suffered enormous losses.

*** * ***

After the submission of our requests and the special memorandum, our work in Paris was now over.

The Conference was going to start in early November. **A. Aharonian and I** as the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia, and **G. Noradunkian** as part of the National Delagate, went to Lausanne.

We had a general office in Lausanne, managed by Levon Pashalyan who was suitable for the job he did, as a smart, serious, well prepared person, and also a linguist. I gave information about our other consultants above.

Turks were worried about our existence. They felt that the Armenian Question might be a matter of debate, but they were determined not to give any concessions. Their newspapers used meaningless lies, for example, they wrote that a number of Armenians including Aharonian, Chobanian, Pashalian had decided to kill the Turkish delegates, at a station on the border, near Geneva called Vigne de Mille.

From day one, we resorted to various means to deny this myth. It was clear that they wanted to undermine our reputation in front of the Allies.

The first delegate of Tajikistan was Ismet Pasha, the second was Mr. Rıza Nur. The UK representatives were Lord Curzon and Sir H. Rumbold, the High Commissioner for Istanbul. Gorona and Montana represented Italy, and Venizelos represented Greece.

Among the Delegations were those who knew the Armenian Question very well, for example Bargeton, Nicholson and Adams, and among the observers the United States representative Admiral Bristol and Bern Ambassador Childs⁹⁴.

We held talks with all of them. We held meetings with the delegations from morning till evening and announced our demands. We prepared a schedule for interviews and we were acting according to this schedule so that no one would be left unaware of our demands.

At the same time, the Delegation of the Armenian Republic published two books; “Armenia from Economic Viewpoint” and “The Armenian Question”. These two books, which we widely distributed to the delegates contained all the basic facts about the political and economic life of Armenia.

The Conference activities started. Throughout all this work, we were helped by: Swiss individuals Kraft Bonar and Nevill; Americans Berry and Montgomery; the British Oliver Baldwin, Broxton, Harris, and Lord Cecile’s secretary Millon; Mandelstam of Russia, and many others. They worked with great energy; without seeking profit, they devoted their whole individuality to our work. For five months, throughout the entire activities of the Conference, these individuals warmly helped us, consulted with us about what to do; they made

⁹⁴ Joseph Grew was the Ambassador of the USA in Bern throughout the Lausanne Conference.

endless applications to the representatives of their countries and increased their awareness.

The Association of Armenophiles [Armenian Lovers] held regular meetings and made personal applications to all delegations, including Russia. The best proof of this selfless work was the warm friendships of the best representatives of European thinkers toward us.

Our friends were on the agenda as the defenders, publishers of our cause and those who put forward our demands.

* * *

One of our first steps was to meet with Ismet Pasha, the Head of the Turkish Delegation. This meeting of high-level importance was arranged by former Minister of Public Works of the Ottoman Empire and current member of National Delegation [Krikor] Sinapian and [novelist, journalist and politician] Levon Pashalian. This interview was described in detail by Pashalian in a written work and it seems that it will be published someday.

The interesting thing is that Ismet Pasha, the current president of the Ankara Government, took an attitude saying that he absolutely did not know such a subject as the Armenian Question, that Armenians lived happily in Tajikistan, and that the only unhappy ones were those who went abroad leaving their homeland behind.

To our statements that the Armenians were forcibly removed from where they lived and their properties were seized, Ismet Pasha gave the following reply:

“You know, Armenians love to travel, this is the reason why they often leave the centers in Turkey and go to Istanbul.”

Taking advantage of his slow hearing, he pretended not to hear questions that he did not have an answer to, or did not find suitable answers. Ismet was acting as if he was not even aware of the existence of the Armenians’ territorial claims:

“Weren’t all the problems on the borders of Armenia solved by Turkey through special agreements?”

This happened to be our last meeting with the Turks.

In Lausanne, apart from political issues, from the first days onwards, we were demanding the suspension of the deportation of Armenians from Turkey. We had in our hands, undeniable facts proving how the Turks took Armenians out of their places in the most insidious ways and confiscated their property. We presented these documents to the Conference. The result, likewise, was nothing.

* * *

We were continuing our talks with anyone who could be useful to us in one way or another and explaining our demands by giving them our detailed memorandum. We met with the famous Norwegian politician Nansen, who met Ismet Pasha and had a negative impression of him. We also met with American representatives Child and Cree. They said that they received instructions, to help the resolution of the Armenian Question, although they attended the Conference in semi-official capacity, only as observers.

I visited Bristol, America’s High Commissioner in Istanbul. He also had no hope that the Tajiks would give concessions as a matter of policy, but he promised to try to change their view. We went to the former editor of “Tanin” and speaker of the Assembly, Hüseyin Cahit, who told us that there is no one close to him among the Tajik delegation and that he was in Lausanne only as a journalist. We visited the French representative Bonar, British Rumbold, Italian Garroni. They all said, almost unanimously, the same thing: Tajiks did not want to give any concessions not only on the Armenian Question, but on all other issues that were subject of the immediate interests of the Allies; For example, debts, monopolies, the European Courts, the Straits Question, the border decision in Mosul, etc.

And in fact, Europeans were obliged to give concessions to the Turks in all these problems. Only the Mosul issue went to the League of Nations Board and it was decided in favor of Britain and Iraq.

As for the representatives of the small states, they did not have any value in the eyes of the Conference. The defeated Greeks, who did not fully recognize the Cabinet of Ministers; the Serbs and other small Balkan states, who feared the Bolsheviks and did not want to surrender any land to the Bolsheviks' rule, were not in a situation to influence the situation. Currently, our request for the Kars and Tajik provinces was also like that in their eyes.

The issue of the establishment of the Armenian National Hearth also encountered serious resistance from the Turks. In order to add more power to our demands, our Armenian loving friends sent thousands of articles from all around. International League of Armenophiles, French thinkers, numerous universities and scientific institutions from Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, France, Finland, as well as Armenian national and political organizations made applications.

The whole civilized world stood up at the Lausanne Conference to demand the satisfaction of Armenian desires. And Lord Curzon had the right to appeal to the Turks at the Conference, by saying the following:

“The whole civilized world is looking at us and expecting us to ensure you to satisfy the Armenians.”

However, Ismet Pasha replied as follows:

“The civilized world is looking more at you [the British Government], because you made endless promises to the Armenians, but we have not given any promises.”

Apart from us, our friends were making applications in various directions, and their impressions were the same as ours. We were hearing words of solidarity everywhere, but were not seeing any actual vehicle of putting pressure on the Turks.

The Conference started with the division of labor first; political, economic and legal commissions were elected. The Armenian Question was in a special subdivision of the political commission whose head was Italian Montana, Italy's first ambassador to Athens and then to Ankara.

The Turks at the conference were following an attitude as if they were completely unaware of the existence of an Armenian Question. They were saying that the Armenia and Tajikistan

border were decided with the Kars and Moscow Treaties, and the problems of Armenians living within Turkey were their own internal affairs. They stood at such a level on this viewpoint that, when the issue came to the Armenian Question again during the Conference, the Turkish Delegate Rıza Nur slammed the door and left the meeting room.

It was obvious that all our efforts from the point of view of putting pressure over the Turks were futile. However, we decided to remind the Lausanne Conference, through the Secretariat of the League of Nations, about the decisions of the League of Nations regarding our problem. And we applied to Council secretary Drummond on December 2nd. He replied within 2 days saying that he would promptly remind the Alliance Governments who had contributed to the resolutions of September 21, 1921 and were still present at the Conference, about the resolutions they accepted on the Armenian Issue adopted by the General Meeting of the League of Nations.

In order to strengthen the Council's influence on the Conference, we made a similar application to the Presidency of the Council who was the Brazilian Representative De Gama, at that time.

Responses to our petitions started to arrive one after the other, mostly without promises. We were reading the words of solidarity and learning that they were "informed" about our suggestions. Many were also appealing directly to the Conference demanding that our case be defended, for justice.

At the beginning of December, we received a news that the political commission will discuss the issue of Tajikistan borders and perhaps the Armenian Question. On December 16, we applied to the Conference asking for permission to explain our point of view in person. It was true that we were not members of the Conference, but we were seen as the legal and authorized representatives of the Armenian people.

In accordance with our petition, we were invited to attend the sub-committee meeting dated December 20.

Before I start defending our demands, I will explain what was done in the Conference for the invitation of the Armenians. Because, the invitation for the official meeting was officially sent to us, therefore all

Conference members, including Greeks and Turks, were invited to the session in question.

However, when the Turks learned from the information note that at this session the Armenian Question will be opened to discussion and Armenian representatives will be present, they refused to attend the session using excuses like; there is no controversial issue between Armenians and Turks, many of these problems have been solved by now, that we cannot be the representatives of Armenians because Soviet Armenia has become the Armenians' real representative. Upon this, the Conference gave its first concession to the Turks, on the Armenian Question; a special session was held instead of the official meeting and we were invited again to participate in it.

It was rainy and cold that day, we were in a tense situation and were ready to discuss everything in detail. We were aware that we were experiencing one of the great historical moments of our national life. All five of us were placed on the same desk, Aharonian, Noradunkian, Pashalian, Oliver Baldwin and myself. Baldwin was excited; he had waited for us in front of the conference door for three hours, saying that he could not be physically away from us at such a moment.

We encountered Venizelos while we were entering, he was coming out of the hall in a sad manner. Venizelos was one of the most influential members of the 1920 Sèvres Conference. When we asked why he was leaving just when the Armenian Question was going to be discussed, he replied: ***“Upon the refusal of the Turks, it was decided to hold a special session. Only the representatives of England, France and Italy are attending it, they asked me to leave the hall.”*** Profound insult and sadness were read across his face.

In the hall, among those invited were Todorov and Dastolov, the representative of the Bulgarians, who had come to determine the fate of the Thracian Bulgarian immigrants, and Agha Bedros, the representative of the Assyrians. An interesting meeting. These were all representatives of the nations oppressed by the Turks.

They immediately called us into the meeting room. Sitting there were, the two British representatives Rumbold British Ambassador to Spain and Ramsey the Istanbul consultant, French representatives de la Croix and Laporet, and Italy's representative Montana. British Rumbold was the president of the session.

In order to fully describe the situation of the meeting, I need to present the detailed protocol that we recorded immediately after the meeting. From this protocol, my reader (I emphasize this here) will see that the British persistently insisted on the establishment of the National Hearth in Cilicia, on the Mediterranean Coast, and the French insisted on the establishment of the National Hearth in the Eastern Provinces, near the Caucasus Armenia.

There were specific reasons for the difference in the perspectives of the two states. The British wanted to create a barrier for them at the starting point of the Baghdad Railway and near the Syrian border line. For the same reason, the French did not want an Armenian Hearth at the border of a country under their support.

Russian influence spreading into our eastern cities was also playing a role in this subject.

The minutes of the meeting of December 26, 1922 are given below.

MINUTES

(Meeting dated December 26, 1922)

The United Armenian Delegation which was composed of G. Noradunkian, A. Aharonian, A. Khatisian and [Levon] Pashalian attended the sub-committee meeting on December 26, at 16:00 o'clock.

With the moderator's proposal, Noradunkian and Aharonian presented the demands of the Armenians.

NORADUNKIAN'S⁹⁵ SPEECH

At a time, which is so vital for us Armenians, we came with injured hearts to occupy your committee with the Armenian Hearth problem.

Gentlemen, you know that our problem is very modest. You know how much Armenians desire peace and how happy they will be for the realization of the good aims of this conference. However, we think there are issues that require us to make explanations and insist upon.

The events of the year 1915 opened a huge gap between Armenians and Tajiks. At that time, the Young Tajik⁹⁶ administrators wanted to act in an unprecedented way against not only towards the Armenians, the loyal subjects of the Tajik Government, but at the same time to also ignore the basic concepts of their own country's interests.

With the testimony of the German Ambassador and others, the Armenians of Tajikistan, despite their mobilization and fulfillment of their military service, were displaced, crushed and lost the majority of their population.

⁹⁵ The speaker, Noradunkian, was given the position of-Foreign Minister in the Ottoman Empire (July 22, 1912 – January 23, 1913).

⁹⁶ "Young Turks"

No matter how tragic this Tajik policy has been, we do not want to re-address these issues, but on the contrary turn our eyes to the present and the future.

Unfortunately, mutual hostility prevails between Tajiks and Armenians at the moment and nothing is being done to relieve the events that have taken an acute state in Tajikistan. His excellency Ismet Pasha thinks that it is not necessary for us to establish a National Hearth, and he deems it a sufficient solution to allow the return of our migrants from foreign places to Tajikistan. Unfortunately, we cannot be satisfied with this alone, considering the situation that may arise from all these events and situations that occurred.

Here is an example, the Armenians living in Balıkesir, Bursa, Biga and staying in their homes trusting the words of local Tajiks were eventually killed, and were exterminated during the recent events. On the other hand, those very few survivors who could dare to go to Anatolia after the Mondros Armistice had to emigrate again. Even women, children and old people lost everything and hit the roads of the Black Sea and Syria in the cold of winter. The strong and healthy ones were held in concentration camps.

Today there are approximately 700,000 Tajik Armenians, and according to the latest information they are scattered in the centers listed below:

*345,000 of them are in various parts of the Caucasus,
140,000 of them are in Syria,
120,000 of them in Greece and on the islands of the Aegean Sea,
40,000 of them are in Bulgaria,
50,000 of them are in Iran,
The rest are in various places,
110,000 orphans that are not included in the count above are
under the support of the Relief Organization.*

All these immigrants have suffered greatly, they have inflicted countless victims and are eagerly awaiting the day that will put an end to their plight. Those who can work and produce are nowadays busy with charities, but this uncertain situation cannot last forever.

Unfortunately, this is the case of events. Gentlemen, you would actually admit that the return of those families back to their old places where

they left terrible memories and where endless arguments would begin again, is against the nature of events. No kind of permission, decree, promise can be an assurance. Only the establishment of the National Hearth will curtail over the terrible past, destroy the feelings of hatred and will provide mutual trust.

The Allies had previously made decisions on the National Hearth; which were later renewed at the London and Paris Conferences in 1921 and 1922.

We cannot understand why Tajiks who fight for their own independence and sometimes recognize the independence of other Muslim nations that comprise a part of their Empire are refusing such modest requests of their other citizens. The Tajik Government and private citizens, both claimed all movable and non-movable properties belonging to the Armenians who were lost in the chaos and those that did not have an heir.

In our opinion, the Ankara National Constitution, from this point of view, did not envisage any situation where Tajikistan might have difficulty in being neutral and supportive to the establishment of the Armenian Hearth; for example, the situation that could prevent it from following the formula existing in the colonies, under the British rule.

Regarding the land that has been decided, our Committee is honored to present to the Conference the issue of the creation of the Hearth in the Northern Provinces of Cilicia; where the Armenians lived for thousands of years and the number of Muslim inhabitants has decreased very much due to the Great War.

Please allow us to remind you that all the nations of our world admit that our problem involving the necessity of establishment of our Hearth is fair. Here on your desk are thousands of calls shouting this, signed by American and European Christian Churches, societies and prominent figures. And allow me to tell you that it is not just Christians who think so, on the contrary, thousands of Muslims in India, Iran, Atrpatakan (Iranian Azerbaijan) and Tajikistan also find the creation of an Armenian Hearth as legal and useful.

In conclusion, after discussing the problem from the Tajik and humanitarian point of view, Dear Sirs, let me say a few words from the standpoint of rights alone.

Strong Allies, waging the Great War in the name of rights, pledged thousands of times to create independence for Tajik Armenia. After the tragic forced migration of 1915, Armenians of America and other countries' Armenians, formed a Western Army with the support of the French. They successfully fought under the command of General Allenby on the borders of Palestine and Syria, after signing the conscription to defend their country's independence.

The Treaty of Sèvres of 1920, the Arbitration decision of the President of the United States for deciding on the Armenian borders, and the 22nd article of the League of Nations are great facts showing the benevolence of the Allies towards the Armenian people. If the current political conditions have changed to require you to create a new peace treaty which will now decide the destiny of the Middle East, we are sure you will not forget that the Armenian cause is also legal and fair in front of Tajikistan's demands.

This is the status of the events, despite the competent use of force by the Allied powers. The Armenian delegation was allowed to stand by your side, taking advantage of many numerous opportunities and even during the Treaty of Sèvres, but we, have hope that nothing will escape your attention, while defending your principles and promises in the best way possible.

If we were to sum up what I have said, I am hopeful that Tajiks will change their perspective on the Armenian Hearth after a better explanation is made and firing of some enthusiasm on them; because for the newly established Tajikistan, this will not only be an honor but from all points of view they will have taken a very smart step in gaining for their future the trust of a hardworking and active element that will be very useful and loyal for them.

We are much more confident that the Middle East peace issue will be built on solid foundations only in this case.

AHARONIAN'S SPEECH OF DECEMBER 26

If I am going to give a speech after the report of my colleague, his Excellency Mr. Noradunkian, it can only be to prove that all the Armenian people with their parties and Diaspora are in total agreement regarding the demands that we are now presenting.

And then, I want to say how immense is the injustice inflicted against us by those Turks who came here to demand justice for themselves.

Today, they have forcibly occupied not only the provinces of Tajik Armenia but also a large part of the Republic of Yerevan. I do not want to address the issues with Russia, that could put the Allies in a difficult position; but I have to say that when the Republic of Armenia was officially recognized by the Allies in late 1920, Kemal's army attacked Armenia, occupied Kars Province as well as Ardahan, Surmalu and Nakhchivan regions.⁹⁷

With this occupation, the Turks worsened the situation of the Caucasus Armenians because the 180,000 Armenians fleeing from the occupied areas in front of the advancing Turkish army took refuge in the remaining parts of the Republic. And if we add to this number the 350 thousand Armenians who fled from Tajik Eastern Provinces during the war and were also refugees here; then, the reason for the hunger and epidemics prevailing in this country becomes understandable. The great destruction they caused was mitigated only with the help of America and Europe.

This terrible act of Tajiks was cleared by the treaty signed in Kars on October 1921. Actually, this is not just a treaty, it is actually four treaties; Brest-Litovsk (1918), Batumi (1918), Alexandropol (1920), and Kars (1921). The last three are repetitions of Brest-Litovsk, which was tearing off the aforementioned lands from us. The Mondros armistice agreement destroyed the Brest-Litovsk and Batumi Treaties, and the Allies Conference held in London in 1921 canceled the

⁹⁷ Katchaznoui writes: "We started" the war in the Autumn of 1920." Pls see the Katchaznoui section of the book: *Ermenilerin Yalan(cı)ları ve İtiraf(cı)ları*. It is also summarized in this book on pp 189-192. Aharonian is repeating the traditional Dashnak lie.

Alexandropol Treaty. As for the Treaty of Kars, none of the great states wanted to recognize its existence.

Tajiks have been saying that all these lands belonged to them prior to the Russia-Turkish War of 1877, but if we were to act with that judgement, Bulgaria also belonged to Tajikistan at that time. If they will go that far, how far can their sovereign rights go?

It should be taken into consideration that if Kars, Ardahan and Batumi are demanded in the National Pact (Misak-I Milli), which Tajiks are so proud of; I have to remind that Surmalu and Nakhchevan never belonged to the Tajiks. Russians captured these places from Iranians. But Tajiks occupied both of these places, they took Surmalu to themselves and gave Nakhchevan to Azerbaijan.

If we are to move on to the Armenian National Hearth question, let me point out that the question is often asked and described badly. Our request is neither a security nor a settlement; on the opposite, what we wish to have is a National Hearth, in our homeland of hundreds of years.

Now you know gentlemen, in parallel with the painful problem of martyrdom of the Armenian people there are also political and diplomatic problems. The Armenian Question was discussed in Paris Conference in 1856 and in Berlin Conference in 1878. After the massacres during the reign of Abdulhamit, reforms were made in 1895 and finally decisions were made for 7 provinces. The result of the decisions was the sending of two high commissioners, Westenenk and Hoff, one Dutch and one Norwegian, to Armenia. But the Great War started and Tajiks sent these two back; and then started to solve the Armenian Question by destroying the Armenians. This tragic history is known to all of us and it does not need to be mentioned. As a just response to our torture and all these victims of hundreds of years, the victory of the Allies which we have always acknowledged, should give us an independent and free Armenia, separate from Tajikistan and Russia.

Today we are advised to put the Caucasus Armenia aside and to relax the borders drawn by the President of the United States. Albeit these are insufficient in terms of covering the borders of all Armenia, wouldn't it be the most fundamental justice to have a National Hearth

with access to a sea? Our people have lived in this country for 25 centuries, and Tajiks have never formed the majority here.

No matter how modest and just as fair these demands are; in response to them, İsmet Pasha is showing our immigrants that are 700,000 in number, the way to Canada and Australia.

We have suffered a lot and shed a lot of blood for our homeland until we reached this point. Our people, in a state of one heart and one spirit, did not jump into a general confusion to go to Canada or Australia, and did not put forth not only its present and future, but neither its past. Because the destruction of an entire generation means breaking the natural link between our ancestors and the next generation. No Alliance State, large or small, that took part in the Great World War experienced as much heavy and painful days as the small Armenian people. And although it is modest, its demand for its inalienable right for a separate homeland is due to these persecutions.

They tell us that the Armenian independence movement was carried out fraudulently, with external influences from Tsarist Russia and Britain. I will explain here that the Tsarist Government and the Sultan absolutely agreed to destroy all those movements against the tyranny of Tajikistan. All Caucasus groups that were established to deliver aid to their Armenian brothers in Tajikistan were destroyed by the Russian Army at the border, because the Tsarist Government did not want a Bulgaria to be created in the southern part of its borders.

Britain's encouragement is another myth. Our independence movement originates from those deep reasons which ensure the independence of the Balkan peoples. The explicit comparison of the Turks and the nations that separated from them provides the best evidence to see how legitimate history is and how much these independences are in line with human and civic interests.

Yes, we have always tried the independence of our homeland and United Armenia will always be our ideal. But, if there are major difficulties now allowing the Allies to draw only the smaller one instead of the great Armenia, that is, to create a National Hearth in Cilicia, we will accept this offer to respect the will of the Allies and to facilitate their work.

We are sure that we will achieve justice, because England, France and Italy have serious promises to us. It was that England which stood up in one day, to show the whole world that international treaties were not just pieces of paper; it was that great France, which with all its might jumped into the arena in order to remain loyal to the Allies and not to allow the great humanitarian principles to be trampled upon; it was that Italy, which saw the foreign yoke and jumped on to the battlefield to exterminate that yoke; they must not leave us. We are comfortable with this point of view. We are confident that the Conference will not fall apart until our cause has a fair solution. We are aware of the weight of the work, but we are sure that the spirit of common will is enough for justice to be fully and truly manifested.

* * *

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

The following question and answer session followed, Noradunkian and Aharonian's speeches:

Sir Horace Rumbold: *How do you envisage the relations will be between the Armenian Hearth and Tajikistan?*

A. Aharonian: *The Hearth that we desire should definitely be independent of Tajikistan, but for the convenience of the Allies we are ready for all formations that will protect the interests of the Tajiks, for example, like the British colonial regime. I think Mr. Noradunkian agrees with me absolutely.*

Noradunkian: *I read my thoughts on this subject, just now.*

Sir. H. Rumbold: *What are your thoughts on the expansion of the borders of Yerevan and about the Hearth? Is there not going to be two separate Armenia under these conditions?*

A. Aharonian: *The issue of expanding the borders of the Republic of Yerevan is difficult because it is under the Soviet rule, so we cannot talk about this subject, because your Council will not be engaged in it; and thus, nothing can prevent the establishment of a Hearth for us on the Russian-Armenian territory occupied by Tajikistan. We do not demand all the boundaries drawn by the President of the United States; we are content with having a portion of it. As for the issue of having two Armenia, Bulgaria and Eastern Romania can serve as examples from this point of view.*

Sir. H. Rumbold: *What is the land you are satisfied with? Can you show me on the map?*

A. Aharonian: *He drew a line on the map that passes through Rize and Hasan Kale, reaches Mush by excluding Erzurum and joins with Iran's borders by including Lake Van.*

Sir. H. Rumbold: *Are 700,000⁹⁸ migrants going to be settled inside these borders? Are they all Tajik Armenians?*

⁹⁸ Confirmed: 700 000 migrants from Turkey. But, somehow in the next page, he reduces this number down to 350,000.

A. Aharonian: *Yes, they are all Tajik Armenians, and they will go and settle in these lands.*

Sir. H. Rumbold: *In other words, no Armenians will be left in the Tajik Armenia anymore?*

A. Aharonian: *Once the Armenian Hearth is established, peace would be established between Armenians and Tajiks, and those who want to remain in Tajikistan become good citizens.*

Sir. H. Rumbold: *Who are the settlers of these lands now?*

A. Aharonian: *Mostly Kurds. Before the war they were very large in number, while the Tajiks made up a small percentage. In other words, the majority were Armenians and Kurds. Kurds belong to the noble race; they hardly became Muslims.*

Sir. H. Rumbold: *Your trust in the Kurds is controversial, not all Kurds are on your side and many have participated in the Armenian massacres. The role played by the Kurdish Hamidiye is very clear.*

A. Aharonian: *The Kurds are not from the crushing group, but rather among the looters. There are many Kurds who are with us. We had two Kurdish Regiments in Armenia, they fought against Tajiks to the end.*

Sir. H. Rumbold: *I would like to learn Mr. Noradunkian's view on this subject.*

Noradunkian: *When talking about the Kurds, it is necessary to take into account the more than 200 tribes of theirs. Yazidis and Kızılbaş are friends of Armenians. It should be remembered that they sheltered 20,000 Armenians in 1915. But, for example, the people of Jalal are anti-Armenian. The Hamidiye Group was formed from them, they continued their banditry wearing Tajik uniforms. When they wanted to replace them – those troops – the Second Regiment Commander Zinki Pasha opposed, saying that this group would live the same way wherever it went. Because they were used to living that way.*

Sir. H. Rumbold: Are all of the 350,000⁹⁹ Armenians you mentioned Tajik Armenians, or are there Russian Armenians among them?

A. Aharonian: They are all Tajik Armenians, and they are waiting for one signal to go back.

De La Croix: What information do you have for those 130,000 in Tajikistan's sub-districts? Are they driven out or are they leaving on their own accord?

Noradunkian: Here is the truth; at certain times, notices for the Armenians to leave were posted on the street walls. Then, the Tajik people were saying to the Armenians; Do you know what will happen to those who remain? And despite the snowfall and winter, regardless of the difficulties of crossing the Black Sea, Armenians went to various places, especially to Syria, where the number of immigrants exceeded 140,000. The Arab people, on the other hand, were not happy with such a mass migration.

La Port: Actually, this is an economic issue. With the arrival of the Armenians, the labor wages of the workers dropped down, which would not be very pleasant for the Arabs.

G. Noradunkian: In the Alexandretta region [Turkey's Hatay Province] in the areas where Alevis live, the situation of the Armenians is better.

La Port: I am of the same opinion.

Sir. H. Rumbold: What is the population of the current Republic of Yerevan and what elements does it consist of?

A. Aharonian: My colleague Khatisian is more familiar with our country, as he was the prime minister for two years¹⁰⁰, he can give you this information.

A. Khatisian: The population of the current Republic of Yerevan is 1,400,000. 1,200,000 of them are Armenians and 60,000 are Muslims. This population lives on 26,000 square kilometers of land, of which only 9,000 kilometers is arable land. In the past days, when

⁹⁹ This number was 700,000 just a while ago!

¹⁰⁰ Khatisian was Prime Minister for one year only, 1919 – 1920.

acceptance of new immigrants to the country became a subject, the Soviet Government refused this transfer of people. A great effort had to be made to settle 10,000 immigrants from Mesopotamia. Our most productive lands which were feeding not only Armenia but also some parts of Caucasia like Kars, Surmalu and Nakhchevan were occupied by Tajiks.

Sir. H. Rumbold: What happened to the Muslim population that was living in Armenia?

A. Khatisian: Some of them moved to Tajikistan, some to Kars and some to Azerbaijan.

Sir. H. Rumbold: Please show on the map in which part of Cilicia you envision your National Hearth to be located?

G. Noradunkian: (Showing on the map) The National Hearth is between Ceyhun, the Syrian borders and the river Firat, and extends northward taking Sis and Marash within.

Sir. H. Rumbold: How much population can you place on this piece of land?

G. Noradunkian: 5-6 hundred thousand.

Chairman: Gentlemen, the information you provided has been recorded. Let us examine it and if necessary, we shall re-invite you for new statements.

G. Noradunkian: I am very glad that the problem of minorities of Tajikistan is not on the agenda of the day. Let me draw your attention to two basic items:

a) Exemption from military service, b) Independence of the Patriarchate.

Every Armenian will be free to refuse military service.

Chairman: The Greek delegation has raised this issue, but Tajiks are against it. In any case, we are taking your explanations into account.

KHATISIAN CONTINUES

Our problem became a matter of serious attention for the Committee.

Outside the Committee too, we continued to appeal to all forces that could help our cause in any which way. M. Varandyan applied to the Socialist International and this organization tried to pressure the Turks. The representatives of the National Delegation tried to invite the French Parliament's Eastern Affairs Committee to intervene and managed to get a special bill in favor of the Armenian Hearth.

Oliver Baldwin went to England with the same thought to put pressure on the Labor Party. Memorandums were presented to the Protestant United Church Council of America, to the "Armenia-American Union" and others. American "observers" intervened indirectly. They announced their views on the Armenian Question in a special article prepared for the press.

In this article it was stated; "Since the American Delegation did not participate in the peace talks nor did it propose any projects, it would not be submitted to the United States Government for approval; so, it approved all the de-facto proposals of Lord Curzon and the Allies for the creation of an independent Armenian Hearth. The American Delegation stands before you today as an advocate of this idea, after taking the favorable opinion of the United States on the establishment of this Hearth. And more, by defending the Armenian people and the Americans who have interests, we gave assurances that the Armenian Hearth issue would be put on the agenda and discussed at the Lausanne Conference. We have tried and will try to persuade the Turks to seriously consider all future projects to be proposed on this problem."

The American Delegation also presented the following program to the Subcommittee on Minorities:

LAUSANNE - December 30, 1922

The proposal to establish an independent Armenian Hearth aroused deep interest and sympathy in most parts of the United States. It should also not be forgotten that, through various

reasons, the Allied Powers declared that the only subject of discussion was the National Hearth from the point of view of the solution of the Armenian Question.

The American Delegation has made a number of humanitarian proposals on this occasion, which are also legal issues for us. We are now bringing before your Committee an issue of great concern to American think tanks. We have applied to the American Unions and Organizations. We asked them to decide on, firstly the territorial question that will form the borders of the Armenian National Hearth, second the issue of economic guarantees and thirdly the establishment of a fair means for the exchange of money between the two states concerned; and following all this, we also asked their decision with the resolution of the support issue and how to protect a completely new region from foreign attacks and invasions.

Likewise, we would like the number of Armenians who want to live in their new homeland to be announced, and submission of new proposals that can be applied in this regard.

We present all these data to your Committee for evaluation, requesting that these be taken into serious consideration.”

Representatives of American think tanks were also working for the appropriate solution to the Armenian Question and were proposing various solutions on this issue. On December 14, Representative of the Council of Churches J. Barton made the following application to the American Representative, Childs:

“After holding long meetings with the Turks and other delegations, we discussed the issue in detail and came to the conclusion that the best solution to the Armenian minority problem would be to allocate a piece of land where migrant Armenians and orphans can settle.

We consider the following:

- 1. This way, the aid issue will be resolved quickly and definitely economically. This job is of paramount importance to American aid committees.*

2. *This way, Armenians will be secured in a better manner in comparison to being scattered all over Turkey within its population.*
3. *In the end, Turks will be satisfied.*
4. *This decision will be acceptable to the Armenians and they will willingly go to the National Hearth, because they are afraid of returning to the places where they used to live among the Turkish population.*
5. *We think that such a solution of the problem is possible and feasible, because the attempt of Armenians to return to their former settlements will cause suspicion and mistrust.*
6. *You are the best judge of choosing the most suitable timing to start the implementation of these offers.*

The Union of "Armenia-America" presented a detailed National Hearth Project and source of material means in a memorandum as follows:

A. The Place Where the Hearth Will be Established.

1. *The location of the Armenian Hearth can be determined by a committee which is more familiar with the issue than anyone else. However, we think it will be useful to put forward some priorities that the best place for the establishment of the Armenians Hearth is the northern part of Syria.*
2. *This region, which is located in the north of Syria, when the sovereignty of Syria was given to France by the League of Nations and its borders were drawn with the partial consent of the Turks and France, it can be said that this region is still subject to negotiations today. The Lausanne Conference will find the final solution to the problem, its fate today is officially in his hands.*
3. *From the point of view of the security of all this region, a neutral zone needs to be created between Turkey and Syria.*
4. *It would be easy to persuade the Armenian immigrants to move to this area.*

5. *This place has access to sea.*
6. *If it will be possible to expand this piece of land located on the west side of the Euphrates River, in the direction of Sis and Elbistan, as an addition of its eastern region, a country with neutral borders as large as 18 thousand kilometers would be achieved; separation of this from Turkey would not block its internal development.*
7. *In America, it is thought that this country will be independent with the support of the League of Nations.*

B. The Subject of Finance:

The first step of the administrative staff of this territory will be an initial funding request. This money will be loaned to them and it is not an unlikely issue to think that this money can be recovered within a few years. Procuring such money will undoubtedly be difficult, but according to a telegram I received from America this morning, the Armenian Question was included in a Congress bill and a \$20 Million loan will be provided. This is the money that was voted for the starving Russians. We are not sure that this item of the program will go unchanged, but we will emphasize that there is great sympathy for this project.

There will be opportunities to make loan agreements from other regions of the United States, which is dealing with the Armenian Question.

We find it natural to think that the League of Nations should have taken into account the financial possibilities related to the problem while voting on the proposals for the benefit of the Armenian National Independent Hearth.



Training in Kars, Sepuh is watching; Sheram is conducting the training.

Likewise, it is natural to think that when the representatives of France, England and Italy announced their March 26th decision on the National Hearth, they took into account the financing aspect of the issue.

C. The Subject of Defense:

We assume that the issue of neutrality of the National Hearth must be recognized by all states that have signed the Lausanne Treaty. There is no need to keep large numbers of military units to achieve this. The pre-recognized neutrality and participation of the states neighboring the Hearth to the League of Nations stipulate that only an army invited to maintain social order could be allowed to exist.

D. Settlement of Immigrants:

We do not think that the Armenians of Istanbul will leave their places to settle in the National Hearth, but we know that there are 15 thousand Armenian immigrants who are engaged in farming, they will settle here willingly.

110 thousand people, who are the last exiles of Izmir and Asia Minor, will likewise want to settle in the new homeland if they have the opportunity to earn their living there in terms of their own interests.

Before the recent events, there were 75 thousand Armenians in Syria, the vast majority of them were still not settled there economically.

There are 4 hundred thousand immigrants in Russia and the Caucasus, the vast majority of them will return to such a safe country, where they will discover the builder spirit in them.

And finally, the administrators of the orphanages with more than 50 thousand Armenian children will happily transfer their work to such a country if this becomes a reality.

We have no doubt that the number of Armenians who want to settle in the National Hearth will exceed 2-3 hundred thousand.

According to a telegram we recently received from America, the following bill was proposed to the Congress:

“In case full support is provided for this place, at the Lausanne Conference, the President is allowed to allocate 20 million dollars from the treasury for the Armenian Hearth.”

* * *

It should be said that the Americans adopted a benevolent attitude towards us Armenians from the very beginning, but this attitude did not help us because they avoided using means of power.

As for Soviet Russia, which took the stage for the first time on the international arena, it was a competent factor in terms of making its voice heard, in the opinion of our friends. It was necessary to benefit from this voice too.

Representatives of the Union of Armenophiles (Armenian lovers) met with Chicherin and presented the following memorandum:

“Whatever the outcome of the Lausanne Conference will be, an artificial alliance should not be established, if the Armenian Question cannot reach a final result. The community think tanks of the civilized world that are demanding the realization of the Armenian National Hearth with millions of signatures today, should not accept a peace that would end the existence of the Tajik Armenian people.”

*“The Union of Armenophiles and their Lausanne Representatives know that Soviet Russia has saved the Caucasus Republic of Armenia, which is now far from the Tajik threat; but it is so small that it is not capable to accept the 800,000 Armenian immigrants, that are waiting for the Hearth. **The Russians can save the Tajik Armenians through a special agreement that they will perform with the Turks that makes it possible to expand the borders of the Caucasus Armenia in the direction of Van and Bitlis.** Thus, the Russians will have solved the Armenian Question, which the Allied States had difficulty in solving because the Turks refused to accept the creation of such a state within their borders.”*

Chicherin replied to this letter on January 26 with the following text:

“During our meetings with you and the members of the International Union of Armenia accompanying you, I had the opportunity to learn that Russia Ukraine and Georgia are not a part of the discussions on the Armenian Question; even though our participation at the Lausanne Conference would have really made a positive contribution to the solution of this problem.

“Now I am honored to announce to you that the Russian and Ukrainian Governments have offered to settle within their borders the Armenian immigrants, the number of which has not yet been determined. Details are discussed between my government and Armenian representatives. I ask you to please

explain my offer to the interested parties. I express my deep respect.” CHICHERIN

Thus, Chicherin was coming forward with the purpose of killing the Turkish-Armenia ideal permanently¹⁰¹, by consolidating the intransigence of the Turks and by moving the Armenian Hearth into Russia.

Here too, the overlap of interests of Russians and Turks played a fatal role in our national efforts.

With the purpose of good comprehension, I should emphasize this situation specially to show how unfounded the hope that Russians would be able to influence the Turks in a way that could help us Armenians was. Their policy stemming from the identity of Bolshevism was not allowing them to take any steps in favor of the Armenians. Mdivani admitted this openly. Those who could not grasp the difference of national and Bolshevik conceptions were short-sighted.

In general, these were the works we carried out within the framework of the Sub-Committee. Our work in the Sub-committee was not doing that well after the meeting of December 20. Our friends had a meeting with Montana at that time. We learned that he definitely decided to stop such a solution which could be acceptable to the Turks. But that solution could not be found because the Turks refused to accept any offer in this direction. They had understood very well the Allies' stance that they would sign a treaty with them at the cost of enormous concessions. I learned from a European diplomat whose name I cannot remember now, that the message containing one of the great states' view stating that it was necessary to sign a treaty with the Turks albeit with great concessions, which was sent to its representative in Lausanne had passed into the hands of the Turks. And from this point of view, the situation of the Sub-committee members was absolutely tragic. Seeing that his endless concessions were ignored by the Turks, Montana

¹⁰¹ In 1920 Chicherin firmly suggested that Ankara Government should agree to cede Van-Bitlis-Mush region to the Republic of Armenia. Upon order from Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Turkish Foreign Ministry wrote a very strongly worded letter on 27 December 1920 to Chicherin that he should not take this matter any further. The message was well taken in Moscow.

moved on to the bare minimum. He moved from the concept of a National Hearth for the Armenians to the idea of concentrating the Armenians in any corner of the [Turkish] Empire. This was his last miserable, ridiculous proposition.

At that time, Robert Cecil's personal secretary Melon came to Lausanne. He had a special task: to apply to the Turks regarding the Armenian Question to persuade them to make concessions in our favor, and to ask for Curzon's help to persuade us to refrain from our most "maximal" demands. In short, he came to find an essential outlet. Despite our consent that the creation of an Armenian Hearth in the formula of British colonies was acceptable for us, he nevertheless came to no conclusion because the Turks remained in the position they held. However, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation did not agree with our proposal, which had proved the experiences meaningless.

* * *

The date of January 6 was set for the meeting where the Sub-Committee would prepare the draft for the Armenian Question and present it to the Policy Committee. Three days after that, the Policy Committee meeting was to be held on January 9.

At this meeting, Montana appealed to the Turks with a speech and asked the Turks to allocate a "location" to settle the Armenians altogether. This land and its administrative method were going to be decided by the intervention of the League of Nations. This was the last demand presented to the Turks for the location of an independent and united Armenia.

British Rumbold and French De La Croix also spoke in similar lines, but before the last word was spoken, the second delegate of Turkey, Reza Nuri Bey stood up and announced in a decisive manner that he would not participate in a meeting where Armenian issue would be discussed. Because the Allies were still continuing to play the role of defenders of the Armenians, although they themselves provoked them against the Turks and caused their losses. Saying this, Reza Nuri Bey slammed the door and left the meeting room with his advisors.

After this incident, discussion of the Armenian Question from the political angle was ended. In other cases, a similar step was enough for

the conference to boom. But in Lausanne, it was a certainly understandable situation that the result wouldn't be so, due to the prevailing mentality that the Turks moved forward triumphantly and the Allies retreated on all fronts.

Thus, the Conference removed the Armenian Question from its agenda. Montana handed our problem over to the Political Committee for inclusion among the list of "unsolved problems". Here, for the last time, Lord Curzon tried to persuade the Turks, but they remained unwavering in their decisions. And the Armenian problem was officially thrown aside.

There is not even a small reminder about the Armenians in the Lausanne protocols.

After learning the outcome of the January 6 and 9 meetings, our first question was: "What shall we do now?" Two thoughts were among our rows, some suggested to protest harshly and leave Lausanne immediately. Others were thinking that, along with the protest, it was necessary for us to show to the Conference that in our opinion the Armenian Question was merely postponed, because Lausanne was not in a position to solve the problem; but the Allies would have to return to this subject at the occurrence of other suitable opportunities.

The second opinion won. It was decided to continue with our political claims and not to cut our ties that have been going on for many years with the Allies, because we were sure that the political situation would change one day. In politics, the breakdown of relations was immediately followed by armed intervention, something that we were not capable of handling. So, we decided to take the diplomatic route, to apply all types and language of diplomacy to find new ways.

* * *

Since that day when the Armenian Question reached its tragic end, we declared to all Allied delegates that the Armenian Question remained essentially the same for us, that Lausanne turned into one of the tragic phases of the Armenian Cause due to the weakness of the Allies, but this would never be the end of it.

We worked in this direction in Paris, London, Lausanne and primarily among the Armenian people, through our political and social

organizations. We asked all delegates to report our complaint to their governments. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation appealed to all its members with a statement expressing the same views.

The Delegation of the Republic of Armenia also made an official statement saying that our problem continues at the same level of strength today; the means may have changed, but the purpose remains the same.

We continued our work. On June 20, we sent the following telegram to the Government of France:

“To the Honorable Chairman of the Council of Ministers,

“The Lausanne Conference decided to remove the Armenian Hearth problem from the Peace Treaty; the 700 thousand Armenians that had been fleeing from Turkey and wandering around in foreign lands had sent their views to the Conference. We, as the people responsible for announcing your promises to the Armenian people many times, cannot accept the abandonment of the Armenian Question in this way. On behalf of the one and a half million Armenians who have been sacrificed for the Allies, on behalf of several hundred thousand immigrants who are in poverty now, we are calling you to give an order to your representative in Lausanne not to sign this treaty, that did not solve the Armenian Question, and made the peace of the east unsafe which is a great injustice to the martyred people who were sacrificed for their loyalty to the Allies.”

Heads of the United Armenian Delegations;

A. AHARONIAN

NORADUNKIAN

We sent a similar telegram to Mussolini in order to keep the understanding of the Armenian Hearth alive in the League of Nations.

“Rome, February 19, 1923.

“To Your Excellency,

“As a result of the meeting we had this morning, I am honored to convey to Your Highness, the following proposals that can facilitate the establishment of the Armenian Hearth. If the Allies, despite their infinitely solemn promises, are not able to make a specific decision for the Armenian National Hearth, they may at least be capable of:

- 1. Including an article in the Treaty of Lausanne stating that the Allied States accept the principle of establishing an Armenian Hearth and leave its implementation to the League of Nations,*

“Or;

- 2. Acknowledging the necessity of the Armenian National Hearth and accepting this problem in principle, and submitting its implementation to the Council of Ambassadors or to a special committee formed in this connection.*

“We would like to express our deep gratitude to Your Excellency, for your acceptance of our problem, and we ask you to sincerely believe that the intervention of Your Excellency with the Allies will be appreciated in the best way by a people suffering from worldly conscience and misery.

“Your Excellency, please accept our deepest respect.”

THE UNITED ARMENIAN DELEGATIONS

A similar application was made to the British Delegation by the Armenophile League. The traditional president of the Delegation until 1924 was Edward Neville. In response, the following letter was received:

“January 25, 1923.

“British Delegation, Lausanne

“Dear Mr. Neville,

“The British Delegation is paying careful attention to the two proposals of the Armenophile League’s Steering Committee, which your esteemed self handed over to me in person, during your visit of January 20.

“These proposals are as follows:

- 1. The Allies have to explain why the Armenian Question did not reach a final solution before the dissolution of the Conference.*
- 2. An international committee will be established to deal with the passport and financial problems of Armenian migrants dispersed to various countries.*

“If the British mission accepts one or both of these problems and starts the process, at a Conference called for achieving peace between the Allies and Turkey, it is thought that a business outside the basic purpose of its mission will be made.

“The British delegation made some proposals to defend Armenian interests and to establish a National Hearth in a part of Asia Minor, the Turks showed some reproach, and all efforts of Britain were in vain. As a result, the British Delegation thinks that all three ministers of the Conference will not be able to initiate the processes regarding your new proposals. I also spoke with Mr. Khatisian regarding this matter, who came to me on this occasion yesterday.

“In sincerity, I am sorry that I have failed to give you any answers that would satisfy or encourage you.

Yours truly”

HORACE RUMBOLD

We decided to submit a letter of complaint to all delegations to be submitted to their governments, before leaving Lausanne.

Two issues need to be taken into account while reading this complaint. First, it is a mixture of different opinions and forms of expressions presented by two delegations, and second, the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia decided to come up to the agenda with a special complaint after the conclusion of the Conference.

We presented this complaint on February 2. In the complaint, the ideas that the Armenian people were filled with, during the Lausanne days were expressed. This complaint is below:

NOTIFICATION (Letter of Complaint)

(Sent to the Allies by the United Mission.)

Lausanne, February 2, 1923.

Our Delegation learned from the statements of the Lausanne Conference Committees and from the peace treaty plans recently published in the press that the Armenian Question was abandoned by the Allies.

Under the current circumstances, the Armenian Delegations do not want to seek or discuss the reasons for the abandonment of this problem, which is very painful for the Allies and Armenians as well as the Tajiks themselves.

However, the Armenian Delegations are indebted to state that the Armenian Question remains unsolved again and the situation of an unfortunate nation has become much more tragic.

The great powers will undoubtedly remember their promise about the independence of the Tajik Armenians, that they should be given this right not only from a political and humanitarian point of view, but also because of the Armenians' participation in the Great War and their numerous services to the Allies.

The reason why the Armenian volunteers gathered in groups under the Allies' flags was the call of the Allies. When those

Armenian volunteers signed those contract documents in which their homeland was promised to be liberated, they became the core of that famous Western Army in Palestine and Cilicia. It was Armenian military units that fought alone along the Caucasian border in 1918 and prevented Tajiks from advancing towards the British Army in Mesopotamia. And finally, it was the Armenians who, with their heroic resistance, prevented oil from reaching the German Army along the Western border from Baku. According to the testimony of the German generals, this deprivation ultimately accelerated the end of the war.

These admirable deeds cost the Armenian people very dearly, and the sacrifices they gave are incomparable. Because if we take a look at the material and physical losses of the Armenian people, we see that 1,500,000 of them were lost due to the massacres and displacement, 700,000 of them are still wandering around without a place of refuge, 100,000 orphans have become burdens over charity organizations, and we have lost more than ten billion Francs in Tajikistan. Thus, the Armenian people lost a great number of their children and were deprived of their churches, schools and their homeland.

Without dwelling on the Treaty of Berlin (1878) which was pursued by international treaties where the great powers took the Armenian Question in their hands, please allow us to remind you that the great powers during the Great War had declared that many reforms were going to be accomplished during the period of peace and that one of the aims of the Great War was the right to justice.

In 1919, on the basis of article 22 of the treaty signed at Versailles, the Allies undertook to liberate several societies in the Ottoman Empire. Armenians were on top of the list of these societies. With the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, the Allies demarcated the territory of independent Armenia.

In 1921, it was decided to create an Armenian Hearth at the London Conference and the following statement was made at the Paris Conference in 1922:

“Special attention should be paid to the situation of the Armenians. During the Great War, Allies assumed great

responsibilities towards them. As a result, with the help of the League of Nations, the Armenian Hearth will be established within the scope of satisfying the traditional desires of the Armenians and defending the small nations.”

Without any doubt, we must be allowed to point out that the Allies in Lausanne in 1923 did not decide anything that could help them to realize their promises to the Armenian people, who were recognized as a warrior element during the war and as an ally after the war.

Under these circumstances, a delegation whose signature is below this letter, was formed and this delegation asks the great powers, once more, to take a decision on behalf of a martyred nation in the name of justice and righteousness for the fate of the Armenian people, because the civilized world cannot bear their suffering. And it is left to us to say that such a peace in the Middle East cannot be stable.

The undersigned delegation requests from your highness, to learn about and to show serious attention to the contract we have presented, as we wait for your response in an understandable discomfort.

* * *

We left Lausanne on Feb 5th and went to Paris. We no longer had work to do in Lausanne. The Conference was continuing its work. The Allies were making concessions to Tajiks on almost all issues, and the treaty was finally signed on July 24th, 1923.

In this treaty, there was no reminder not only about Armenia and the Armenian Question, but also about Armenians in general.

The Delegation in Paris was having severe days. The anger of the Armenian people was unlimited, all the promises of the Allies had been trampled upon. All Armenian Diaspora from India to America were feeling trapped; there was no way out. The Armenian people were experiencing a kind of confusion in the social sense; and it seemed a general necessity to express this experience. Gradually, our ideas began to concentrate on the League of Nations and every year resolutions were being voted on the Armenian Question.

On August 9, we sent the following letter to the President of the League of Nations:

“Dear President,

“The Delegation of the Armenian Republic, authorized by the Armenian people, cannot remain silent against this treaty signed between the Allies and Tajiks on July 24, 1923. This treaty which came to replace the Treaty of Sèvres, besides not taking into account the rights of Armenians acquired by the Treaty of Sèvres and subsequent conferences, on the basis of the promises made by the Allies during and after the war, it also, clearly denies the existence of the Armenians. With this letter, the Delegation of the Armenian Republic appeals to the government heads of the great states, with a respectful request, to invite the most serious attention of the League of Nations.

“All issues regarding the Armenian Question are now pending. With deepest gratitude for the unanimous decisions taken by the League of Nations until now for the Armenian people, and the interest it has shown in the context of the interventions it has made with the Allied states, the Delegation of the Armenian Republic humbly requests you to bring the issues mentioned in our article to the agenda of the General Assembly Meeting.

“Mr. President, please grace us with the acceptance of our deepest regards.”

President of the Delegation of the Armenian Republic,
A. AHARONIAN

We also sent the following reasoned complaint letter, which is still holding its timeliness even today, to the representatives of Allied States:

“Paris, August 8, 1923

“Esteemed Minister,

“Following the Lausanne Conference, to replace the Sèvres Treaty, a new official document was signed with no mention of the Armenian Question.

“The Armenian people, who entered the war to gain independence relying on the great principles suggested by the Allies, has suffered more than all of the warring peoples, has lost one third of its population and feels isolated and doomed to oblivion today.

“Clauses guaranteeing the existence of Armenia were included in the Treaty of Sèvres, as the payment for the numerous victims, thanks to the official promises of the Allies, because none of the other peoples fighting for independence and justice have paid as much as the Armenians, in order to obtain the comparatively independent right to live.

“If it is true that general peace can solve all the problems that existed before the war; it is also true that only the situation of the Armenian people has become unimaginably aggravated, that only the Armenian people cannot reap the fruits of the victory and only they experience all the consequences of an immediate painful abandonment.

“Before mentioning more than two million Armenians living in Tajikistan and under the Bolshevik regime, I have to say that there are still over one million Armenians scattered all over the world, living in refugee camps, suffering from severe deprivation and diseases. Only one tenth of them can survive on their own, good or bad, yet prosperous, the remaining are immigrants without the protection of the law.

“Tajik Armenians are not allowed to return to their places of residence or to benefit from the income of their properties. More than ten thousand orphans are deprived of their inheritance rights and if the applicant was born in Armenia, this is enough to make his application illegal; he will get neither a compensation nor a resettlement.

“As for the properties, churches, monasteries, schools, libraries and museums that have been left in the homeland, and whose damage reaches billions in cash, all of them have been burned and destroyed. The surviving properties are in an occupied state in the hands of the Turkish Government.

“It is essential to remember all these like a handbook, because only this way is it possible to grasp the tragedy of the Armenian people, which has been forgotten so quickly. All these problems, and many others that arise from them and not lacking any less value, remain unsolved until now. It is clear that the Lausanne Conference has turned into a mistake on the Armenian Question. The treaty was signed by ignoring the Armenian people as if they never existed. The Treaty of Lausanne, which puts the fate of an eastern people in an uncertain situation can serve neither peace nor justice.

“Under these circumstances, our Delegation as the signatory side of the (Sèvres) treaty, allows reservations to be placed on all these matters concerning the defense of our rights which were promised to us by the Allied Powers before and during the war, and as approved by the Treaty of Sèvres and the subsequent conferences.

“The Delegation of the Armenian Republic will work against the Treaty of Lausanne with all its might, respecting the authority given to it by the Armenian people, in a way worthy of the official complaint that we are submitting now.

“We are full of hope that history will be the best judge.”

A. AHARONIAN, Head of the Delegation of the Armenian Republic.

CHAPTER-20

(Page 358-367 of the original book)

THE ARMENIAN ISSUE FROM THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE TILL TODAY

Following the return of the Armenian Delegations from Paris, all Armenians no matter where they were at the time, learned all the realities about the Lausanne Conference through the press-news and reports. The Armenian people learned that they were betrayed by the European States at Lausanne. The dreams which were steadily nourished for tens of years, that the Armenian question would be resolved by Europe, collapsed. A kind of lethargy that would be seen following major disasters surrounded everyone.

However, gradually, the life force and immortal energy of the Armenian people woke up again. And this awakening developed into an orientation towards our own strength. It was as if the Armenians felt that the moment had come to rely on their own strength, absolutely. The people reached the awareness that it is a nation needing to seek the opportunity within itself to heal its own wounds and that it must continue on the path of history by gathering all its vital forces. And the Armenian mentality began to develop in this direction, and the fate of the Armenian people continued in this direction.

So, with what can this development be expressed?

In order to answer this question in detail, it is necessary to focus on a feeling that is expressed similarly with a special power in some stratum of fundamentally Turkish Armenian cities. After losing everything, the land, crops and all hopes from Turkey, they started to turn their eyes back to Russia again. For them, Bolshevism was not a factor whose strength and importance they saw with their own eyes. Many of them had already settled in Europe a long time ago, they were recognizing the wild regime of Turkey through experience, and for this reason they were taking a more forgiving attitude towards the Russian Bolsheviks. Those who were aware of the downsides of the Bolshevik regime compared it to the Turkish regime and concluded that Bolshevism was the lesser evil. If we add to this the centuries-old Russian-Turkish hostility and the prospect of a resurgence of Russian national feelings that were always hostile to the Turks; it becomes understandable that the people who were utterly disappointed from Europe, gradually turned their views to the Russian side and even to Soviet Russia. They were thinking that, regardless of the regime that prevailed, Russia would support the Armenians who were a useful element.

After the Lausanne Conference, this feeling began to be felt as a political understanding in a number of Armenian circles. We were able to see the numbers of people belonging to this or that political movement in places where political thought could be expressed freely, that is outside of Soviet Armenia and Russia; and on the basis of unquestionable information, we could definitely argue that those of the Soviet minded parties were very small in number.

They were just a few individuals in various places, and they were unable to show anywhere, masses of followers or important media outlets supporting them. All the people were following the current that unshakably held the flag of the United and Independent Armenia and incarnated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

The Lausanne disaster failed to remove the power, the roots and the essence which nurtured the true democratic party understanding from the spirit of the Armenian people.

As for the sealed-mouthed and muffled Armenian people, that is, the people of Soviet Armenia, we had to rely on information received from secret sources that could not be published. And on the basis of this information, we claim that most of the Armenian people shared the Dashnaktsutyun's political ideals. This is understandable, because failures change only the way of behavior, not the three goals and ideals, right?

Thus, after learning about the political aspirations of the Armenian people in their various currents, we can now finalize these ways in which these desires have been expressed in the last four years. The Armenian national understanding determined four tasks for itself after Lausanne.

The first is, no matter what, to consolidate the foundations of the Republic of Armenia from the economic, cultural and physical perspectives, regardless of the regime prevailing in it.

Second to protect the national spirit, language, culture and national-political ideals among the Armenian masses scattered around the world as our Diaspora.

Third, to defend the basic demands of the Armenian people in front of the European Governments, political parties and the League of Nations, and to prepare the ground for their realization.

Fourth, at all costs, to provide financial aid from humanitarian and charitable organizations, for both the people of Armenia and the immigrants.

All elements that accepted this program were following the realization of these tasks. The Delegation of the Republic of Armenia, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the free minded press, the Philanthropist Association, other smaller organizations and private individuals were working for their realization. Among the foreign organizations, the first place needs to be given to the Federation of Middle East Relief Committees, among which there were 23 organs close to the Armenians; the first of which was the American Relief Administration [ARA].

The understanding of the general management of the work of all these organizations is of course the spiritual and physical existence of the Armenian people and to ensure their development. Their mode of action was: raising the people, especially the orphans, preparing them for independent life, helping Armenians in need, curing the sick, etc. The idea of establishing a national leader body that would be responsible for conducting national cultural affairs among the Armenian masses living in Europe had climaxed. This idea could not be exercised due to the opposition of the conservative stratum. These stratum feared that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation would win the majority during the general election and take over the business. The Episcopal Councils in various countries partially filled the deficit of such an institution. In places such as Romania, Egypt and elsewhere, these Councils are of partial value. They, in person took care of the education and training of the new generation. Chapels started to be established and churches were built. Within the scope of social activities, physical education institutions, libraries, cafes, public meetings and seminars (in America and France) are especially worth remembering.

* * *

It is important to remember three of the political steps taken in recent years:

The first one was carried out by the League of Nations, under the name of Sardarabad Irrigation Program, to irrigate some lands in Armenia with the aim of resettling the immigrants from abroad. At the same time, it was strongly expressed that this project was only a temporary cure, an intermediary tool, that the Armenian people had a basic demand for the expansion of Armenia's borders and that this is still valid.

The second one was an application for social thought – to the Second International, the Federation of Human and Citizen Rights, the International Union of Organizations of the League of Nations, private political parties and politicians. They were complaints against the Bolshevik power's numerous arbitrary practices aiming to trample over personal freedoms in Armenia, their tyranny and endless persecution, and application for restoration of democratic order in Armenia.

And the third is the application to the Government of France, demanding that Armenians be considered as citizens of a state that has been recognized indefinitely (de jure) but temporarily deprived of the independence of their state.



Military Parade in Yerevan
The Garrison Commander Sahhatuni, Gamazian, A. Khatisian

Applications sent to the League of Nations were concluded by a series of good decisions taken by the League of Nations. But these still have not yielded actual results; like the provision of the nearly one million British golds required for irrigation was rejected by the capital owners, who did not trust the Soviet Government, for not being able to show serious guarantees and deemed untrustworthy.

On the occasion of the loan requested for the irrigation of Sardarabad; Chairman of the Financing Committee of the League of Nations Doubois said to me, in the presence of the representative of the Paris Armenian Aid Committee M. Papajanian and the representative of the [Armenian] Relief Organization L. Pashalian the following:

“If a non-Soviet government had taken over the power in Armenia, the requested money would be provided within a day. But how can you ask the capital holders to give money to a government that did not pay off their old debts? There is no trust to the Soviet state.”

And in fact, contrary to the unanimous decision of the League of Nations, contrary to the desires that are absolutely sincere, despite the support of a world-renowned politician like Nansen who was firmly advocating the project, despite the popularity of the Armenian Question and above all although the project was well prepared and profitable for all; nobody paid for it to operate.

Could there be a more meaningful evidence to show that the Soviet regime prevented Armenia from growing and prospering? Is it not true that, given the extreme impoverishment of the former Russian Empire, it was impossible to envision that it could advance without the aid of European capital? Nor did the communists deny it themselves. On the other hand, keeping them in power was not giving confidence to the owners of capital.

Thus, a mysterious cycle was created in which the Soviet power has been wandering and unable to find a way out until today...

* * *

As for the political side of the Armenian Question, the League of Nations has no power to go beyond the blueprints. And since the power

of the Armenian Question depends on the will of the Armenian people and the organized intellectual power of the society that has become a factor, the attempts of the Armenians to keep the fire of this problem alive in organizations with an international character become understandable. During these four years¹⁰², a whole series of reports, proposals and memoranda were submitted to these organizations, and the Second International, the Association of Human and Citizen Rights Defenders, the League of Nations Companies Association, etc., spoke their words about these.

All these proposals demand the independence of Armenia and the re-establishment of the democratic order and the expansion of the state's borders. True, the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty by France, Britain and Italy was a blow to our problem, but it had a strong impact in January 1927 when the United States Senate refused to ratify the Turkish-American Treaty of Lausanne¹⁰³. Unfortunately, this decision did not have direct actual consequences, but it is also very important and opens new horizons. And work in America, which has always been important to Armenians both politically and economically, is now becoming more important.

The third form of political activity is the study mainly carried out in France, aiming to regulate the political situation of Armenia and the immigrants.

* * *

After the recognition of the Bolshevik power, a question naturally arose in France and England; What was the subject of (de jure) recognition of Armenia and Georgia going to be? And thanks to the work of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia, the Governments of France and Britain placed a reservation to the first item of the draft of the agreement recognizing the Soviet Power: "The Soviet power is recognized, **for the**

¹⁰² Khatisian must have written these lines in 1927.

¹⁰³ The Friendship treaty (General Treaty) signed between Ismet Pasha and Ambassador Grew in Lausanne on August 6, 1923.

lands where the **people** of Soviet Russia **personally** recognized this power.”

By this they wanted to say that the people of Armenia and Georgia had not declared their will to recognize the Soviet Power under the necessary conditions, i.e. independently. And for this reason, the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia maintained its legal status to the extent possible, even if it was not authorized. First, “citizenship – Armenian” was written on the citizenship papers of the Armenians. Then, it was attempted to write “Russian” or “Turkish”, depending on the origin of the document holder, in France. Now, after the efforts of the Committee, a special statement was formed as: “Congenital Armenian”. However, various certificates are still issued today on behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia, independent of the Soviet representation.

If we add to all this, the permanent participation of Armenian politicians to the annual congresses of the International Federation of Middle East Relief Companies; the work done abroad to strengthen the understanding of the independence of the Republic of Armenia and to solve the practical problems associated with it becomes clearer in general. This work often goes unnoticed or appears weak, but immigrant masses see the fruits of it in their daily lives. We hope to see its political consequences in the future, on a bright day, when our people get their indisputable rights.

* * *

Here my memoirs naturally ended. We divided the Armenian Question into two parts; some are within Armenia, where the Republic was founded; the other is in where almost a third of the Armenian people live, except Georgia, Azerbaijan, the North Caucasus and Russia.

We left the political development aspect of the Republic of Armenia at that historical moment when the Soviet power took the steering wheel of the Armenian Government on December 2, 1920 and the Armenian-Turkish border was finalized with the treaty on March 16, 1921. Six years have gone by since that day. Politically, nothing has changed in Armenia. Armenia is still independent on paper, in accordance with the Soviet Constitution. But in reality, it is first a member of the Transcaucasian Alliance, and second it has entered the Soviet Union

through this alliance. It does not have its own foreign policy, its own army, nor does it have a separate political front. It is actually a part of Russia, even though it has some local rights in the fields of schooling, language and justice - that is, it has some cultural rights. Its inhabitants lack all political freedoms – it can neither express its will freely nor enter political parties whose existence is generally prohibited; it has no ethical social characteristic. It is an extremely fatal situation for a people who have set foot in the arena of politically dominant life.

In such conditions, there is no official way or social body through which we can learn about the internal lives and thoughts of the Armenian people. But there are unofficial means. And I can claim, without being mistaken, that a large part of the Armenian people has attempted to get rid of these shackles and they desire freedom. They have firmly embraced coexistence and the defense of democratic forms of state establishment, but must be patient and wait for independence.

Even though it is chained, deprived of its lands, out of breath due to land scarcity and struggling in the clutches of injustice, Armenia is the only state treasury for all Armenians. The ideals and thoughts of Armenians are directed at him. All Armenians are living with his joys and sorrows.

It is impossible to deny this fact. It is necessary to protect and strengthen this feeling with all means. The brightest proof of this reality is the traumatic pain felt by all strata of the Armenian people altogether when the bitter news of the Shirak earthquake reached. Everyone responded to this disaster; Armenians living in four corners of the world responded as they would to a state disaster. Everyone felt that “homeland is in danger”. After a life with no rights and no state for centuries, everyone felt that they had a motherland - a state. There was something to embrace for the people from Van, Yerevan and İzmir. This was the greatest victory for the Armenian national ideal.

In fact, within ten years, even under the rule of Soviet Armenia, it carried out some studies for the development of economic and cultural life; irrigation, hospitals, schools, etc. Some of these were newly opened and some were pre-existing, but they all expanded to a certain extent in number and quality. But all this is too little for a hardworking and energetic people like Armenians. And I often remember the words of one of the leaders of Soviet Armenia: “*The Republic of Armenia is*

developing naturally during the Soviet rule, just as a newly planted tree grows despite all negative obstacles. Its vital essence and possibility of growth are within itself. Powers often have no role in this.”

But scarcity of land and hardship in a country is fatal. For this reason, there is constant immigration out of Armenia, and the number of Armenians coming from abroad is very limited.

This is why we think that this external peace provided to Armenia, completely objectively and without any background, should give more values and fruitful results, taking into account the victims sacrificed for this peace.

If we add to this Akhalkalaki¹⁰⁴ Karabagh and Nakhichevan – which are sacred Armenian territories¹⁰⁵ detached from Armenia – but still remain outside Armenia, we are compelled to conclude that the Republic of Armenia continues to stand at a deadly point for six years, in a politically chained, psychologically under pressure and economically deplorable state.

This is the state of Soviet Armenia today.

“But sometimes boiling water flows underneath the snow as well” says the poet. External conditions do not allow the boiling water to gush out to the surface, to flow in bubbles and revitalize the country. However, for decades, the Armenian people did not break the chains of tyranny in order to be constantly put-on new chains. Its freedom is only linked to the development of Russian events, because Armenia was occupied by Communist forces, which were also in power in Russia.

The facts show that Armenia’s liberation from the Communist regime largely depends on what is happening in Russia or what will be performed. Armenia itself is still busy with healing its severe wounds. Armenia has shed more blood than its caliber in the last 15 years. She needs tranquility and must gather her strength.

All of these dictate that one should be vigilant, the political situation should be followed carefully and with great sensitivity, and the

¹⁰⁴ According to Google search, it is a small city in southwest region of Georgia where Karapaks and Turks used to live, but were kicked out upon the Russian-Armenian invasion from 1830 onwards

¹⁰⁵ Actually, Karabagh and Nakhchivan are sacred lands of Azerbaijan.

Armenian people should gather their strength and energy. The appropriate policy followed by the Armenian active elements also stems from this awareness. They are pursuing a policy of strengthening power and sympathy.

Here are the current morale conditions inside and outside of Armenia. These morale situations are a result of the system of current political conditions. Their outer package is not very shiny, but the content is full. They dictate to keep the sacred fire in flames, through which the Armenian youth scattered across the Diaspora communities should be spirited from. This is why the national colleges, lessons and lively interrelationships of the public and intellectuals with the press are so important for the new generation. It is necessary to work non-stop for community education. For this reason, he will light the fire of sacred enthusiasm inside the people; and will benefit greatly from that fire while lighting tomorrow, the torch of independence that will illuminate the path of victory for the United and Independent Armenia, for which generations have sacrificed themselves and shed rivers of blood.

The life of peoples and states lasts for centuries, thousands of years. Included in my memories is a small piece of time, historically it is just one second, but one of infinite significance. This is the moment when our nation, combined with enthusiasm, has regenerated an independent national life for itself.

I tried to show the birth and ups and downs of this life, and especially those seconds that I personally witnessed the events of. But life doesn't stop. And it's in constant motion. And everything in life is changing. In reality, future conditions will change in the development of the life of the Republic of Armenia. Of course, he will feel many joys and pains. But let this slogan be cherished for the city in which these lines were written:

“It fluctuates, but does not sink.”

THE END

EDITORS' REMARKS ON KHATISIAN & HIS BOOK

Khatisian's Book is unique in several ways. It was written during 1924 – 1930, printed privately (without a Publisher) in (out of all places) Athens while he was living in Paris! It covers a period from February 1917 to 1930.

It is detailed and fairly long when compared with other books:

- Pasdermadjian's *Why Should Armenia be Free*, written in haste in 1918 (50 pages).
- Aharonian and Nubar Pasha's *The Memorandum* submitted to the Peace Conference, in 1919 (65 pages)
- Katchaznoui's Manifesto 1923 (77 pages)

All these three publications had been written to meet time-set deadlines.

Khatisian had all the time he needed, after Lausanne seven years to write and publish his 368-page book, in 1930.

After the Russian revolution and withdrawal of the Russian army from Eastern Anatolia and Southern Caucasia, Georgians Azerbaijanis and Armenians, feeling lonesome and unprotected, decided to start peace talks with the Turks.

First important event in the Book, is the Trabzon Peace Conference which lasted one month but yielded no result:

“... we were bringing WAR instead of PEACE to our country from Trabzon.” (Khatisian's concluding remark)

As far as the Turkish – Armenian relations are concerned, two Armenian requests at the Conference were very important:

- a. Autonomy for the Armenians in Eastern Turkey
- b. Permission for the return of Armenian refugees

Autonomy was requested for those Armenians who were living in Russian occupied Eastern Anatolian provinces like Erzurum, Muş, Van and Bitlis as shown on the map below:



The following excerpt from the DIASPORA publication of the 1955 Katchazoni Manifesto, (Appendix V) makes clear who autonomy had been asked for:

“Following the October 1917 Revolution, the Bolsheviks relaxed their interest and withdrew from Caucasus region, turning over to the Armenians, their munitions and leaving them in possession of a relatively large territory including the Vilayets of Trebizond, Moush, Erzourum and the regions of Kars, Ardahan, Karabagh and Nakhitchewan – a total area which later became known as ‘Wilsonian Armenia’.”



Prof. Richard Hovannisian gives a more precise detail in his ***Armenia on the Road to Independence 1918*** (UCLA 1967):

*“The delegation was to **try** to guarantee the right of self-determination for Eastern Anatolia and for Turkish Armenia especially, autonomy within the structure of the Ottoman State.”*

The Turkish delegation at the Trabzon Conference was prepared to sign the Peace Treaty, if the Caucasians (Armenians) would agree to the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and turn over Kars, Ardahan and Batumi to Turkey. The Armenians refused.

After the War that Khatisian mentioned above which they were taking back from the Trabzon Peace Conference, the Turks not only took the three provinces (Kars, Ardahan and Batumi) but also 14 – 15 thousand square kilometers more territory leaving only 10,000 Km² to the Republic of Armenia, as shown on page 95.

Khatisian’s account of the events leading to the Batumi Peace Treaty as well as the signing of the Treaty are very clear and need no elaboration. The same cannot be said, however, about how he describes the four months in Istanbul during the summer of 1918.

A striking example is about how he narrates the audience with the new Sultan on September 6, 1918 as opposed to what Prof. Hovannisian wrote in his above mentioned (1967 UCLA) book.

Khatisian:

“Aharonian gave a speech on behalf of the Republic of Armenia and expressed his hope that Armenia and Turkey would become good neighbors from now on.”

Hovannisian:

“In September, during an audience to felicitate the enthronement of the Sultan, Aharonian expressed thanks for Vahideddin’s good wishes and again promised that Armenian Government would not forget the Ottoman charity which had allowed the Republic to be created.”

“With obvious satisfaction, Enver translated the laudation from French to Turkish.” (Page 232)

Khatisian is not clear as to who is to be blamed for the 1920 Turkish – Armenian War. That is why the ATTACHMENT from Katchaznouni’s Manifesto was added, (pages 189 – 192).

On the other hand, his account of the negotiations prior to the finalization of the Alexandropol Treaty, especially as to why they accepted the clause regarding the denunciation and cancellation of the Sevres Treaty are very clear.

One final remark about his character. He signed the Peace Treaty with Ankara Government on 2-3 December 1920. Before his departure for Erivan where safety of his life was not guaranteed he received Karabekir Pasha’s highly humanitarian gesture and offer for safe conduct to alternative destinations.

Despite these, during 1921-1923 in London, Paris and Lausanne he was extremely active trying to secure Kars and Ardahan or Cilicia as an Armenian Home. This is understandable. What is not understandable at all is his inability to overcome his complex towards the Turks and Turkey as he constantly used the words Tajik ad Tajikistan even after the Alexandropol Peace Treaty.

The word ‘Peace’ must have had a different meaning for Mr. Alexandre Khatisian.

A FINAL WORD ABOUT KHATISIAN’S BOOOK

Khatisian’s book has been disowned by the Armenians, especially by the DIASPORA. It is not known if an English, French or Russian translation exists.

We believe that this is the first English translation and publication since he published it in 1930, why in Athens, nobody knows.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS TO THE READER

Alexander Khatisian was a clever person and a shrewd politician. He; Participated at the Trabzon Peace Conference, with Katchaznouni.

Signed the Batumi Peace Treaty, as head of the Armenian Delegation (Katchaznouni was a member of the delegation, page 1.)

Served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Prime Minister Katchaznouni's government.

Was with the Goodwill and Thanks Delegation in Istanbul.

Became the Prime Minister on May 28, 1919 and declared United Armenia by adding (on paper) 6 provinces of Turkey to Armenia.

Signed the Gyumri [Alexandropol] Peace Treaty, on behalf of the Republic of Armenia, and with this treaty, by receiving the approval of the Capital of Armenia-Yerevan, together with his friends and advisors he declared that THE SEVRES AGREEMENT IS NULL AND VOID.

Participated in the delegation that went to London, Paris and Lausanne (February 1921 – August 1923) as the representative of the Republic of Armenia to influence the British and French delegations during the Lausanne Peace Treaty negotiations.

He must have known that nothing would, could have come out of those two years' (1921 – 1923) efforts, with Soviet Russia sitting firmly in all three capitals (Yerevan, Tbilisi, Baku) and Mustafa Kemal Pasha's Turkey, a victorious new state having defied the Sevres, now waiting comfortably to sign the Lausanne Peace Treaty. Yet he and Aharonian went on asking for the impossible: The United Armenia, Soviet Armenia united with Erzurum & Van!

We think that he actually had a concealed, private and very realistic target: A life-long and generous pension fund from rich DIASPORA Armenians. Indeed, after Lausanne he did not return to Soviet Armenia but stayed in Paris. When the Germans came in 1940, he moved to Porto in Portugal until early 1945. He died in Paris in his bed. Katchaznouni died in an unknown Stalin-prison.

Would you agree with this scenario, if not please let us know how, without a substantial (unknown) capital of his own, did he manage to live 22 years in expensive Paris without financial problems?

FIRST PRIME MINISTERS¹⁰⁶ OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

(6 June 1918 – 2 December 1920)

No 1

Hovhannes Kajaznuni

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Jump to navigation](#)[Jump to search](#)

Hovhannes Kajaznuni

Յովհաննէս Քաջագնունի



1st Prime Minister of Armenia

In office

6 June 1918 – 7 August 1919

¹⁰⁶ Source: Wikipedia

Preceded by	<i>position established</i>
Succeeded by	Alexander Khatisian
Chairman of the Parliament of Armenia	
In office	
4 November 1920 – 2 December 1920	
Preceded by	Avetik Sahakyan
Succeeded by	<i>position abolished</i>
Personal details	
Born	February 14, 1868 Akhaltsikhe , Tiflis Governorate , Russian Empire
Died	March 1938 (aged 1936–1937) Yerevan , Armenian SSR , Soviet Union
Nationality	Armenian
Political party	Armenian Revolutionary Federation
Spouse(s)	Satenik Mirimanian (m. 1889)

Hovhannes Kajaznuni, or Hovhannes Katchaznouni ([Armenian](#): Յովհաննէս Բազազունի) (14 February 1868 – 15 January 1938), was the first [Prime Minister](#) of the [First Republic](#)

[of Armenia](#) from June 6, 1918 to August 7, 1919. He was a member of the [Armenian Revolutionary Federation](#).

Contents

- [1Early life](#)
- [2Political career](#)
 - [2.1Trebizond Peace Conference and Transcaucasian Federation](#)
 - [2.2Batumi Peace Conference](#)
 - [2.3Independent Armenia](#)
 - [2.4Soviet Period](#)
- [3Report to the 1923 ARF Congress](#)
- [4Bibliography](#)
- [5See also](#)
- [6Notes](#)
- [7References](#)
- [8Sources](#)

Early life^{[[edit](#)]}

Kajaznuni was born as *Hovhannes Ter-Hovhannisian* in 1868 in the town of [Akhaltsikhe](#), then part of the Russian Empire, now part of [Georgia](#). He attended secondary school in Tiflis from 1877 to 1886. In 1887, he moved to [Saint Petersburg](#) and entered the Citizens' Architectural Institute, graduating with honors in 1893. While in Saint Petersburg, Kajaznuni joined the [Armenian Revolutionary Federation](#), eventually becoming one of its most important figures. After graduation, he worked at the construction department of the Baku provincial administration (1893–95), as an architect in [Batumi](#) (1895–97), and as regional architect at the [Tiflis](#) provincial administration (1897–99). Between 1899 and 1906, he worked as a senior architect in Baku, designing hospitals and apartment buildings, his most notable work being the [Saint Thaddeus and Bartholomew Cathedral](#) completed in 1911. After 1906 he devoted himself to political and social activities.^{[[u\]](#)]}

Political career^{[[edit](#)]}

Kajaznuni was forced to leave the Caucasus in 1911 to avoid being called to testify at the [trial of Armenian Revolutionary Federation members](#) mounted by the Russian government in Saint Petersburg in January 1912. He lived in [Istanbul](#) and then in [Van](#) until 1914, when he returned to the Caucasus. He became a member of the [Armenian National Council](#) in 1917 and was an [ARF](#) representative in the Seym (the Transcaucasian Parliament) until 1918.

Trebizond Peace Conference and Transcaucasian Federation^[edit]

He was part of the Armenian delegation that conducted peace talks with the Ottoman Empire at the [Trebizond Peace Conference](#), beginning on March 14, 1918.^[2] The three groups of Transcaucasus delegates—Muslim, Georgian and Armenian—had divergent aims, and were in a weak position to negotiate with the Ottomans.^[3] While the talks progressed, the [Ottoman Third Army](#) retook [Erzurum](#) after the Imperial Russian army abandoned it and advanced to the previous frontier with Russia.^[3] These setbacks spurred [Akaki Chkhenkeli](#), the Georgian [Menshevik](#) leader of the Transcaucasus delegation, to unilaterally inform the Ottomans that he would accept the [Treaty of Brest-Litovsk](#) as the basis for negotiation, and thereby abandon Armenian claims to portions of Ottoman territory.^[4] This concession was repudiated by the Seym, which ordered Chhenkeli and the delegation to return to Tbilisi.^[5]

The capture of [Batumi](#) by Ottoman troops on April 14, 1918 sapped the will of the Georgian Mensheviks to continue fighting the Ottomans, and they pushed their Transcaucasus allies to accept the two Ottoman prerequisites for resuming negotiations: a recognition of Turkey's territorial rights and a full break with Russia.^[5] This resulted in the Mensheviks and Muslims in the Seym proposing on April 22, 1918 to establish a [Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic](#) with reluctant endorsement from the increasingly isolated Armenian representatives.^[6] The new republic's cabinet was selected by Chhenkeli as premier-designate, and included Kajaznuni as one

of four Armenians.^[7] One of Chhenkeli's first acts, without consulting the Sejm or the Armenian cabinet members, was to order the Armenian army to surrender Kars to the Ottomans.^[8] The furious Armenian leaders tendered their resignations from the cabinet and demanded Chhenkeli be replaced. The Mensheviks would only agree to replace him with Kajaznuni or another Armenian. The Armenians realized that nominating an Armenian premier would cause the Ottomans to attack Russian Armenia, which was on the front-line since the loss of Kars. Accordingly, Kajaznuni and his fellow Dashnaks allowed the Sejm to confirm their cabinet positions on April 26, 1918.^[9]

Batumi Peace Conference^[edit]

Kajaznuni also accompanied Chkhenkeli as a delegate to the [Batumi Peace Conference](#) that began on May 11, 1918.^[10] The conference saw the Ottomans extend their demands to include [Akhaltsikhe](#) and [Akhalkalaki](#) in [Tiflis Governorate](#) and the western half of [Erivan Governorate](#).^[10] Before the Transcaucasus delegation had delivered a response, Ottoman forces invaded the Erivan Governorate, and on May 15 captured [Alexandropol](#).^[10] A week later, they had approached both [Yerevan](#) and [Karakilisa](#).^[10] Unable to negotiate anything more favorable than capitulation with the Ottomans, the Georgian leaders at the Batumi talks arranged a side-deal with Germany to exchange German protection for access to Georgia's economic resources. The result was that the Sejm dissolved the federative republic on May 26, 1918, with the [Democratic Republic of Georgia](#) declared the same day and the republics of [Azerbaijan](#) and [Armenia](#) declared on May 28.^[11]

Independent Armenia^[edit]

The Armenian National Council elected Kajaznuni as the first prime minister of the independent Armenian state on June 6, 1918 and his cabinet was formed on June 30. Kajaznuni held this position until August 7, 1919; with the nomination as a prime minister abroad from June 5, 1919. He was in diplomatic missions in Europe (beginning in August 1919) and the United

States (from October 9, 1919 until August 1920). He returned to Armenia to become chairman of the parliament on November 4, 1920. Kajaznuni was arrested after the [Bolsheviks](#) came to power in December 1920 but was liberated during the [February 1921 revolt](#) against the Soviet regime.

Soviet Period[\[edit\]](#)

After the end of the revolt in early April 1921, he left the country and lived in [Bucharest](#) from 1921 to 1924. In 1925 he returned to [Soviet Armenia](#) and worked as an architect in [Leninakan](#). He also taught at the technical department of [Yerevan State University](#), lecturing on construction and architecture. In 1930 he joined the newly established [Construction Institute](#) and attained the title of professor there. Kajaznuni became a member of the [Armenian Union of Architects](#). Kajaznuni was a victim of Stalin's [Great Terror](#)—arrested in 1937 and imprisoned, he died in prison in 1938. The exact date of his death is unknown.^{[\[12\]](#)}

Report to the 1923 ARF Congress[\[edit\]](#)

Kajaznuni prepared a critical report for the Armenian Revolutionary Federation party convention held in Bucharest during April 1923 (the 10th Congress of the Party was held in 1924-1925)^{[\[13\]](#)[\[n 1\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[n 2\]](#)} titled *Dashnaksutyun Has Nothing More to Do*, which called for the party's support of Soviet Armenia.^{[\[15\]](#)[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[18\]](#)} Before this event, every single Armenian political party in exile was opposed to Soviet Armenia's stance.

Kajaznuni published his report in Vienna in 1923. In the same year it was republished by non-A.R.F. circles in Tbilisi, Alexandria (Egypt), and Bucarest.^{[\[19\]](#)} Its claims immediately drew rebuke from the party.^{[\[20\]](#)[\[n 3\]](#)[\[21\]](#)[\[n 4\]](#)[\[22\]](#)[\[n 5\]](#)}

In 1927, Zakkniga in Tiflis published a Russian translation of Kajaznuni's report in an edition of 2,000 copies, with an introduction by S. Khanoyan.

A condensed version of the report was translated into English in 1955 by Matthew Aram Callender, and edited by [Arthur Derounian](#).^{[\[23\]](#)} In the introduction written by Derounian (whose

birth name was Avedis Boghos Derounian), an anti-Dashnak journalist,^[24] Kajaznuni is described as a "patriot" whose report was a "deep and incisive self-study" that is a "refutation" of the "grandiose, exaggerated and even outrageously false claims of the Dashnag leadership today".^[25]

The Armenian original was reprinted twice in Yerevan in 1994 and 1995.^[citation needed]

In 2007 Turkish historian [Mehmet Perinçek](#) produced new texts in Turkish and English claimed to be translations of Kajaznuni's 1923 report, based on a Russian copy (printed in [Tbilisi](#) in 1927) held in the [Russian State Library](#) in [Moscow](#).^[26] Perinçek said that the Russian State Library copy was unabridged and that translations for these copies were unavailable before.

Callender's translation did abridge the main body of the book but translated Kajaznuni's introduction verbatim - this is the key section which contains the description of the holocaust.{{refn|Katchaznouni's description of the holocaust is given on pages 6 and 7 of Matthew A. Callender's translation.^[27] A note on page 4 explains that Callender has translated most of Kajaznuni's remarks directly: "Except for abridgements, made for the sake of brevity by the translator and the editor, Katchaznouni's utterances appear verbatim."^[28] On page 8, after the holocaust description, Callender indicates that he is switching from verbatim to selective translation:

"Translator's Note: Up to this point the words of the author have been translated verbatim in order to give an idea of Mr. Katchaznouni's logical mind and the exposition of the facts that drove him to present his 'Manifesto' to his colleagues at the 1923 Convention. From here on, and solely for the sake of brevity, we shall quote excerpts of his arguments which led to his decision as to why the Dashnagtzoutiun, in his opinion, should 'decisively end its existence' because 'there is no work for the Party.'^[29]

Armenian scholar Viken L. Attarian claims Perinçek's "discovery" is actually a forgery made by partisan Turkish historians to deny the fact of the Armenian Genocide.^[30] As evidence for his position, Attarian notes that these alleged translations into Turkish, English and German were published

by [Kaynak Yayınları](#) in Istanbul as the first in a book series titled *Ermeni Belgeleriyle Ermeni Soykırımı Yalanı* (in English: *The Lie of the 'Armenian Genocide' in Armenian Documents*).

Attarian said: "The Turkish denialists are the ones who talk most about Katchaznuni and ... use texts and falsified translations that have nothing in common with the originals... Whatever the Turk denialists present about K is wrong and a lie... Katchaznuni never denied the Genocide and ... never betrayed his homeland.". In Matthew A. Callender's translation, made from the original Armenian text, Kachaznuni describes what happened to the Armenians as a "holocaust" (p. 7):

The second half of 1915 and the entire year of 1916 were periods of hopelessness, desperation and mourning for us. The refugees, all those who had survived the holocaust, were filling Russian provinces by tens and hundreds of thousands.^[31]

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See also^[edit]

- [First Republic of Armenia](#)
- [John Roy Carlson](#)

Notes^[edit]

1. [^] [Svajian](#) describes this as "...the manifesto to the 'Dashnag Party Congress' in Bucharest, April 1923. His manifesto is entitled, 'Dashnaktzoutune Has Nothing To Do Any More.'"
2. [^] [Bast's](#) description is a "...book which was originally 'a manifesto' he had presented to the convention of the foreign branches of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Bucharest, 1923)"
3. [^] [Reuben Darbinian's](#) first name is also transliterated as "Rouben", "Ruben", "Rooben", etc.
4. [^] [Gakavian](#) writes "In the early 1920s the ARF experienced a split between its left and right wings over what policy the party should take towards Soviet Armenia. At the same time, the former Prime Minister of Armenia, Hovhannes Kachaznoui, published a book, *The ARF Has Nothing More to Do*, and migrated to Soviet Armenia. As the title suggests, Kachaznoui argued that the ARF and the other parties had no role to play in Armenian political life, now that Armenia was Bolshevik. The opponents of the ARF, of course, capitalised on this. In the same year, a response was written to Kachaznoui by high-ranking party member Rouben Darbinian, who argued that Kachaznoui was wrong to give up hope, because Sovietisation would be short lived, and the ARF needed to continue the struggle for freedom."
5. [^] [Derogy](#) quotes an April 11, 1923 letter from [Shahan Natali](#) to the Boston committee: "I was informed too late to be able to express my view towards the item put on the agenda of the next interim conference in Vienna; the position of the Party toward the sovietization of Armenia. You are not without responsibility for this delay, which has prevented me from making the party return to its revolutionary line."

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1. [^] [Tigranian 2003](#), pp. 236–241.
2. [^] [Hovannisian 1971](#), p. 23.
3. [^] [Jump up to:^a ^b \[Hovannisian 1971\]\(#\), p. 24.](#)
4. [^] [Hovannisian 1971](#), pp. 24–25.
5. [^] [Jump up to:^a ^b \[Hovannisian 1971\]\(#\), p. 25.](#)
6. [^] [Hovannisian 1971](#), pp. 25–27.
7. [^] [Hovannisian 1971](#), pp. 27–28, note 60.
8. [^] [Hovannisian 1971](#), p. 27.
9. [^] [Hovannisian 1971](#), pp. 27–28.
10. [^] [Jump up to:^a ^b ^c ^d \[Hovannisian 1971\]\(#\), p. 28.](#)
11. [^] [Hovannisian 1971](#), p. 29–33.
12. [^] [Encyclopedia of the Armenian Question 1996](#), p. 456.
13. [^] [Svajian 1977](#), p. 418.
14. [^] [Bast 2002](#).

15. [^] [Katchaznoui 1923](#).
16. [^] [Hovannisian 1974](#), Footnote 12.
17. [^] [Nassibian 1984](#), p. 105.
18. [^] [Libaridian 1991](#), p. 20.
19. [^] See [http://www.armunicat.am:8991/ARMA Archived](http://www.armunicat.am:8991/ARMA_Archived) 2007-10-24 at the [Wayback Machine](#) and search for Յովհաննէս Բաջազկունի.
20. [^] [Darbinian 1923](#).
21. [^] [Gakavian 1997](#).
22. [^] [Derogy 1990](#), p. 167.
23. [^] [Katchaznoui 1955](#).
24. [^] Zake, I. (2009-05-25). *Anti-Communist Minorities in the U.S.: Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees*. ISBN 9780230621596.
25. [^] [Katchaznoui 1955](#), p. 3.
26. [^] [Özdemir 2007](#).
27. [^] [Katchaznoui 1955](#), pp. 6–7.
28. [^] [Katchaznoui 1955](#), p. 4.
29. [^] [Katchaznoui 1955](#), p. 8.
30. [^] [Attarian n.d](#).
31. [^] [Katchaznoui 1955](#), p. 7.

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NOTE. Wikipedia article on Katchaznouni is 11 pages. Khatisian and Ohanjanyan articles are (each) 4 pages while Vratsian's is longer 7.

Although the First Prime Minister's life story is much longer than the others, an important detail is missing: Why was he arrested and put into jail? Where the jail was and exactly when and how he died?

Armenians seem to be not interested to find the answers to these questions.

No 2

Alexander Khatisian

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Jump to navigation](#)[Jump to search](#)

Alexander Khatisian
Ալեքսանդր Խատիսեան



[Foreign Affairs Minister of Armenia](#)

In office

30 June 1918 – 4 November 1918

Preceded by *position established*

Succeeded by [Sirakan Tigranyan](#)

In office

27 April 1919 – 5 May 1920

Preceded by [Sirakan Tigranyan](#)

Succeeded by [Hamo Ohanjanyan](#)

2nd [Prime Minister of Armenia](#)

In office

28 May 1919 – 5 May 1920

Preceded by [Hovhannes Kajaznuni](#)

Succeeded by [Hamo Ohanjanyan](#)

Interior Minister of Armenia

In office

26 January 1919 – 27 April 1919

Preceded by [Aram Manukian](#)

Succeeded by Sargis Manasian

Welfare Minister of Armenia

In office

13 December 1918 – 7 February 1919

Preceded by	Aram Manukian
Succeeded by	Sahak Torosyan
Mayor of Tiflis	
In office	
1910–1917	
Preceded by	Vasiliy Cherkeзов
Succeeded by	Benia Chkhikvishvili
Mayor of Alexandropol	
In office	
1917–1917	
Personal details	
Born	17 February 1874 Tiflis , Tiflis Governorate , Russian Empire
Died	10 March 1945 (aged 71) Paris , France
Nationality	Armenian
Political party	Armenian Revolutionary Federation

Alexander Khatisian ([Armenian](#): Ալեքսանդր Խատիսյան) (February 17, 1874, [Tiflis](#) – March 10, 1945, [Paris](#)) was an [Armenian](#) politician and journalist.^[1]

Khatisian was born in [Tiflis](#), [Tiflis Governorate](#), [Russian Empire](#) (now Tbilisi), [Georgia](#)). He served as the mayor of [Tiflis](#) (Tbilisi) from 1910 to 1917. During this period [Count Illarion Ivanovich Vorontsov-Dashkov](#) consulted with him, the primate of Tbilisi, Bishop Mesrop Der-Movsesian, and the prominent civic leader Dr. [Hakob Zavriev](#) about the creation of [Armenian volunteer detachments](#) in the summer of 1914.^[2]

During the establishment of [First Republic of Armenia](#), he served as a member from the [Armenian National Council of Tiflis](#) to the [Armenian National Council](#) and later to the permanent executive committee selected by [Armenian Congress of Eastern Armenians](#). After declaration of the First Republic of Armenia, he served as Foreign Minister and signed the [Treaty of Batum](#) with the [Ottoman Empire](#). He was elected as the [prime minister](#) from 1919 to 1920. Khatisian died in exile in [Paris](#), [France](#) on 10 March 1945.

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- [↑] Hovannisian "The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times " p 280

No 3

Hamo Ohanjanyan

Hamo Ohanjanyan
Համո Օհանջանյան



3rd Prime Minister of Armenia

In office

5 May 1920 – 23 November 1920

Preceded by [Alexander Khatisian](#)

Succeeded by [Simon Vratsian](#)

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia

In office	
3 April 1920 – 23 November 1920	
Preceded by	Alexander Khatisian
Succeeded by	Simon Vratsian
Personal details	
Born	1873 Akhalkalak, Tiflis Governorate, Russian Empire
Died	31 July 1947 (aged 73–74) Cairo, Egypt
Nationality	Armenian
Political party	Armenian Revolutionary Federation

Hamo Ohanjanyan (**Armenian:** Համո Օհանյան‎) (Akhalkalak, 1873 – Cairo, 31 July 1947) was a member of the **Armenian Revolutionary Federation**. He served as the third **Prime Minister** of the **First Republic of Armenia** from May 5 to November 23, 1920.^[1]

Biography^[edit]

Hamo (Mher) Ohanjanyan studied in Akhalkalak, his birthplace. He later moved to **Tbilisi** and graduated from the Tbilisi Russian Lyceum. In 1892 he continued his studies in **Moscow University** and entered the School of Medicine. However, he left school early in order to join the Armenian revolutionary movement. He traveled to Lausanne, where he met Kristapor

Mikayelian, one of the founding members of the [Armenian Revolutionary Federation](#).

After the [Russian revolution](#) of March 1917, he was elected a member of the Russian Assembly and then became member of the Transcaucasian Seim in 1918.

In early 1920 he went to Yerevan and took up the position of Foreign Affairs Minister of the newly founded [First Republic of Armenia](#) in the cabinet of Prime Minister [Alexander Khatisian](#). After the resignation of Khatisian's government following the Bolshevik uprising of May 1920, Hamo Ohanjanian became Prime Minister until November 23, 1920, when his cabinet resigned amid the crisis generated by the Armenian-Turkish war.^[1]

References^[edit]

- [^] [Jump up to:](#)^a ^b *"Former Prime Ministers"*. *Government of the Republic of Armenia*. Retrieved 18 November 2012.

Political offices		
Preceded by Alexander Khatisian	Prime Minister of the First Republic of Armenia 1920	Succeeded by Simon Vratsian

No 4

Simon Vratsian

Simon Vratsian

Սիմոն Վրացեան



4th [Prime Minister of Armenia](#)

In office

23 November 1920 – 2 December 1920

Preceded by [Hamo Ohanjanyan](#)

Succeeded [Soviet Armenia](#)

by

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia

In office

23 November 1920 – 2 December 1920

Preceded by [Hamo Ohanjanyan](#)

Succeeded [Soviet Armenia](#)

by

Minister of Agriculture and State Property of Armenia

In office

3 April 1920 – 23 November 1920

Preceded by *position established*

Succeeded [Arshak Hovhannisyan](#)

by

Minister of Labour of Armenia

In office

3 April 1920 – 23 November 1920

Preceded by *position established*

Succeeded	Arshak Hovhannisyan
by	
Personal details	
Born	1882 Metz Sala, Nor Nakhichevan (today Nakhichevan-on-Don), Russian Empire
Died	21 May 1969 (aged 86–87) Beirut, Lebanon
Nationality	Armenian
Political party	Armenian Revolutionary Federation
Spouse(s)	Yelena Shigaeva

Simon Vratsian ([Armenian](#): Սիմոն Վրացեան; 1882 – 21 May 1969) was the last [Prime Minister of the First Republic of Armenia](#). He also headed the Committee for the Salvation of the Fatherland after the [February Uprising](#) for 40 days in 1921.

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Contents	
1	Biography
2	Quotes
3	Personal Details
4	References

Biography^[edit]

After education at Armenian and Russian schools, he joined the [Dashnak party](#). He received further education at the [Gevorgian seminary](#) in [Echmiadzin](#) from 1900 to 1906. Vratsian returned to Nor Nakhichevan as a Dashnak party worker and took part in the 4th general congress of Dashnaktsutun at Vienna in 1907; where he supported the adoption of socialism.

In 1908 he traveled to [St. Petersburg](#) to study law and education. He travelled to the United States in 1911 where he edited the [Hairenik](#) newspaper.

In 1914 he made his way to the [8th general congress of Dashnaktsutun](#) in [Ottoman Empire](#). He was elected to the party's Bureau and mixed with the leaders of the [Young Turks](#). In August 1914 he was jailed as a Russian spy but escaped to [Transcaucasia](#), where he became involved with the [Armenian volunteer units](#) who fought with the [Russian army](#). After the disbandment of the units, he attended the Moscow state conference, the Armenian National Congress, and was elected a member of the National Council. [Hovhannes Katchaznouni](#) asked him to accompany him on his tour of Europe and America in 1919, but he was refused a visa by the British as they saw him as a radical socialist. In the same year he was appointed to ministry of labour, agriculture and state positions in [Alexander Khatisian](#)'s Cabinet. His positions carried over to the government of [Hamo Ohanjanyan](#); he also assumed responsibilities for information and propaganda. After the resignation of the government and the failure of Hovhannes Katchaznouni to form a coalition, Vratsian accepted post of [Prime Minister](#) on 23 November 1920.

On 2 December he handed over [Armenia](#) to the [Bolsheviks](#). He subsequently went into hiding, and later emerged as President of the Committee for the Salvation of the Fatherland. He also was President of the short-lived Republic of Armenia after a revolution against the Bolsheviks in February 1921. However, this second republic only lasted around 40 days; he then escaped to Persia with his bodyguards and aides, leaving his

wife and child with American Near East Relief worker Dr. Clarence Ussher. He also appealed to Europe and [Turkey](#) for assistance against the [Bolsheviks](#). Vratsian then travelled over Europe, settling in Paris to edit the *Droshak* from 1923 to 1925. In 1945 he presented a petition to the UN General Assembly at San Francisco demanding the restoration of [Wilsonian Armenia](#) held by [Turkey](#) to [Armenia](#).

During his lifetime he edited various now defunct Armenian periodicals and newspapers, including *Harach* and *Horizon*.

Quotes^{[\[edit\]](#)}

Shooting the last bullet, Armenian soldiers, the government and those who refused to abide with loss of independence of the country on July 10 went through Araxes and entered Persia taking with them the flag of independent Armenia to continue the ideological struggle for their country's independence.^{[\[1\]](#)}

Personal Details^{[\[edit\]](#)}

Simon Vratsian (born Simon Grouzian) was born in Metz Sala, Nor Nakhichevan, Russian Empire (now [Nakhichevan-on-Don](#)) in 1882. In his memoirs, he explains that his first surname, Grouzian, came from the Armenian word "grouz" (գրուզ), which means curly or frizzled.^{[\[2\]](#)} This was because many people from his extended family had curly hair. His surname was changed twice; the first time by a schoolteacher, Melikian (first name unknown), who observed that there is no such surname as Grouzian, just Grouzinian. The second time was when he changed it to Vratsian. He also describes that after the incident with Melikian, his family was divided into three camps: the Grouzian camp, which included his mother, who thought he was a traitor, and his conservative uncle Garabed. The Grouzinian camp, which consists of his "lover of all new things" (as described by Vratsian) uncle Mergian, and finally the Vratsian camp, in which Simon was the only member (he also says that his grandmother died at age 116, but that it cannot be proven since most countries didn't start recording dates of birth until the year 1900).

He describes his father as a storyteller, whose stories increased business for the family coffee shop. He also writes in his memoirs (*Կեանքի Ուղիներով*, *Along Life's Paths*) about his rich maternal uncle Mikishka, and estimates that his net worth in several millions of dollars.^[3] Vratsian recounts how his 'cheap' and 'stingy' maternal uncle Mikishka gave him the equivalent of 20 modern US cents for a 2,000 kilometer journey.^[4] He also recalls how later, when he was getting involved in Armenian political parties, he was going to be a member of the [Social-Democrat Hinchakian Party](#). However, he and his friend accidentally walked into a Dashnak meeting, themselves becoming Dashnaks. He also describes Dashnak General Congresses in detail, such as which member of the congress wanted an alliance with Russia, who wanted to fund the curing of Armenian villagers from lice^[5], which hotel he stayed in, and who he became friends with. He describes friendships with [Rostom](#), [Hamazasp](#), [Andranik](#), [Armen Garo](#), [Aram Manukian](#), and others. He even describes how those friendships began. For example, in the second volume of his memoir "*Կեանքի Ուղիներով*", he tells how he was a teacher of Armenian History for a year. One of his students who always disrupted class was Andranik's daughter. Vratsian hit Andranik's daughter, and was summoned to the Headmaster's office. There he met Andranik, and when Vratsian explained why he had hit his daughter, Andranik thanked Vratsian for disciplining her.^[6]

In Vratsian's memoirs, there are no accounts of his wife or any children. [Oliver Baldwin](#)'s "Six Prisons and Two Revolutions" gives us the only piece of evidence about his direct family. Baldwin was an Englishman who became a [Lieutenant-Colonel](#) in the Armenian Army. He was at the house of Dr. [Clarence Ussher](#) (from the [Near East Relief](#)) when a messenger from Vratsian arrived asking Dr. Ussher to keep his wife and son safe when the Bolsheviks took over. However, while they were fleeing to Persia, Vratsian's son "died of exposure".^[7] There is no other mention of Vratsian's wife and son.

He died in [Beirut](#), [Lebanon](#) at age 86 or 87, on 21 May 1969.

References^[edit]

1. [^] [Government of the Republic of Armenia](#)
2. [^] [Vratsian, Simon \(1960\). Title:Keank'i ughinerov Volume II. Beirut: Hamazgayin. p. 11.](#)
3. [^] [Vratsian, Simon \(1960\). Keank'i ughinerov Volume II. Beirut: Hamazgayin. p. 83.](#)
4. [^] [Vratsian, Simon \(1960\). Keank'i ughinerov Volume II. Beirut: Hamazkayin. p. 78.](#)
5. [^] [Vratsian, Simon \(1960\). Keank'i ughinerov Volume II. Beirut: Hamazkayin. pp. 227–236.](#)
6. [^] [Vratsian, Simon \(1960\). Keank'i ughinerov Volume II. Beirut: Hamazkayin. pp. 158–162.](#)
7. [^] [Baldwin, Oliver \(1944\). Six prisons and two revolutions: adventures in Trans-Caucasia and Anatolia, 1920–1921. Fresno, California: Meshag Publishing. p. 122.](#)

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