

HISTORICAL RETHINKING OF RELATIONS WITH THE FIRST REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: THE DILEMMA OF ORIENTATION AND EXPECTATIONS

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Abstract

This article examines the features of relations with the First Republic of Armenia and the United States of America in the context of the dilemma of orientation and expectations of the Armenian political elite and society. The purpose of this study is to determine the characteristics of the influence of interethnic conflicts on the Armenian population and political elite after the February Revolution of 1917 on the territory of the Russian Empire. The main attention is paid to identifying general and specific elements in the process of restoring independent Armenian statehood at the end of May 1918.

The scientific novelty lies in the study of transformative processes and the long break of independent Armenian statehood, the people's and liberation struggle, as well as the geopolitical developments in the region in the context of the clash of both diplomatic and military, political and economic interests. As a result, after lengthy negotiations, on February 25, 1919, the assembly was presented with a single demand of the Armenians for recognition of the Armenian state.

The characteristic features of such decisions are highlighted and described, on the basis of which it was proposed to transfer Armenia under the guardianship of the Entente and transfer its mandate to one of the countries for at least twenty years. It is emphasized that the Armenian delegations expressed their desire to transfer the patronage (mandate) of a united, independent and free Armenia to the United States of America or the newly formed League of Nations.

Keywords: First Republic of Armenia, United States of America, revolution, Armenian National Central Council, Ottoman Empire, Ottoman Turkey, Armenian-Turkish Peace Pact.

Introduction

The February revolution of 1917 was a kind of a shock not only for Russia itself, but even the distant outskirts of the large empire, including the Caucasus.

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In the post-revolutionary period, important historical events of pivotal and fateful significance for the Armenian people took place. The main thing, of course, at the end of May 1918, after a long break, was the restoration of independent Armenian statehood, which was achieved as a result of national awakening, popular and liberation struggle, strained inter-ethnic relations, as well as geopolitical developments in the region, sharp contradictions, the clash of military-political and economic interests, diplomatic and military confrontation in difficult conditions (Libaridian 2022; Yengoyan 2023; Aleksanyan 2016).

In 1918 after signing the Armenian-Turkish “Treaty of Peace and Friendship” in Batumi on June 4, the Armenian delegation returned to Tiflis on June 6. In fact, the Armenian National Central Council started forming the central bodies of the government of the Republic of Armenia only after signing the treaty. The issue of power was delayed not so much by internal political disputes as by external circumstances.

On June 7, the continuous sessions of the Armenian National Central Council of Tiflis began. It was chaired by Avetis Aharonian. The issues of forming the first legislative (council, parliament) and executive (government) bodies of Armenia were discussed. On the first day, as a result of long and intense discussions, the Council decided to elect Hovhannes Katchaznoui as the President (Prime Minister) of the Government of the Republic of Armenia and instruct him to form a provisional government on the basis of a coalition (treaty) principle, reserving the choice of persons to him¹. It was also decided to temporarily assign the powers of the legislative body (Council of the Republic of Armenia) to the Armenian National Central Council and move it from Tiflis to Yerevan. On June 8, at the Tiflis Club of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Alexander Khatisyan informed: “Yerevan will be the capital of the independent Republic of Armenia, where the Armenian government will soon move to.”²

It is noteworthy that on June 11, at the invitation of the Minister of Justice and Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire, Halil Bey³, the chairman of the Turkish delegation in Batumi, an Armenian delegation from Tiflis visited Constantinople to participate in the conference with Turkey and its allied states (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria) to resolve all remaining issues between the newly independent republics of the Caucasus and the Ottoman Empire (Vratsyan 1928, 157). In fact, it was a continuation of Batumi’s diplomatic negotiations in Constantinople.

It should be noted that the Armenian delegation was going to Constantinople to revise the Armenian-Turkish pact, that is, to align the established borders with the conditions of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty (March 3, 1918), as well as hoping to improve the situation of hundreds of thousands of Armenian refugees (Zang 1918). Therefore, with the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the newly independent

¹ “The declaration of Armenia’s independence and the formation of the central bodies of power (May-July 1918).” In: *Collection of documents and materials*, edited by Amatuni Virabyan, Karen Khachatryan and Hamo Sukiasyan, 61-62. Yerevan: Publication of the National Archives of Armenia, 2009.

² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 116.

Republic of Armenia, it was necessary to legally fix the participation of the Armenian delegation at the state level in the negotiations to be held in Constantinople.

The difficulties of urgent protection of the state and society

As we can see, Katchaznoui's haste had a basis under it, because with the creation of these key ministries, not only would the protection of the country from external and internal enemies be ensured, but also the main directions of the foreign policy strategy and the implementation of diplomatic negotiation processes would be developed and formed under the direct leadership of the head of the government, the prime minister.

Despite the disagreements regarding the discussed issue, the National Central Council adopted the following decision at the June 8 session: "Listening to the Prime Minister Katchaznoui's explanations about the difficulties and inexpediency of having a full-fledged government, the National Council decided to be content with the ministries of foreign affairs, military and finance (if a suitable person is found) for the time being, leaving the rest of the affairs to the relevant heads of the Council until the transfer to Yerevan"⁴.

Katchaznoui informed at the meeting of the Council that Khatisian was offered to take the position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. Thus, the beginning of the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia was set on the same day, on June 8, from the moment of appointing Khatisyan as a minister⁵. New trials and difficult days were expected in the whirlwind of the republic's foreign policy and diplomatic struggle.

As a rule, every newly created state strives to immediately enter the international arena, to accelerate the recognition of its independence of its own state and to establish many, multifaceted ties and diplomatic relations with other states at the level of ambassadors. However, the solution of that issue was connected with overcoming serious difficulties. Ottoman Turkey put the Republic of Armenia in a circle, allowing it to enter into relations only with its immediate neighbors and its allies, the Central Powers and its neighboring states (Petrosyan 2019, 249-298).

About a week after the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, on June 13, when the Armenian delegation was on its way to Constantinople, with the signature of the chairman of the Armenian National Central Council Aharonian, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Katchaznoui and Minister of Foreign Affairs Khatisyan, as it was assumed, the first official note was sent from Tiflis to Constantinople separately to the representatives of the embassies of Iran, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Holland, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, in which they were asked to inform their governments about the fact of the formation of independent Armenia⁶. However, it was not at all surprising or accidental that the authorities of the newly established Republic of Armenia did not send such an official

⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 222, list 1, file 141, sheet 252.

⁵ We think that the Day of the Diplomat of the Republic of Armenia should be celebrated not on March 2, but on June 8, the day of the establishment of the first Republic of Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 35, sheets 1a, 2a, 5a, 7a, 9a.

note to the Entente's great allies, France, England, the United States of America, and neighboring states. It could give Ottoman Turkey an opportunity to start new military operations against the Republic of Armenia.

The point was that even on the eve of the signing of the Armenian-Turkish peace treaty in Batumi, on June 3, the head of the Armenian delegation, Khatisyan, under the compulsion of Ottoman Turkey, had signed a document and assumed a certain obligation: "The Government of the Republic of Armenia undertakes not to have any diplomatic relations with the states in a state of war with the Ottoman Empire during the entire process of war (the First World War)⁷. It clearly follows from that document that the Republic of Armenia undertook on the one hand not to have diplomatic relations with the Entente states⁸, including Russia, even though the latter withdrew from the war with the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty of March 3, 1918, throughout the First World War, and on the other hand, to present that document to the public opinion meant putting the credit of the Government of the Republic of Armenia to the test, because "the Russian-Armenians," (Hairenik 1924, 78) writes A. Jamalyan, - they dreamed of the return of Russian rule. The reality was that the Armenian political and social circles did not know about the existence of that document (commitment). It was no coincidence that at the second session of the council on August 3, Kajaznuni bypassed the official position of the Republic of Armenia regarding the Entente and other neighboring states due to the Batumi Agreement after June 3 (Petrosyan 2022; Petrosyan 2023).

New obligations stemming from the logical spirit of the June 3 letter of commitment were set forth in Article 2 of the temporary additional annex to the treaty signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Armenia on June 4: "The Government of the Republic of Armenia was obliged to immediately remove from its territory the officers and civilian ranks of the countries that are in a state of war with Turkey or its allies, as well as the allies and ranks of the said belligerent countries. Apart from that, during the entire period of the war, the government of the Republic of Armenia will not accept any officer or anyone in general from the aforementioned belligerent countries or their allies" (Khatisyan 1930, 72).

Thus, in the first stage of the existence of the Republic of Armenia (June-November 1918), until the final defeat of Ottoman Turkey in the First World War, both the Batumi Agreement of June 3 and the Armenian-Turkish Peace Pact of June 4 and the requirements of Article 2 of the additional annex attached to it caused serious obstacles for the country to conduct an independent and free foreign policy and to establish diplomatic relations with the Entente powers, in particular, the United States of America and other neighboring states.

This situation did not last long due to the final defeat of Ottoman Turkey and its allies in the First World War. In November, the commitment of June 3 and the famous pact lapsed, although they had been in force since they were signed. Meanwhile, they had no legal force from the point of view of international law, because they were not

⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 32, sheet 6.

⁸ The United States of America not only did not oppose Ottoman Turkey in the war, but also maintained neutrality, and the diplomatic relations between the two states were broken by the Ottoman military and political leadership.

ratified by the governments of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Armenia, moreover, they were not recognized by the Central Powers, the Entente, Soviet Russia and other countries.

The invisible challenges of the favorable new geopolitical situation

According to Article 11 of the Armistice of Mudros (October 30, 1918), Turkish troops had to leave Transcaucasia by the beginning of December. In the new favorable geopolitical situation, the Republic of Armenia was now free to conduct its foreign policy and could make efforts to establish more active diplomatic relations with the Entente, the United States of America, France, England, and with more than vital and important in terms of security for the Republic of Armenia, with Soviet and non-Soviet (anti-Bolshevik) state entities of Russia and other states. But new trials and difficult days were ahead. In the new political conditions, one of the primary issues of the Republic of Armenia's foreign policy was the establishment of relations with the United States of America. That process began at the beginning of 1919, facing many and varied political, diplomatic, technical difficulties and obstacles.

It is important to note that during the implementation of its functions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia faced many, including technical difficulties: "The main obstacle was the difficulty and even disruption of communication with the world. If other states and governments generally did not show initiative and interest in starting relations with the Republic of Armenia, there were Armenians living in those states and countries - natives or immigrants from the regions of Armenia, who had a need and demand to establish ties with their motherland, to return and or to enjoy the care and treatment of their own government. This foreign Armenians, especially in those places where they formed a small and very large community, established Armenian bodies and automatically connected them with the Republic of Armenia. In this way, they wanted and to some extent were able to satisfy a number of their demands and free themselves from several inconveniences and deprivations"⁹.

On February 4, 1919, the Council of Armenia passed a law on sending Minister-President Katchaznoui to Europe and the United States of America to procure bread, food and other basic necessities for the Republic of Armenia¹⁰. The delegation headed by Katchaznoui was also given the right to hold negotiations on behalf of the Armenian Council and government with various high-ranking political and state officials and other representatives of those states.

It is remarkable why in the first months of independence, in the difficult internal and external political, economic, and security conditions created in the country, the Council of Armenia, in which the majority were the representatives of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party, adopted a law to send a delegation headed by Prime Minister Katchaznoui to Europe and the United States of America. It should be noted

⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 207, sheet 66.

¹⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 2, file 962, sheet 103.

that all of this was preordained and not random at all. The goal was to isolate Prime Minister Kajaznuni from the state administration process.

The point was that there was still a lack of harmonious, interconnected work of different wings of the country's state system: there were disagreements between the legislative body, the government, and the dominant political force, the "Armenian Revolutionary Federation" party.

In this regard, the Prime Minister of the Republic Katchaznoui later writes: "Practically, our party sought to subjugate, to take under its control both the legislative body and the government. We did not have the courage (nor the ability) to openly declare a party dictatorship. But we didn't want to stay within the limits of the parliamentary rules and we were trying to implement the practices of İttihat members in Armenia. Party dictatorship disguised under ramkavar guises. There was an intolerable duality of power. Frankly speaking - the parliament and its government, in the shadows: the party and its organs. It is clear that these two types of authorities, official and unofficial, could only hinder and constrain each other: the formal requirements did not allow the party to move freely and quickly, to fully express its will and the interference of the party did not allow the government to do what it knows, to follow its course and line" (Katchaznoui 1923, 23).

Apparently, such a situation was inevitable. The formation of a democratic political-state system was not an easy task. The Prime Minister correctly imagined its solution. The "Armenian Revolutionary Federation" Party that came to power should not establish a monarchy, but should leave the arena to the parliament and the government. However, Katchaznoui failed to realize his point of view and overcome the influence of the party in the political life of the country. The consequence was that he was isolated from the process of public administration. On that occasion, Ruben Ter-Minasyan writes: "The absence of Kajaznuni - in essence, his removal - meant the strengthening of the influence of the ARF" (Ruben 1982, 27).

On February 13, 1919, Katchaznoui's statement was read in the Council of Armenia that, due to his departure on a business trip, until the decision of the Council, the Minister of Internal Affairs Khatisyan will substitute him (Zang 1919). Two days later, on February 15, the official delegation headed by Katchaznoui visited Tiflis to leave for Europe and the United States of America. However, the British military command in Tiflis deliberately prevented the entry of Simon Vratsyan, a member of the delegation, party member and statesman, to Europe and the United States of America for about three months. Vratsyan had to leave Tiflis and return to Yerevan. On April 2, Katchaznoui also returned to Yerevan. Indeed, it became known to the British military command that at the end of June 1918, Vratsyan left Tiflis on a special mission to different regions of Russia and until the end of October, he carried out extensive activities to establish contact with the Volunteer Army of the South of Russia, which "... can provide direct assistance to Armenia by delivering bread, food and other necessary goods." (Vratsyan 1966, 14). He had many meetings with the command staff of the Volunteer Army of the South of Russia and received a

particularly warm welcome from the Commander-in-Chief, General M. Alekseev, whose “attitude towards the Armenians was extremely friendly”¹¹.

Transcaucasia at the crossroads of strategic struggle of superpowers

The point is that according to the secret agreement signed between Great Britain and France in Paris on December 23, 1917, Russia was divided into spheres of influence. Great Britain would manage the North Caucasus, Transcaucasia, Turkestan, Bessarabia, Ukraine, Crimea and Donbas would come under French control¹². After the end of the First World War, Great Britain set out to isolate the Caucasus from Russia forever and establish its influence in Transcaucasia. Transcaucasia was of great importance to England as a region of strategic importance, which was to become a barrier preventing the advance of the Bolsheviks into the Middle East. Another interest of Great Britain was of course Baku Oil (Lloyd 1938, 274-280; Churchill 2015).

In order to establish itself in Transcaucasia and implement its strategy, Great Britain naturally had to overcome Russia’s influence in the region and achieve the point that Transcaucasia was no longer part of it. And General J. Walker’s statement is quite important here: “The British cannot allow any propaganda aimed at the reunification of Transcaucasia with Russia” (Denikin 1925, 204)¹³. The English general explained it in this way: “The Peace Assembly has not yet given a solution to the issue of the state structure of Transcaucasia” (Denikin 1925, 204)¹⁴. And it was not at all accidental that the desire of the Volunteer Army of the South of Russia to restore the former Russian borders, which was contrary to the interests of England, was therefore working to free Transcaucasia from Russian influence. That is why the British military command was against the relations of the Republic of Armenia with the Volunteer Army and sought to break them.

In the new political conditions, the Armenian government could not give such flexibility to its foreign policy that the republic would not suffer from the conflict of interests of Great Britain and the South of Russia. Due to the impact of the blows suffered in the First World War, the authorities of the Republic of Armenia continued to consider the South of Russia as an ally of the Entente states, their friend. They failed to make a timely and correct assessment of Britain’s covert, sometimes overt anti-Russian policy in Transcaucasia after the end of the war. Great Britain sought to push out of the region the forces controlling the South of Russia and strengthen its position

¹¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 223, list 1, file 113, sheet 21.

¹² Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, fund 71, list 35, file 195, sheet 151.

¹³ Source: *The beginning of the civil war*, compiled by S. A. Alekseev; Edited and with a foreword by N. L. Meshcheryakov. Moscow; Leningrad: State Publishing House, 1926 (Revolution and civil war in descriptions of the White Guards; Vol. 3) (Memoirs: Denikin, Krasnov, Lukomsky, Drozdovsky, Sakharov, Pokrovsky, Budberg, Gins and others) (in Russian) [*Начало гражданской войны*, составил С. А. Алексеев; Под редакцией и с предисловием Н. Л. Мещерякова. Москва; Ленинград: Государственное издательство, 1926 (Революция и гражданская война в описаниях белогвардейцев; Том 3) (Мемуары: Деникин, Краснов, Лукомский, Дроздовский, Сахаров, Покровский, Будберг, Гинс и другие)].

¹⁴ Ibid

there. It was not by chance that it did not tolerate the friendly relations of the Republic of Armenia with Russia and considered it an irredeemably pro-Russian, unreliable element in Transcaucasia. As we mentioned, the Armenians did not inspire them with confidence because of the traditional pro-Russian orientation, and they used all means to fight against the pro-Russian tendencies of the Armenians. That is why official Yerevan refrained from establishing relations with Soviet Russia. If Great Britain did not tolerate the friendship of the Republic of Armenia with the south of "allied" Russia, then attempts to establish relations with its potential enemy, Soviet Russia, could have unpredictable and severe consequences for the country.

In order to neutralize the pro-Russian attitude of the Armenians, the British used all forms and means of struggle. So, for example, it got to the point where the British blocked the departure of the Armenian delegation to Paris, finding that its members had a pro-Russian orientation and were in contact with the Volunteer Army.

In the created situation Katchaznoui was forced to form a new delegation without S. Vratsyan. It is noteworthy that the British military delegation also expressed dissatisfaction with the newly formed delegation: "He came to me in this regard," writes M. Arzumanov (member of the Russian mission of the European delegation), - Walker's adjutant and said: "You Armenians are amazing people. When we were in Yerevan, Katchaznoui was asking for a pass for five people, but now he came to Tiflis and is asking for 15 people, and all of them as specialists in the field of food, finance, purchase of agricultural tools, etc. Your country is completely destroyed and there are no people, and you are sending 15 people headed by the ministers and the chairman of the government to America. You are hungry and you give them half a million for expenses. We do not understand you. What is it all for? I am afraid that General Walker will give the trip a political character. America will not give you money, because no one except Turkey has recognized your independence, and agricultural tools can be bought for you by your Parisian MPs (I informed Mr. Katchaznoui about all this and asked him to take it all into consideration)""¹⁵

Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia Aharonyan expressed his deep indignation from Paris regarding the Pan-Armenian policy of the Entente states, particularly Great Britain. On April 24, 1919, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Aharonyan in a secret letter addressed to S. Tigranyan, writes: "This article causes me great pain and great concern. I must say that the carelessness of the Allies and the unkindness of their officials regarding our relations disturb me greatly. I notice the same attitude regarding the Tiflis-based members of the delegation and Katchaznoui's trip. Both I and Poghos Pasha (chairman of the Western Armenian National Delegation in Paris) have made many oral and written requests to cancel the departure of the colleagues who are so necessary for us. From the letters of General Korganov and Papajanyan, I am familiar with the difficulties caused by the British military department against their expedition"¹⁶.

¹⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 2, file 963, sheets 86, 97; National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 158, sheet 94.

¹⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 193, part II, sheet 423.

After long negotiations, the English military command allowed the new delegation, formed by Katchaznoui, to leave Tiflis for Europe on May 18¹⁷. For months, the delegation did not receive the reassuring support of official Paris and London to import flour, bread and other essential goods to the Republic of Armenia.

The delegation decided to go to New York at the beginning of October and then to Washington on behalf of the Council of Armenia to present the difficult economic, political and security situation of the Republic of Armenia to the American government, expecting their support. The delegation was joined by the representative of the Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg V Surenyan, who was sent to the United States of America in 1917, a famous figure, former member of the Parliament of Ottoman Turkey, Garegin Maskrmachyan (Armen Garo), whose main mission was to present the demands of the Armenian National Committee (Hay Dat) to the American government and society (Hovhannisyan 2002, 146-147).

The delegation in Washington actively participated in the hearings of the United States Senate Committee, had meetings with high-ranking American administrative officials and other representatives, raising the issues of economic, political and security support of the Republic of Armenia. In the hearings under the title "Preservation of Peace in Armenia" in the sub-committee of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the United States of America Senate, the chairman of the delegation Katchaznoui made a report (Ghambarian 2021, 136).

Food aid from the United States of America to the Republic of Armenia arrived in time. However, his demands for the assumption of the Armenian mandate and military assistance were rejected and no steps were taken for the de facto recognition of the Republic of Armenia until January 19, 1920.

The big expectations of a small state from the Paris Peace Conference

As mentioned above, in the new political conditions, the Republic of Armenia showed a western orientation, expecting that the states of the Entente will appreciate the contribution of the Armenian people to the victory of the First World War and, taking into consideration the great sacrifices and territorial losses they suffered, will show good will and work to solve at least the some part of the vital problems of our people. In this regard, the Republic of Armenia had great expectations from the Paris Peace Conference, to which, however, the Republic of Armenia was not officially invited. The leaders of the Entente decided that only the countries that had won the war and those that had broken relations with the Central Powers would participate in the work of the assembly. Expressing the position of the Entente on the question of the participation of Armenians, the President of the United States of America, Woodrow Wilson, noted that "I see the most sincere and direct sympathy for the Armenians everywhere among the delegates of the Peace Conference", but, unfortunately, "technically, it is very difficult to provide political units that have not yet been accepted into the family of states with the representation (Hovannisian 1971, 280).

¹⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 59, sheet 1.

Then Wilson adds that he will take such active work for the solution of the Armenian Case, which will be equivalent to the participation of Armenian delegates in the work of the Peace Conference (Hovannisian 1971, 280).

The Paris Peace Conference opened on January 18, 1919. As we have already mentioned, Armenians had great expectations that the assembly would compensate for the huge losses they suffered during the war years and would contribute to the realization of national dreams. On February 4, 1919, the delegation of the Republic of Armenia arrived in Paris, where the Western Armenian national delegation headed by the wealthy Egyptian-Armenian Poghos Nubar Pasha had already arrived. From the beginning, efforts to create a joint delegation expressing the united will of the Armenians from the two delegations were ruled out, as serious disagreements arose on a number of key issues, which had a negative impact on the process of a positive solution to the Armenian Question.

After extensive negotiations, on February 25, 1919, the assembly was presented with the unified demand of Armenians to recognize the Armenian state, with borders including Caucasian Armenia, the seven vilayets (provinces) of Western Armenia, and the four sanjaks (districts) of Cilicia. It was proposed to place Armenia under the care of the Entente and hand over its mandate to one of the states for at least twenty years. The Armenian delegations expressed their desire to hand over the patronage (mandate) of a united, independent and free Armenia to the United States of America or to the newly formed League of Nations. Presenting these proposals to the Paris Peace Conference, the Armenians waited with great hopes for its decision, which was very late. On April 17, Poghos Nubar Pasha and Aharonyan was received by the President of the United States of America, Wilson, and said: "If America ever accepts a mandate from any country, it will be Armenia only."¹⁸ In a letter-report addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia on April 24, Aharonyan requested to urgently publish the declaration of a united, independent Armenia, which will put an end to the dualism of the two delegations and create an opportunity to act in the international political arena with one front¹⁹. At the end Aharonyan considered it important to note that "soon, international assignments will have to be made, contracts signed - financial and economic, loans signed, relations with the state receiving the mandate, even the conditions of the mandate to be examined. For all of these, a united government of a united Armenia is necessary, so that it can strive to act as an organized state of all Armenians, otherwise the mandate holder can deal with us as he wants and our political freedom and independence will be threatened."²⁰ As can be seen from the letter-report, the Armenian delegation cherished real hopes for the possibility of uniting the two parts of Armenia and creating a single state. It remained to provide the legal basis for the planned and expected functions: the adoption of the declaration of a united, independent Armenia.

An important favorable opportunity was also created for the proclamation of that historical act - the territories of the republic had expanded. According to the Truce of Mudros, the Turks left the occupied territories in Transcaucasia and the borders should

¹⁸ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 193, part II, sheets 428, 459, file 35, sheet 118.

¹⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 193, part II, sheet 435.

²⁰ Ibid.

have been as they were in 1914, and the main obstacle to Armenia's independence, writes A. Jamalyan, disappeared (Droshak 1928, 132). Around April-May, Kars, Sarighamish, Ardahan, Surmalu, Kaghzvan, Sharur, Nakhichevan joined the Republic of Armenia, and the Armenian refugees who took refuge in different places returned²¹. At the session of the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia on August 5, 1919, Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Khatisyan announced that the territory of the Republic of Armenia is 40,920 square meters, except Syunik (Zangezur), which is an integral part of it, which is 6742 square meters (Worker of Armenia 1919). An Armenian administration with its military power was established in all reunified territories. Freed from the Turkish threat, the Armenian people got an opportunity to restore their destroyed economy. "... Armenia was resurrected from under the ruins and ashes like a mythical phoenix" - writes A. Gulkhandanyan" (Hairenik 1966, 74).

Great Britain responded positively to the publication of the Declaration of Independence of Transcaucasia, including Armenia. As we have already mentioned, the "United, indivisible Russia" political program of the Volunteer Army of the South of Russia and the "Special Consultation" attached to it was unacceptable for Great Britain, the goal of which was the restoration of the territories of the former Russian Empire along the 1914 borders. That is why they sought to hinder the Russians by isolating Transcaucasia from the South of Russia. It is clear why Great Britain responded positively to the publication of Armenia's declaration of independence. General A. Denikin writes that the 'voice of real politics' of Great Britain became known to them when. L. George announced in the House of Commons on November 17, 1919: "Admiral Kolchak and General A. Denikin are fighting not only for the destruction of Bolshevism, for the establishment of order and legality, but also for the creation of a united Russia... I need not say whether that slogan corresponds to British policy... One of our great politicians, Lord Beaconsfield saw the great, powerful and capable Russia rolling like a giant snowball toward Persia, Afghanistan, and India as the greatest threat to the British Empire" (Denikin 1925, 205). By the way, L. George's warning was not unfounded. General A. Denikin and Admiral A. Kolchak united their forces, forming a united front of the struggle for the creation of a united Russia, for the restoration of the 1914 borders.

Great Britain outwardly expressed its "alliance loyalty" to the South of Russia, showing support to General Denikin to overthrow the Bolsheviks. They also supported the existence of independent Transcaucasian republics, which contradicted the political goals of the Volunteer Army of South Russia. In fact, Great Britain sought to isolate the South of Russia and push it out of Transcaucasia with the independent existence of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

On March 28, 1919, participating in the consultation of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, General V. Thomson, referring to the relationship between the States of the Entente and the Volunteer Army, said that the South of Russia was being supported because it was being used in the struggle against Bolshevism, but they would never be allowed to interfere with the independence of the Transcaucasian republics,

²¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 35, sheet 88.

which they were defending²². In that case, the question arises why Great Britain and the United States of America did not recognize the independence of the Transcaucasian republics. The English diplomacy was trying both ways, announcing its support for the independence of Transcaucasian republics, but at the same time, it did not want to openly violate the allied “loyalty” to General Denikin.

Regarding the positive attitude of the British towards the independence of the Transcaucasia, including Armenia, in the “political theory” of April-May 1919 of the “Special Consultation” attached to the Volunteer Army, it is said that the policy of the British is aimed at realizing the aspirations of new state formations for independence and complete separation from the South of Russia. That was manifested in the behavior of all Transcaucasian republics, including the Republic of Armenia²³. General Denikin writes that the British convinced the governments of the Transcaucasian republics that sooner or later they would recognize their independence so that they would help them drive the Volunteer Army out of the region. Life in the Transcaucasia was linked to and highly dependent on English policy (Denikin 1925, 205).

In fact, England demanded from the government of the Republic of Armenia to radically change its attitude towards the Volunteer Army, with which it was in close relations until then. Moreover, England urged the Republic of Armenia not to have anything to do with the political forces in the South of Russia, which are in conflict with it. General V. Bich convinced the Armenian ministers that Russia is the enemy not only of England, but also of the Republic of Armenia. Now the moment has come when Great Britain can finally fulfill its long-standing intention and push the South of Russia out of the Caucasus²⁴.

The new realities of the Bolshevik period

Khatisyan had a meeting with V. Thomson in Tiflis (April 4-11). During this meeting the latter, while referring to the relations between the Bolsheviks and the Volunteer Army of the South of Russia, mentioned that both are evil forces for Armenia. The Bolsheviks destroy the intelligentsia, and the Volunteer Army does not accept the independence of Transcaucasia, as well as Armenia²⁵. At the end of the conversation V. Thomson reported that the Bolsheviks were getting stronger day by day. At the Paris Peace Conference, attitudes toward the Bolsheviks had changed. On April 24, 1919, Aharonyan wrote in a letter-report addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia from Paris: “...Here these days the Russian problem had a serious crisis. The states as if wanted to recognize the Bolsheviks and enter into relations. America was the defender of this idea, in the face of President V. Wilson. England and

²² National Archives of Armenia, fund 223, list 1, file 76, sheet 25; National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 23, part I, sheet 143, 145, file 32, sheet 176; National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 243, sheet 73; National Archives of Armenia, fund 201, list 1, file 42, sheet 16; National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1, file 101, sheet 16, file 120, sheet 61.

²³ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 1, file 19, sheet 28.

²⁴ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 1, file 39, sheet 96.

²⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 2, file 962, sheet 47; National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 32, sheet 154; National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 243, sheet 75.

France immediately showed strong opposition. It is quite possible that a new attempt will be to recognize the Bolshevik government actually from now on. For now, what is certain is that the Entente states have decided not to intervene in Russia's affairs with the army and not to declare war on the Bolsheviks, and even to withdraw their troops. With this in mind, decisive statements were made in the French Parliament by Pichon and in England by Lloyd George. I must say that intervention in the affairs of Russia is not at all popular²⁶. This information greatly worried the government of the Republic of Armenia. It seemed that a new political situation was being created in the relations with the South of Russia, which requires the government of the Republic of Armenia to adopt a new behavior. In April 1919, the Council of Armenia, based on the created political situation, decided to maintain neutrality, severing contacts with both the Bolsheviks and the non-Soviet state organizations of South Russia²⁷ (Denikin 1925, 252; Worker of Armenia 1919). The point was that the victory of any of the different political forces of Russia would lead to the unification of the territories of the former Russian Empire, as a result of which the government of the Transcaucasia, including the Republic of Armenia, would fall. Wide propaganda is being carried out among the Armenians of the North Caucasus and the Don, not to mix two to none of the political forces, because before that Armenians helped the Volunteer Army in the fight against the Bolsheviks²⁸. In 'Political Theory' it was also stated that according to the special intelligence information of the Volunteer Army, the government of the Republic of Armenia was also dissatisfied with the behavior of the Armenians living on the shores of the Black Sea, because they support the Volunteer Army with weapons in the fight against the Georgians²⁹. In order to push the Georgian soldiers out of the Black Sea regions by force of arms, General Denikin used the atrocities of the Georgian authorities against Armenians and Abkhazians as an occasion. Back on February 24 (March 9), 1919, the Armenian National Council of Gagra appealed to General Denikin to protect the Armenians of Sukhum region from the violence of the Georgian army³⁰. In this regard, on February 26 (March 11), General Denikin, the English military commander, General Ch. Briggs addressed with the following statement: "Representatives of the Armenian National Council of the Sochi region asked me to protect the Armenians of the Sukhum region, particularly the village of Gudauti, from the violence of the Georgian army. The above-mentioned statement of the Armenian National Council of the Sochi region is confirmed by the reports of the commanders of the military units subordinate to me, according to which the noise of cannon and machine gun fire can be heard continuously from the enemy's rear on the other side of the Bzyb River. I ask your Excellency to inform the British High Military Command of Transcaucasia about my protest against the violence against the unarmed Armenian population, and also to put pressure on the Georgian government to stop the barbarism"³¹.

²⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 193, part II, sheet 430.

²⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 120, sheet 117.

²⁸ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 1, file 19, sheet 29.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 38, sheets 20-21.

³¹ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 38, sheet 18.

Regional and geopolitical dimensions of the “Act of Independence of United Armenia”

As we can see, the relations of the Republic of Armenia with its neighbors Georgia and Azerbaijan were not settled. This document also testifies to that, as well as confirms the fact that the Armenians found protection from the Russians. Despite this, in order to establish the country's independent statehood, the Council of the Republic of Armenia decided to maintain neutrality and not participate in the struggle of various Russian political forces. After long delays, on May 28, 1919, on the day of the first anniversary of independence, the Government of the Republic of Armenia (Khatisyan) finally announced the “Act of Independence of United Armenia” under solemn conditions, where it is said: *“In order to restore the integrity of Armenia and ensure the complete freedom and prosperity of the people, the Government of Armenia, in accordance with the unanimous will and desire of the entire Armenian people, declares that from today the divided parts of Armenia are permanently united as an independent state union... Thus, at present, the people of Armenia are their the supreme owner and director of the completed motherland, and the parliament and government of Armenia are the supreme legislative and executive power uniting the free people of united Armenia. The Government of Armenia publishes this act based on the special powers granted to the Government by the decision of the Parliament made on April 27, 1919 (May 28, 1919, Yerevan)”*³².

On June 4, 1919, at the meeting of the Council of Armenia, Khatisyan announced: “What was done was political necessity. The adoption of the declaration provided the legal framework by which the government got the opportunity to solve national and state problems”³³.

The main point of the declaration of May 28 was that the official acceptance of independence put an end to the unfavorable opinions about the independence of Armenia created by the representatives of the Entente, their representatives in the Transcaucasia, neighbors and especially the non-Soviet state entities of the South of Russia.

The declaration of “United Independent Armenia” was positively accepted by the administration of the United States of America. On August 3, 1919, the French military delegation to the British military mission in Transcaucasia and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the south of Russia, General Denikin was informed by telegram that on August 13 the American colonel W. Haskell will arrive in Batumi. The telegram showed that at the session of the Inter-Allied General Council on July 5, on behalf of the governments of the United States of America, France, Great Britain and Italy, Colonel W. Haskell was appointed as the High Commissioner in the Republic of Armenia. At the same time, he was instructed to take all measures to organize the necessary assistance to the Republic of Armenia. All the representatives of the Entente governments and military commands operating in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan were obliged to show all kinds of support to Colonel W. Haskell. At the end of the telegram it was said that Cilicia was not included in the list of territories to which

³² National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 35, sheet 88.

³³ Ibid.

Colonel W. Haskell's powers³⁴. On August 14, 1919, Colonel W. Haskell was welcomed by the General Consul of the Republic of Armenia G. Yedigaryan and the chairman of the Armenian National Council, Ashot Mndoyants. The consul, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, in welcoming remarks to Colonel W. Haskell: "... expressed a desire for drastic measures to be taken to end the threat to Armenians and Armenia" (Nor Ashkhatavor 1919a). Colonel W. Haskell replied that he will use all means to settle the difficult situation of the Republic of Armenia peacefully and will support the process of giving Armenia's mandate to America (Nor Ashkhatavor 1919a).

On August 21, Colonel W. Haskell was received with great pomp and ceremony by the members of the government of the Republic of Armenia, parliamentarians and citizens. During his first visit, he informed Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Khatisyan that the Paris Peace Conference instructed him to ensure the internal and external security of the Armenian people, food supply, safe immigration, etc. He then informs that he will stay in Yerevan for three days to thoroughly familiarize himself with the internal and external situation of the country and the demands of the government of the Republic of Armenia, then he will telegraph the collected information and conclusions to the Paris Peace Conference and hopes that he will be able to ensure the security of the Republic of Armenia until the mandate issue is resolved³⁵. He also informed Khatisyan that American General James Harbord will come to the Republic of Armenia in ten days to study the general situation of the republic and find out how many American troops are needed to protect the entire Republic of Armenia, etc. He also reported that the issue of Armenia's mandate is being discussed in America. During the conversation Khatisyan thoroughly presented the difficult internal and external situation of the republic, documented how the Turkish invaders have been feverishly preparing for two months to cause new disasters to the Armenians of the Republic of Armenia, rousing the local Muslim elements as well. At the end of the conversation Khatisyan noted that for this reason, the Republic of Armenia made a focus on the Paris Peace Conference and, in particular, to America, whose representative is W. Haskell. On the next day, on August 22, at the 6th session of the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia, after the Chairman's welcome speech, Colonel W. Haskell made a speech. The "New Worker" newspaper, published in Tiflis, on August 27 informs that the members of the parliament and the people "gave an enthusiastic and long standing ovation to the High Commissioner" (Nor Ashkhatavor 1919b). Colonel W. Haskell spoke in the parliament in detail about his rights, powers and tasks. He also assured that he will do everything to help the Republic of Armenia and ensure its security. In his speech, he also emphasized the military assistance needed by the Republic of Armenia: "...I have asked the British forces that the British soldiers will remain temporarily until they are replaced, so that the minor conflicts between the minor nationalities will be settled. When I learned the order for their return in Poland, I asked the English command and Clemenceau to stop for the time being. Right now, that issue is probably being discussed in Paris, and I have great hope that my issue will be respected, and in case of their departure, we will have to think of some

³⁴ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 39, sheet 90.

³⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 37, sheet 1.

army to replace them”. Colonel W. Haskell noted that there is no doubt that Azerbaijan violated the borders determined by the English military command (Nor Ashkhatavor. 1919b)³⁶. He assured the parliament that he will go to Baku and put an end to their military operations, and if they try to disobey, he will take drastic measures and hold the organizers and leaders personally responsible (Nor Ashkhatavor 1919b)³⁷.

The authorities of the Republic of Armenia were convinced that Colonel W. Haskell had broad powers, but without any leverage to stop the military operations of Azerbaijanis and Turks. Khatisyan writes: “After the departure of the British, we are under the auspices of the Americans, but this possibility has only a platonic character, because the Americans, being deprived of military power, have no possibility to force the Tatars and Turks to fulfill their orders.”³⁸ Despite this, the leadership of the Republic of Armenia received Colonel W. Haskell, pinning some hopes on him. A person in a difficult situation always clings to the smallest hope. Taking into consideration the warm reception shown to the American commissioner, the leadership of the Volunteer Army and the attached to it leadership of “Special Consultation” made a hasty conclusion: The Republic of Armenia has an American orientation.

Colonel M. Zinkevich informed D. Tchaikovsky in the end of August that it is time to cautiously bring forward the issue of pro-Russian orientation, as opposed to the American one, because it is an obstacle to the South of Russia. Colonel M. Zinkevich advises to use the mistakes of the Americans and prove to the leadership of the Republic of Armenia that the South of Russia can practically help it materially (bread, money, bullets, etc.) and put pressure on the enemies of Armenians. After some time, Colonel M. Zinkevich informs that the deep disillusionment with the American policy in the politically charged regions of the republic played a certain role in the request for the restoration of official contacts with the Armenian government in the South of Russia. Such a mood was caused by the indiscretion of Colonel W. Haskell, the High Commissioner of Armenia, who had given similar condolence speeches in the legislative bodies of Armenia and Azerbaijan³⁹. In this regard, the “New Worker” newspaper informs that Colonel W. Haskell in Azerbaijan “... denied the opinion that he is the “advocate” of Armenians. I treat all republics in the same way” (Nor Ashkhatavor 1919c). The newspaper then reports that Colonel W. Haskell was very satisfied with the government of Azerbaijan. He denied the information that was published in the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia. According to the assessment of Grigor Chalkhushyan, Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in Rostov, Colonel W. Haskell maintains bifacial policy: “Haskell was not a political scientist. A direct speech was expected from him. And he spoke. He spoke in Tiflis, he spoke in Baku, and finally in Yerevan. His three speeches were insoluble riddles, as if made by three different persons. In one, he was pro-Georgian, in another, pro-Turkish, in the third, pro-Armenian. We were depressed. And now Colonel Haskell starts denying his speeches one after the other: he denies Baku’s speech in Yerevan, Yerevan’s in Baku, finally Colonel Haskell fell in love with Baku, where he was constantly honored with

³⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 37, sheet 7.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Museum of Literature and Art, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Archives. Boston, N 4063.

³⁹ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 39, sheet 104.

receptions, feasts and balls. Little by little, Haskell turns his face away from us, little by little praises the Musavatists and dislikes the always inadequate, always complaining Armenian”⁴⁰. G. Chalkhushyan, expressing his displeasure with the representatives of the Entente in the Transcaucasia, reported that they lived in Tiflis, rich and prosperous. Their second- and third-class attaches were delegated to poor and modest Yerevan. On Sundays and holidays, they could always be seen in Yerevan Square, in the market, where they bought carpets at cheap prices from poor people and exported them without customs duty, taking advantage of their privileged representative position⁴¹.

At the end of August, Colonel M. Zinkevich informs Colonel D. Tchaikovsky that America is continuing Great Britain's policy of isolating Transcaucasia, including the Republic of Armenia, from the South of Russia. Colonel W. Haskell demanded from the government of the Republic of Armenia not to establish relations with General A. Denikin: “... When the Americans see, Armenia sympathizes with Russia, writes Colonel M. Zinkevich - Armenians are being convinced that Russia will no longer be a great power, and there is no need to rely on its help”⁴². Colonel W. Haskell's first steps showed that by entering the Transcaucasia, America sought to prevent the establishment of the South of Russia in the region. That traditional American policy continues to this day.

Although Colonel W. Haskell was against the government of the Republic of Armenia entering into relations with the General Command of the Volunteer Army and the “Special Consultation” attached to it, he advised Khatisyan to use the support from the South of Russia⁴³.

Factors complicating the military-political situation

At the end of August 1919, the military-political situation of the Republic of Armenia became even more complicated. On September 2, at the 11th session of the Parliament, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Khatisyan reported: “The motherland is in danger... the English soldiers have left” (Nor Ashkhatavor 1919c). On August 28, the chairmen of the delegations of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan in Paris appealed to the chairman of the Supreme Council of the Allied States Georges Clemenceau, noting that the withdrawal of the British military mission may have sad consequences for the Transcaucasian republics (Haratch 1919). This application did not have any positive results. Before the beginning of September, the British military mission left Transcaucasia. Only 10 000 English soldiers were concentrated in Batumi⁴⁴.

Colonel W. Haskell's promise to postpone the withdrawal of British soldiers from Transcaucasia also had no result, which certainly created an atmosphere of mistrust in

⁴⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 6, file 293, sheet 43.

⁴¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 6, file 293, sheet 41.

⁴² State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 39, sheet 104.

⁴³ National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1, file 101, sheet 90, file 183, sheet 39.

⁴⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1, file 101, sheet 92, file 183, sheet 36.

the political circles of the Republic of Armenia⁴⁵. Yes, he had great powers, but he did not have the power to stop the Tatars and Turks.

The delay in accepting the Armenian mandate by America also played a certain role in the regulation of official relations with the South of Russia, which caused greater disappointment towards America in the political circles of Armenia. General Denikin informs: "Armenians are massacred throughout Transcaucasia, Anatolia and Cilicia, and the supreme commander, Colonel W. Haskell answers the Armenians who addressed him that "the issue of Armenia's mandate has not been resolved yet" (Denikin 1925, 251)⁴⁶.

According to the decision of the Paris Peace Conference on March 20, 1919, the new American delegation led by General J. Harbord, which included 50 people, traveled along the Diyarbakir-Erzurum-Mush-Kars-Yerevan-Tiflis route to study the Armenian Question from ethnic, economic, financial, military and other aspects. On September 25, General J. Harbord arrived in Yerevan. In this regard, G. Chalkhushyan writes that America sent General J. Harbord to the Republic of Armenia to make researches and assessments in order to decide the issue of the mandate. That question "... was already decided negatively by America. The commander's assignment was a game, a fake, completely dishonorable for a great state. In three or four weeks, the general went through all of Anatolia like an arrow, and the issue of the mandate was forgotten. In this way, official America only harmed the case. It gave us hope. It would have been more useful for us if we had not been swayed by vain hopes"⁴⁷. After all this, within the framework of the government of the Republic of Armenia, the desire to restore official relations with the South of Russia naturally strengthened.

On September 17, 1919, the representative of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia attached to the Allied High Command of the Transcaucasia reported in a top-secret letter-report to the head of the Volunteer Army Department that the strengthening of the pro-Russian orientation was observed in the Republic of Armenia. The political circles of the Republic of Armenia are aware of the difficulty and complexity of the implementation of the country's security and independence establishment process, and they forcibly turn to one or another powerful European power, America, expecting their support. However, the authorities of the Republic of Armenia clearly expressed their disappointment towards them and tended to "... the most loyal patron and protector⁴⁸ (Russia). The moment has come to win the sympathy of Armenians. It should be used to make them understand that Russia has always been the only disinterested defender of Armenians and will continue to be so in the future."⁴⁹

In August 1919, Colonel M. Zinkevich informed the General Command of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia and the "Special Consultation" on the issue of regulating relations with the Government of the Republic of Armenia⁵⁰. As it is known,

⁴⁵ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 34, sheet 79.

⁴⁶ SA of the RF, fund 446, inv. 2, file 39, sheet 104.

⁴⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 6, file 293, sheets 43-44.

⁴⁸ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 34, sheets 96-98.

⁴⁹ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 34, sheet 96.

⁵⁰ Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, fund 71, list 35, file 195, sheets 205-206.

Colonel M. Zinkevich was a high-ranking Russian officer who became the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia. The leadership of the republic resorted to that diplomatic step. They sent him considering that the colonel had great experience and rich knowledge that could be useful to the Armenian army. In addition, this step strengthened the ties with the main command of the armed forces of the South of Russia and the "Special Consultation" attached to it. Actually, Colonel M. Zinkevich acted as an unofficial representative of the Denikin Army in the Republic of Armenia.

In the new political conditions, taking advantage of the favorable situation in the Republic of Armenia, the Russian side appointed the colonel as its official representative attached to the government of the Republic.

On August 28, 1919, with General A. Lukomsky's signature Colonel M. Zinkevich was given the certificate N 3703, in which it was said that he is being sent to Yerevan as a military representative of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia attached to the Government of the Republic of Armenia. He is authorized to conduct negotiations with the government of the Republic of Armenia on all issues⁵¹.

While discussing the issue of relations with Russia, the general meeting of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party (September 27 - November 2) highlighted the importance of maintaining friendly relations with Russia. In October 1919, Colonel M. Zinkevich, in his report to the representative of the Commander-in-Chief in Transcaucasia, informs that two months ago, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation was almost unanimous in accepting America's patronage, but now it is disappointed, and this promises great prospects for Russia⁵². The meeting decided: "While being completely benevolent towards the Russian people and Russia's political revival, our diplomacy must resist the attempts of the existing governments in Russia to extend Russian power over the former Russian Armenia, and thus make the work of the integration of Armenia impossible"⁵³.

The restoration of official relations with the south of Russia gave a new impetus to the organization of Armenian emigration, the repatriation of Armenian soldiers serving in the Military Army, the supply of weapons and ammunition to the Armenian army, as well as the establishment of trade and economic relations.

After restoring official relations with the volunteer army and the "Special Consultation" attached to it, the government of the Republic of Armenia again adopted a very cautious policy towards it. It tried to use diplomatic tricks to avoid political confrontations with the Volunteer Army and ensure the country's security with the latter's support. The point was that General Denikin, faithful to his political program of "United, indivisible Russia", fought to restore the territories of the former Russian Empire with the borders of 1914, and the Republic of Armenia was adamant about preserving its independence.

⁵¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 164, sheet 54; National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1 file 188, sheets 1, 3.

⁵² State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 39, sheet 95.

⁵³ Excerpts from the decisions of the 9th General Assembly of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF). Yerevan, 1920.

There were disagreements on the issue in Russian political circles. On December 13, 1919, B. Savinkov, a member of the Russian Embassy Council from Paris, wrote in a letter addressed to General Denikin that "... the importance is clear to us, it is especially great while we are in the struggle with the Bolsheviks, and the Volunteer Army needs to provide the rear. We still have loyal friends in the Caucasus, the Armenians, whom, however, we could not take advantage of, and whom we are gradually losing. It is necessary to enter into negotiations with Armenia (supported by America) and reach an agreement, promising broad autonomy. An agreement with Armenia will lead to an agreement with Azerbaijan, and Georgia, which plays the same role as Estonia in the North, cannot face us alone, like the latter"⁵⁴.

Thus, we come to the conviction that both the government of the Republic of Armenia and the south of Russia, pursuing different goals, nevertheless sought to restore official relations. The government of the Republic of Armenia, for the sake of the security of the country in the "iron ring" and due to other reasons, in August 1919 restored the official relations with the main command of the armed forces of the South of Russia and the "Special consultation" attached to it.

The South of Russia, pursuing long-term goals of creating a "United, indivisible Russia", sought to restore official relations with the Republic of Armenia in order to realize the reunification of Transcaucasia with the South of Russia.

Conclusion and discussion

The military successes of the Soviet Army changed the political situation in Transcaucasia. Soviet Russia was probably entering here. This circumstance caused great fear in the governments of the states of the Entente, the United States of America, England and France.

In January 1920, the Supreme Council of the Entente States together with the representatives of the military headquarters discussed the measures to provide assistance to the Transcaucasian republics. The English memorandum says: the current reality is the result of Admiral A. Kolchak's, as well as General A. Denikin's defeat. As a result of the inevitable attack of the Soviet army on the Caucasus, the situation especially in Georgia became complicated. Without serious help, Georgia, which is experiencing an economic crisis, will not be able to resist the simultaneous attack of the north and the south, and Georgia's failure will have serious consequences for the allies (Stein 1949, 348).

As an urgent measure, the British side proposed the following:

"1. Allies recognize Georgia and Azerbaijan...

⁵⁴ State Archive of the RF, fund 5827, list 1, file 160, sheets 1-2; *Anti-Bolshevik Russia: from the White Guard and emigrant archives (Collection of documents)*, managing editor G. A. Trukan, compilers L. I. Petrusheva and E. F. Teplova. Moscow: Institute of Russian History RAS, SA of the RF, 1995, p. 353 (in Russian). [*Россия антибольшевистская: из белогвардейских и эмигрантских архивов (Сборник документов)*, ответственный редактор Г. А. Трукан, составители Л. И. Петрушева, Е. Ф. Теплова. Москва: Институт российской истории РАН, ГА РФ, 1995].

2. For Denikin, all the supplies sent as aid, which are on the way, should be directed to those republics.

3. Additional aid from allies to Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

4. To allocate large amounts of aid to defend Baku and Batumi.

5. To prevent the Bolsheviks from entering the Caspian Sea” (Stein 1949, 348-349).

The joint report of Marshal Foch, Field Marshal Woodrow Wilson, Winston Churchill, Admiral Beatty and others to the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers states: “If it is not possible to defeat Bolshevism on its own territory, then it is necessary to do everything possible to stop it on some dangerous roads, for example, in the Caucasus. For this purpose, the issue of creating military blockades in the Caucasus should be considered. Taking into consideration the unstable situation of the local governments, the weakness of their military forces, these obstructions should be removed first of all with the help of European troops” (Stein 1949, 350).

As it can be seen, analyzing the upcoming danger, the governments of the Entente states suddenly “remembered” that the Transcaucasian republics have been asking them for official recognition for a long time. Diplomatic efforts of the Armenian delegations in the United States of America and Western Europe in this matter did not yield any results for about a year. It is a fact that the governments of the Entente states feared that the Transcaucasia was subject to the danger of a Bolshevik invasion, which could pave the way for the broad spread of Bolshevism to Persia and the countries of Central Asia. That is why the de facto recognition of the Transcaucasian republics became an urgent issue for the states of the Entente, which could create a diplomatic precedent against Soviet Russia. The act of officially recognizing and announcing them was just a political game, with the aim of “taking into circle the Bolshevism movement”⁵⁵. By recognizing the Transcaucasian republics, the Supreme Council of the Entente states actually created an opportunity to protect itself from the Bolshevik threat. The fact that Georgia and Azerbaijan had an anti-Russian position, they quickly appeared in the center of attention.

On January 12, 1920, the Supreme Council of the Commonwealth of Nations de facto recognized the governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan⁵⁶ (Boryan 1929, 65), “not remembering” the Republic of Armenia. Naturally, this caused deep indignation and dissatisfaction in the political, diplomatic circles of the Armenian people of the republic, why “allies... at the same time did not announce the de facto recognition of Armenia” (Hairenik 1926, 92). Khatisyan expressed his indignation in a letter to the High Commissioner of England M. Wardrop and asked to inform the Supreme Council about it (Ashkhatavor 1920)⁵⁷. On January 15, M. Wardrop in the reply letter addressed to Khatisyan, writes: “I was very concerned when I heard from you that your compatriots are currently de facto worried only about the recognition of Georgia and Azerbaijan. According to me, that news should have created the opposite impression. The Armenian Question is related to the Turkish issue and will soon be resolved by the reconciliation agreement to be concluded with Tachkistan, and until then I am not authorized to make any official statement about the issue of Armenia’s recognition.

⁵⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 278, list 1, file 10, sheet 36.

⁵⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 43, list 1, file 124, sheet 19.

⁵⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 555, part I, sheets 40, 56.

And the fact that Georgia and Azerbaijan have been de facto officially recognized seems to me to be a convincing proof that the Armenian people have no reason to worry. The case can be left to the decision of the allies, fully believing that they will be fair to the Armenian people” (Khatisyan 1930, 196).

At first glance, the reasoning seems well founded. Indeed, the Armenian Question was being discussed at the Paris Peace Conference, and the treaty to be concluded with Turkey was being prepared, which was supposed to solve the problem of Western Armenia. However, this did not prevent the Supreme Council from recognizing the already established Republic of Eastern Armenia. The latter’s friendly relations with the South of Russia played a role simply. The governments of the states of the Entente were sure that the Republic of Armenia would not act against Russia, no matter how it acts, white or red, but since the attitude of the Supreme Council towards the Republic of Armenia was openly unfriendly, the latter hastened to correct the mistake made. A few days later, on January 19, the Republic of Armenia was de facto recognized (Haratch 1920)⁵⁸. It was assumed that this international-legal recognition of the governments of the three Transcaucasian republics was intended to create a diplomatic and international legal basis for uniting their forces against Soviet Russia. Officially, in Washington, Garegin Kastarmachyan (Armen Garo) was appointed as the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.46991/JOPS/2023.2.5.076>

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Conflict of interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

⁵⁸ State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, file 36, sheet 98; *Armenia and Soviet-Turkish relations in diplomatic documents of 1945-1946*, edited by Arman Kirakosyan. Yerevan: Tigran Mets, 2010, p.18 (in Russian) [*Армения и советско-турецкие отношения в дипломатических документах 1945-1946 гг.*, под редакцией Армана Киракосяна. Ереван: Тигран Мец, 2010].

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