

ARMENIAN STATEHOOD IN FOREIGN POLICY REALITIES: THE FIRST STEPS OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC

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Abstract

The article analyzes the prerequisites for the establishment of the restored Armenian statehood in Eastern Armenia at the end of May 1918, as well as from June to November, which was of existential importance for the further development of the Republic of Armenia. The establishment of Armenian statehood took place under extremely difficult internal and external conditions. The problems facing the newly created Republic of Armenia and requiring immediate solution were diverse and many. In unprecedented geopolitical conditions, the political elite is faced with a national agenda to bring the state institutions and the Armenian society out of a hopeless situation. For the implementation of which political will, enormous efforts and consistent work were always needed.

The article also analyzes the problems related to social security, because hunger, epidemics and various diseases continued to negatively affect all spheres of Armenian society's life. It was obvious that the genocidal policy was continued against the Armenian people, because being isolated from the civilized world, helpless and surrounded by enemies, Armenia was quickly running out of food supplies.

The moral and psychological atmosphere prevailing in the Armenian society is also in the center of attention in the article. The latter generated despair and internal division, which gradually destroyed the united spirit of the nation, weakened resistance, and deprived the ability to think and act for the common good of the state. In such circumstances, the establishment of Armenian statehood was extremely difficult. The disastrous internal political and economic situation of the republic continued until the end of the year, one of the main reasons of which was the security and hostile environment of Armenia.

Keywords: *Armenian statehood, civilized world, genocidal policy, Eastern Armenia, First Republic of Armenia, security, hostile environment*

Introduction

The Prime Ministers of the governments of the first Republic of Armenia and their plans were discussed and adopted in a difficult military, political and economic situation,

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which was more than risky on the eve of the independence of the Republic of Armenia and after it. The prime minister and members of the government often mentioned that, on the one hand, they were in exceptionally difficult conditions, on the other hand, the conflict in the development and implementation of the internal and external policies of the executive power was deepening.

It was obvious that the government of the First Republic was taking the first steps, because it had no support in the past and it did not follow the previous government to be able to continue the state work already underway. Moreover, the First Government and the First Parliament of the First Republic did not even inherit ready-made apparatus adapted to the needs of the central government. According to which, the state authorities are forced to start everything from the beginning, which resembled a ‘pile of chaos’ and ‘ruins’, from which viable and working institutions had to be created.

The geopolitical factors of the catastrophic situation, the First World War, the February and October revolutions of 1917 in Russia and other circumstances caused a regional conflict. It was obvious that the irregular withdrawal of Russian troops from the borders of Armenia, the destruction of the Russian Empire, the defeat of the Armenian people in the war and the loss of territories, as well as the division of the Transcaucasia into separate states, which these profound upheavals caused enormous traces.

The key task of the public authorities of the First Republic was to stop the process of disintegration of the country, to remove the country from anarchy and to create the necessary conditions for state building. In the conditions of national security risks and anarchy, such phenomena prevailed, among which were: complete destruction of economic life and financial situation, cessation of goods and industry and exchange, extreme shortage of living products, interruption of imports, cessation of railway communication and lack of vehicles, then hundreds of thousands of homeless people and immigrants. In such exceptional conditions, the governments of the newly independent country could not strive for a comprehensive and comprehensive program of activities, which were limited from time to time by urgent problems.

Difficulties in harmonization of domestic and foreign policy of Armenia

At the end of May 1918, Armenian statehood was restored in Eastern Armenia, and the Republic of Armenia was established. It was founded under harsh internal and external conditions. The problems of the newly created republic and requiring immediate solutions were diverse and numerous. They were related to the country’s inner life and foreign policy. According to A-Do’s assessment, “the territory, from which the Republic of Armenia was formed, with a small exception, was the mountainous and barren region of the Armenian provinces. There, even in normal years, the population was subject to deprivation, and when life went out of its natural course, the people succumbed to hunger. Hundreds of thousands of refugee people from the devastated provinces came to take refuge on this land. The country’s territory is narrow, hilly and barren, the conditions are extraordinary and exceptional, and the population has grown and accumulated. Here is the fact that the reality was rapidly moving towards the worst days” (A-Do 2014, 530).

Political will, enormous efforts and consistent work were needed to bring the country out of its desperate state. First Prime Minister of the First Republic of Armenia Hovhannes Kajaznuni, in June-July of 1918, made a program-application in which he presented the main directions and priorities of the internal and foreign policy strategy of the provisional government he headed¹ which he delivered on August 3, 1918, to the Council of Armenia (parliament) (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 10-12).

Kajaznuni divided the problems faced by the republic into two groups: internal and external. The Prime Minister realistically presents the country's complicated internal situation and the causes of the current crisis, from which would derive his foreign policy. As it is known, the foreign policy of any state is the continuation of its domestic policy, the reflection of its internal situation and is meant to solve the existing problems, to use favorable international conditions for the benefit of its country.

According to Kajaznuni's brief description situation in the country was desperate. More than half of the population was made up of refugees and migrants, homeless, naked and hungry; the villages were destroyed, and the agricultural works were disorganized. Due to the lack of bread and the severe scarcity of other foodstuffs, the peasants had eaten their seed, and then it was the turn of the draught animals. Famine prevailed in the true sense of the word. As a result, epidemic diseases, particularly typhus, became widespread, and there was no medicine. Communication with the outside world was cut off because Turkish troops took over the only railway, and the import of goods had stopped. There was an acute shortage of the most necessary goods. Complete chaos and anarchy reigned in the country. It was essential to start everything from the beginning, to build a new state on the ruins². It should be noted that all of this was mainly the result of the Turkish authorities' raiding. It is clear from Kajaznuni's report that the Armenian world was a miserable state at the dawn of freedom.

On December 7, 1918, the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia in Georgia Arshak Jamalyan, in a secret letter-instruction addressed to the representative of the Republic of Armenia in Ottoman Turkey F. Takhtajyan, wrote: "They have taken away everything, be it state, public or private. They have taken away all the bread, livestock, fuel, goods of warehouses and stores, railway semaphores, lanterns, telegraph wires, telegraph poles, and so on. If in short, they have taken away everything that has any value for our people or the state. The situation of the migrants is simply desperate: some of them cannot return to the country because the Turks are still there, and their fear is great; those are the people from Turkish Armenians, Kars and some parts of Etchmiadzin, Surmalu, Sharur, Nakhijevan and Akhalkalak. The other part of emigrants, who managed to return to their place of residence, were doomed to starve to death because, as I mentioned above, the Turks had taken away all the food and fuel supplies and destroyed their homes. The difficulties of communication in Transcaucasus have reached unprecedented proportions. Going to Baku is considered a heroic exploit for us. We also cannot go to Gandzak without risking our lives. Since we have been separated from Karabakh for almost a year, it is possible to go back and forth to Tiflis on the condition of completing 5-6 formalities, but there is hardly a single train going back and forth between Tiflis and Yerevan every 3-4 weeks. These communication difficulties

¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 5-15.

² National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 498, sheet 48-50.

create an impossible situation for us, not only from the point of view of economic operations but also from the point of view that emigration and war prisoners are unable to return to their places. Armenia's food supply situation is terrible. They cannot get bread either from Georgia or especially from Azerbaijan, where there are vast reserves of bread, because Georgians and Azerbaijanis are not allowed to buy and export. We cannot get bread from the North Caucasus and Ukraine, where there is an opportunity to make purchases, because communication is complicated. The second, we have difficulty getting Russian currency, and our Transcaucasian bonas (Ruble of the Transcaucasian Commissariat) are not accepted there, and the third, there are great difficulties in Georgian transit"³.

The republic's internal political and economic disaster continued until the end of the year. "Enemies from all sides surround Armenia, and we are completely cut off from the outside world," writes Simon Vratsyan (1962, 274). "Famine, epidemics, and diseases continue to rule our country: the weak die and the strong become weak and then die. If it continues so for another 6 months, most of the people of Armenia will be slaughtered" (Vratsyan 1962, 274). Cut off from the world, helpless and surrounded by enemies, Armenia used up its poor supply of bread within a few months until October. "The wheat stored by the government ran out and hunger stuck its merciless claws into the Armenian's chest. They died by the thousands, tens of thousands," writes Artashes Babalian (1959, 19).

Since 1918, infectious diseases (typhoid, cholera) were widespread in the country, which have claimed thousands of lives. In Yerevan and Etchmiadzin, there were days when the number of deaths exceeded several hundred (Zohrabyan 2000, 117). There was also a difficult situation in the army. "Military hospitals were overcrowded, and the paramedics were more involved in transporting corpses than caring for the sick. And what happened at that time in Sardarapat, Ghamarlu and Igdir region and in the migrant barracks is beyond imagination. Hundreds of doors in these regions remained closed forever because all their inhabitants were dead. The number of dead was so great, and their owners were so exhausted that they could not even carry out burial ceremonies. Remaining unburied for days, the corpses rotted and served as a basis for new epidemics. No animals, dogs, or cats were left in the famine-stricken regions, and people turned to animal carcasses and even human corpses," (Hairenik 1924, 72), writes A. Jamalyan. Until the summer of 1919, according to the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Republic of Armenia lost around 192 thousand human lives due to the typhus epidemic and famine (Hairenik 1924, 72). It is clear what a problematic morale-psychological atmosphere was prevailing in the country due to all this. The internal split was like a worm gnawing at the united spirit of the nation, weakening the resistance and depriving it of the ability to judge for the common interest of the state. In such circumstances, the establishment of statehood was challenging.

Deprived of statehood for centuries, the Armenian people had the opportunity to regain their independence. Still, each part of the republic had various local groups that approached all problems in their favor and continuously pushed their interests to the front line. "All these representatives of Yerevan, Van, Sasun, Karabakh, Shatakh, Nukh, Aresh

³ National Archives of Armenia, fund 430, list 1, file 533, sheets 13-14; National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 2, file 963, sheets 102-103.

and others caused such a disturbance in our state-social affairs that it is difficult even to imagine, - writes A. Jamalyan. - Yerevan people were dissatisfied with the leaders of Armenia, who, being foreigners, did things in their city without the proper participation of locals. That is why they played the role of bystanders in the events of Armenia, like riotous children. The Van people believed that the government should prioritize the recapture of 'Van City' and the region above all other problems to liberate the migrant population and provide them with decent living conditions. On the contrary, the people of Karabakh claimed that, first of all, the liberation of Karabakh should be the problem of the government because Karabakh is the backbone of Armenia.

Sasun people lived for themselves like a single tribe. They did not allow anyone to interfere in their internal affairs, just as they did not interfere in the affairs of others. They did not consider any government order binding for them until that order came known by the head of the tribe in the name of "Ruben Pasha". Aresh people could not understand how the Armenian government could be engaged in any other business when it had not yet killed the last Turk in our country. Didn't those Turks, their relatives, destroy 40,000 people of Aresh and Nukh? And for that reason, what the government was not doing, they wanted to do themselves. So did all the other locals. They all had their expectations of the government of Armenia, and in many cases, they conditioned their assistance to that government on satisfying their demands.

I am not talking about individuals or small groups who came to our country from Russia, Europe, America, Istanbul, Tiflis, Baku and brought many programs, advice and criticisms. Each of them brought their diversity into our reality, wanting to shape and set the affairs of Armenia according to what they had seen and heard. I am not talking about the similar attitudes of the Armenians abroad towards the Republic and its affairs, which did not remain without influence for our state-building" (Hairenik 1924, 70-71). This is how A. Jamalyan realistically presents the moral and psychological atmosphere in the republic. The situation was becoming more complicated in the sense that about 30% of the population of the republic was Muslim, who constantly caused obstacles and were a threat to the existence of the newly formed state. Kajaznuni testifies: "Azerbaijan's position has been openly hostile towards us. It is undeniable that the Muslim population of Armenia, encouraged by Turkey and Azerbaijan, has taken an anti-government course. But the important thing is that we have not been able to find suitable means to secure our situation, from outside and inside. We were not able to find a somewhat tolerable modus vivendi with Azerbaijan; we were not able to keep the Muslim provinces in order by administrative means; we were forced to resort to arms, to move troops, to destroy and massacre and - which was a double discredit for the government - to face major failures. In such important places as Vedi-Basar, Sharur and Nakhijevan, we did not manage to establish our power even using a weapon; we were defeated and retreated" (Katchaznuni 1923, 35-36). "The majority of the Muslim ethnic population of Armenia, under the influence of external dictates and internal moods, did not recognize our government at all and did not want to deal with the state," writes A. Jamalyan. - And the minority, which in some places due to its weakness, could not go against our government completely, although it probably recognized its power, but did not want to be a supporter of it in any way" (Hairenik 1924, 69). Moreover, they did not recognize the Armenian government and resorted to armed actions.

Although the number of Russians in the Republic of Armenia was small - about 10 thousand - they were influential in the state bodies and the army. They were divided into two groups: peasants who had established permanent residence in Armenia due to the tsarist government's resettlement policy, and government officials and employees, mainly in the military, judicial and communications fields. With few exceptions, the first and the second, who had a privileged position in Armenia during the Russian rule, "were very ill-disposed towards our statehood. Even though they could not psychologically come to terms with the idea that a Russian subject has become the master of his country today, they did not agree with the aspiration of our state to equalize the situation of the Armenian peasant and the Russian peasant in terms of the land plot distribution and making the Armenian language the state language in all public affairs. The first was difficult for the Russian villagers because it violated their privileged position. The second was not easy for the Russian officials because it made it difficult for them to hold office in Armenia. So, in case of the ethnic Russian population, we generally had an ethnic group, which was at least unfriendly to our statehood" (Hairenik 1924, 68). I think there is no need to bring up any fact that the moral and psychological atmosphere created in the country in the first months of independence also left its corrosive and heavy stamp on both the internal and external political activities of the government of the newly established Republic of Armenia.

The decisive imperative to bring the country out of the worst situation was the efficiency of the newly formed state system. However, the relations were strained: the harmonious, interconnected work of different wings of the state system was still missing. There were disagreements between the legislative body - the Council of Armenia (parliament), the executive body - the government, and the dominant political force - the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party. In this regard, the Prime Minister of the Republic Kajaznuni later writes: "Practically, our party sought to subjugate, to bring under its control both the legislative body and the government. We did not have the courage (or the ability) to declare a party dictatorship openly. But we didn't want to stay within the limits of parliamentary procedures, and we were trying to implement the practices of Ittihat members in Armenia disguised under party dictatorship. There was an intolerable duality of power: in visible and open aspects - 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 one another. The formal requirements did not allow the party to work freely and quickly to express its will. And the party's interference did not allow the government to do what it knows, to follow its political course" (Katchaznoui 1923, 32).

Apparently, such a situation was inevitable: the formation of a democratic political-state system was not an easy task. The Prime Minister correctly imagined the solution. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party, which came to power, should not establish a monopoly but should leave the arena to the parliament and the government. However, Kajaznuni failed to implement the vision and overcome the party's influence in the country's political life. The consequence was that he was isolated from the state governance process. 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, 278). Moreover, he was expelled from the country. On February 4,

1919, the Council of Armenia adopted a law: to send Prime Minister Kajaznuni to Europe and America to procure bread, food and other basic necessities for the Republic of Armenia. However, due to the deliberate delay of the entry visa by the British command, Kajaznuni was able to leave for America only on May 29, 1919. The complex internal and external political situation in the Republic created an atmosphere of mistrust among the majority of the people towards the independent Republic of Armenia. For most Eastern Armenians, independence was incomprehensible, contemptible, and meaningless. “The Russian-Armenian peasant and the petty-bourgeois living in the city, - writes A. Jamalyan, - who suffered a lot from the recent years’ upheavals and were in a difficult economic situation, dreamed of the return of Russia, which would bring with it cheap bread, sugar, clothes and make life as easy as before...” (Hairenik 1924, 69). According to Grigor Chalkhushyan, in the first months of independence, no one in Armenia believed that independence was permanent. Its existence seemed a matter of time, because the state was in ruins. Eastern Armenians thought that eventually, the Russians would come and rule their country, while for Western Armenians, Armenia was Anatolia⁴. Individual members of the Council of Armenia did not even accept the existence of an independent Armenia; they demanded the country’s reunification with Russia. For example, on August 6, 1918, at the fourth session of the Council of Armenia, MP S. Mamikonyan, addressing the parliamentarians, asked: “Isn’t the very existence of the Republic of Armenia itself a catastrophe?” (Vem 1934, 98). Speaking against the country’s independence, S. Mamikonyan demands to “restore the union with Russia”⁵.

I think it was no coincidence that in the first period of the existence of the Republic of Armenia, the Council of Armenia and the government did not consider it appropriate to officially accept the country’s declaration of independence, and this, according to S. Vratsyan, also gave an opportunity to “think about our suspicious neighbors. And not only these neighbors, that Armenians are not in favor of independence” (Vratsyan 1924, 64). Naturally, the republic’s unstable and uncertain external situation had a negative impact on the internal life of the country, making it more difficult. Thus, in the first months of the independence of the First Republic of Armenia, the country survived in unspeakably difficult socio-economic and political conditions, from which the main directions and priorities of its foreign policy strategy would emerge.

First Prime Minister and Provisional Government

August 1, 1918, is one of the most important historical days in the annals of an independent Armenia. At 11:30 a.m., the first session of the inaugural Supreme Legislative Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, the Council of Armenia (from August 1, 1919, the Parliament) officially began in solemn conditions in the building of the City Club of the capital, Yerevan. The temporary chairman of the Armenian National Central Council of Tiflis, the oldest member of parliament, Avetik Sahakyan (father Abraham), opening the inaugural session of the Armenian National Council, said: “Citizens, members of parliament of the Council of Armenia. On behalf of the Supreme Armenian

⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 6, file 293, sheet 26.

⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 7, sheet 80.

National Council, I have the honor to open the inaugural session of the Council of Armenia today and announce that from now on, this is the only authorized body of the state power of the Republic of Armenia. This day will become historic for us and open a new, bright era in the life of our young state, independent political and economic development. This day will remain in our minds forever because, for the first time, we see the beautiful dreams and the cherished longing for self-determination within the limits of our poor possibilities, although in impossible, challenging conditions. Yes, our republic is small and narrow in its borders; it has been deprived of its most valuable territories and cannot give place entire population, and, it seems, has no conditions for independent existence. But I think that the country's borders cannot always remain frozen. I believe that the borders of our country will be expanded by the iron power of life, by the protection of our just and indisputable rights regarding the occupied lands and by a new friendly alliance with Tachkistan and its allied states, whose representatives are present here. We have chosen the way of agreement and peace, and I want to hope that we are not mistaken. Until then, we will perform our duties arising from the alliance of peace with sanctity and steadfastness. Let us leave aside the future perspectives, at least, today, here, without hesitation and with complete determination, we drop the anchor of our state ship and lay the foundation of the state building, striving to always improve it for the benefit of all nationalities of the Republic of Armenia, as children of our dear motherland" (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 7-8).

After Av. Sahakyan's opening speech, at 12 o'clock, the national flag of Armenia, the Tricolor, was solemnly raised at the top of the building of the Council of Armenia, accompanied by the anthem "Our Motherland" (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 9). At the same session Av. Sahakyan was elected the Chairman of the Council of Armenia. Deputy Chairpersons were elected Gr. Ter-Khachatryan and D. Zubyan, and senior secretary P. Zakaryan (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 9). The council decided to hear the report on the draft program of the provisional government at the next session. It should be noted that the Council of Armenia did not elect a prime minister in August of 1918. The fact was that the Armenian Council, considering itself the legitimate successor of the Armenian National Central Council of Tiflis, did not question the prime ministership of Kajaznuni (Vagharshyan 2012, 24).

Kajaznuni, in June-July of 1918, submitted a program (application) in which he presented the main directions of the internal and foreign policy strategy of the provisional government, headed by him.

On August 3, at the second session of the Council of Armenia, the Prime Minister realistically presented the draft plan of the provisional government. I do not consider it superfluous to focus on the most important arguments presented in the preface of the Prime Minister's speech, from which it is obvious what a difficult military, political and economic situation the Republic of Armenia was in before and after the restoration of its independence. "The government I formed started to work in extremely difficult conditions," says the Prime Minister (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 10). And "it is called to exercise executive power in a state that has just been born and has not yet passed the first period of its organizational works. The government has no support from the previous period: it is not the successor of the previous government to continue the state work, which is already in progress; it has not even inherited ready-made apparatus

adapted to the needs of the central government. It is forced to start all over again; it must create a viable and functional body from formless chaos and piles of ruins. On the other hand, the government finds the country in a condition that can only be described in one word: catastrophic. The four-year war, the Great Revolution, the irregular retreat of Russian troops from our borders, the disintegration of the empire, our defeat on the war front, the loss of territories, Transcaucasus partition into separate states, these profound upheavals could not but leave enormous traces behind them. Complete destruction of economic life and financial situation, cessation of goods and industry and exchange, extreme shortage of basic necessities, deficiency of the most necessary items or terrible prices, complete interruption of imports, termination of railway communication, lack of other means of transportation, then - a homeless and malnourished emigration numbering in the hundreds of thousands, insecurity at the borders and, as an inevitable consequence of all this, anarchy. These are the difficult conditions under which my government was called to work. This exceptional situation predetermines the very nature of the government. It cannot strive for versatile and complete activities, cannot have a serious program and will limit itself to the most critical and urgent problems. To stop the process of disintegration, to pull the country out of anarchic conditions and to create the necessary conditions for state-building, this is how the current government understands its calling” (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 10). Then, at the session of the council, Kajaznuni announced the following strategic tasks to be implemented in the fields of the internal and external policies of the provisional government headed by him to pull the country out of that deep crisis.

A. In the field of internal politics: 1) To establish a basic legal system, security of life and property in the country; 2) To open the roads of communication for uninterrupted traffic; 3) To restore regular postal and telegraphic communication within the country and neighboring states; 4) To take serious measures to mitigate the food crisis as much as possible; 5) To manage the situation of migrants and refugees, partly by returning them to their former places and partly by settling in new areas; 6) To prepare the convening of the Constituent Assembly of Armenia as soon as possible (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 10-11).

B. In the field of financial policy: to prepare the ground for laying the foundation of the own monetary system. To take the necessary steps to secure the country with money, restore industrial life and the exchange of goods, and develop a sound taxation system (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 10-11).

C. In the field of justice policy: to adapt the court to the conditions of the country’s civil legal understanding and legal customs while making the people’s representatives participate in the criminal proceedings (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 10-11).

D. In the field of military policy: to restore the country’s military forces, to create an army that is not large in number but strong in spirit and discipline (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 10-11).

It is not difficult to notice that the primary and urgent strategic issues, the solution of which would bring the country out of the worst crisis and ensure a little stability, were the basis of the project of the provisional government’s plan in the field of the country’s internal policy. According to Kajaznuni, if the government “...manages to provide a favorable solution to at least some of the problems mentioned above, I will consider that

it has rendered a great and invaluable service to the country...”⁶. As mentioned above, in the first months of independence of the First Republic of Armenia, the country survived in unimaginably difficult social, economic and political conditions, from which the main directions and priorities of its foreign policy strategy followed. As it is well known, the foreign policy of any state is the continuation of its internal policy, a reflection of its internal situation. It is meant to solve the problems it faces, to use favorable international conditions for the benefit of its country.

Prime Minister Kajaznuni presented the following vitally essential directions of the provisional government’s foreign policy strategy:

1. To consolidate the peace concluded with the Ottoman Empire and establish neighborly relations with it. To fulfill strictly all the obligations that Armenia has undertaken towards the Ottoman Empire and see that the Ottoman Empire does the same in its turn for the Republic. And, in particular, to resolve the issue of the withdrawal of Ottoman troops from Armenia and to ensure the return of emigrants.

2. By reaching a mutual agreement with Azerbaijan and Georgia, to resolve the issue of the borders of Armenia and those states based on the ethnic principle, as the only one that corresponds to the spirit and goals of the ramkavar (democratic and liberal) states.

3. To liquidate, in agreement with Azerbaijan and Georgia, the common institutions and property that remained from the Transcaucasian Republic (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 11).

4. To fulfill the obligations of the Batumi Treaty, demanding the same from Turkey before their review by the Constantinople Conference. In particular, to control the movement of Ottoman troops through the territory of Armenia⁷.

5. To establish neighborly relations with neighboring states, paying particular attention to the issue of restoring trade ties (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 11).

This was the government’s plan. “This can be called the most necessary pledge program to ensure the existence of the state,” says the Prime Minister. - It is clear that it does not cover the diverse needs of the country entirely and that several fundamental and mature problems remain outside. But the government does not include these problems in the agenda because it considers their solution impossible in today’s conditions. The government does not want to make mistakes, promising perspectives and unrealizable capacities; it does not want to take on responsibilities, the fulfillment of which is beyond its power. The government ensures that the proposed program is the maximum of current possibilities. The government will exert all its strength and ability to reach that maximum and hopes to successfully solve at least a part of the set problems if it has the council’s unconditional trust and active support” (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 11-12). Kajaznuni summarized the main directions of his not extensive strategic program with these words.

On August 5, at the third session of the Council of Armenia, the draft of the provisional government’s plan was discussed, which was accepted with great reluctance and received sharp criticism from party factions and individual members of parliament. For example, on behalf of the faction of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party S. Khondkaryan stated that the program draft briefly presents the problems and details of

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

⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 5.

the republic's foreign policy. He noted: "For the Member of Parliament the motives that forced the government to present to the parliament such a statement seem to be incomprehensible, in which general words hide the government's true intentions. But that very circumstance does not allow forming some idea about the government and its policy. That is why Socialist-Revolutionary faction, finding it difficult to determine its attitude towards Kajaznuni's based only on the application, decided to abstain during the vote of confidence or no confidence" (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 13). He also expressed his surprise that not a single word is said about the relations with Russia. He raised a question: is this explained by the fact that the government considers the Russian issue resolved, or are there other considerations? (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 12).

Representative of the Armenian People's Party A. Mkhitarian, on behalf of his faction, expressed satisfaction with the draft plan of the provisional government published at the session on August 3. "The government has decided to follow real policy and avoided programmatic announcements" (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 13). However, on behalf of his faction, he considered the part of the draft plan unacceptable, especially the part related to the relations with Ottoman Turkey, where it was said: "To consolidate the peace signed with the Ottoman government and establish friendly relations with it. To fulfill strictly all the commitments we have made to the Ottoman government and make sure that the Ottoman government does the same for us, in particular, to resolve the issue of the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops from our country and the return of the emigrants". He expressed great surprise, "...how the government ignores the longing and vital interests of the Armenian people in such a case, on which depends the existence of the Armenian state." Meanwhile, with the agreement of the Ottoman state and its allied states, government MPs are working in Constantinople to re-examine the Treaty of Batumi, having a goal to expand our state's borders and give the people the opportunity to live a normal (state) life. While on the solemn opening day of the Council of Armenia, the Chairman of the Parliament, expressing the unanimous desire of the people, expressed the hope that "the borders are not carved in stone, that they will expand by the power of the iron law of life, concerning the seized land and taking into consideration our just and indisputable rights for its protection", the government in its statement ultimately reconciles with the Batumi Treaty. It promises to strengthen it, thereby preventively disrupting the work of its MPs and simply making it invalid" (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 14).

A. Mkhitarian also expressed reluctance that the provisional government is silent on what kind of relationship newly independent Armenia will maintain with neighboring new and distant great powers; what direction will it follow in its foreign policy? This is a circumstance that is of crucial importance for the establishment of the interstate relations of our country. In his opinion, the draft plan of the provisional government is incomplete and insufficient in many parts. Therefore, the faction of the Armenian People's Party declares that it will support the government only to the extent that it implements the promises of the draft program, to which the faction has no objection, and to the extent that it will consider and work to implement the remarks of the faction (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 14).

On August 6, at the fourth session of the Council of Armenia, Kajaznuni explained the sharp criticisms and remarks made by the parliamentarians during the third session of August 5, which were related to the policies of the provisional government in the internal and external arenas of the country, etc. Addressing this or that criticism and remarks of the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia, he presented his well-argued and well-founded explanations.

The Prime Minister, contradicting the views of individual MPs, firmly stated that the government would adhere to the terms of the Batumi Peace Treaty signed with Ottoman Turkey and would not allow any deviations. “Yes, I have to say that since we have taken on responsibilities with the treaty, which the new act has not changed, we will strictly fulfill them and demand others to do the same. MPs Mamikonyan and Melikyan demand the government be brave. Still, since the current government exists, it will not lead the country to new adventures and trials and will not allow others to do the same” (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 18).

Let us remind you that at the session of the Council on August 3, Kajaznuni had mentioned preventing the MPs from excessive passion. “The government does not want to make mistakes, promising perspectives and unrealizable capacities; it does not want to take on responsibilities, the fulfillment of which is beyond its power.” It is a fact that at the second session of the Council on August 3, Kajaznuni bypassed the interpretations and valid conclusions of individual points of the strategy and tactics of the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the sensitive and complex problems and their painful and difficult solutions, which were included in the handwritten draft of the plan of the provisional government. However, the question arises: why and what were the primary motivations for not announcing them during the session of the council? Let us try to answer those questions. It is obvious that Kajaznuni, being a circumspect and insightful statesman and politician, while developing the project of the government, took into consideration the realignment of the geopolitical forces of the great powers in the region during the First World War, the sharp contradictions, the conflicts of military-political and economic interests, as well as the complex military-political tactics and diplomatic impasses by Ottoman Turkey - the conditions, the focus of which was the Republic of Armenia with its unspeakably deep political and economic crisis, and finally, the coercion of external and internal factors on the newly independent country, etc. Thus, in the handwritten draft of the unpublished plan at the board meeting, Kajaznuni writes: “In the field of foreign policy, I will follow a supreme principle: to establish neighborly relations with neighboring states, avoiding conflict with them by all possible means. It is dictated by the fact that our people, our country needs rest, peace, even if it is unstable. We are exhausted and ultimately broken. We are not capable of further tension; we will not withstand new trials. Any new complication of the external situation threatens us with inevitable and final destruction. We are a defeated side. We must clearly realize this, always remember and have the courage to make appropriate conclusions. At this moment, we can have one goal: to save the remaining part of the Armenian people and to make a heroic attempt to establish a state on the small territory that is still in our hands. This awareness should become the cornerstone of our current foreign policy”⁸.

⁸ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 6-7.

Indeed, this saved part of the Armenian people tried with superhuman efforts to get on feet again, to establish a state on that small territory allocated to it. And for that it needed peace, otherwise would not be able to withstand the new challenges, expected from the neighboring states, which showed a very unfriendly and hostile attitude towards this part of the Armenian people, which was in terrible conditions. Therefore, the main task of the young republic's foreign policy was to establish good relations with neighboring states, which was not so easy. At the same time, Turkish aggression posed a greater danger. The Turks had not yet given up the idea of eliminating the main obstacle to the implementation of the pan-Turkish strategic plan, Armenia, from the historical arena. It is clear from the draft of the project that the priority issue for the Republic of Armenia in foreign relations was the policy to be adopted towards Ottoman Turkey. Kajaznuni rightly believed that all possible means should be used to find peace with that country. The Prime Minister witnessed the policy of Ottoman Turkey towards Armenia and the Armenian people. "Turkey caused us great harm, it was merciless and cruel to us, and it gave such a terrible blow to our national structure, from the consequences of which we may never recover. By quickly solving its state problems, the Turkish state deliberately and in a planned manner destroyed the Armenians of Eastern Anatolia, thereby putting an end to the Armenian-Turkish problem."⁹.

Violating even the peace treaty signed in Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918, Ottoman Turkey separated two Armenian marzes (provinces) (Kars and Kaghzvan) from Eastern Armenia and reached Araks, establishing itself at the gates of the Shirak and Ararat valleys. Later, by the Treaty of Batumi after June 4, 1918, Ottoman Turkey separated from Armenia the entire province of Akhalkalaki, most of the province of Alexandropol together with the city, the best parts of the provinces of Etchmiadzin and Yerevan, and the entire province of Surmalu. It left Armenia too small territory for independent state existence. But it wasn't even limited to that. Violating the same Batumi Peace, Turkish troops entered Karakilisa, Jalaloghli and did not want to leave its places. And they could finally end up in Yerevan¹⁰.

Ottoman Turkey was also violating the Batumi Treaty regarding the refugee issue. The return of refugees was simply prohibited in some regions, while in other places conditions were created to make it impossible¹¹. Kajaznuni, as a statesman-politician, gives perhaps the most sober and true assessment of Turkish politics. "...Turkey in the Transcaucasis, as well as in Eastern Anatolia, strives to destroy politically the Armenian element and hinder the establishment of the Armenian state. Thus, we have no reason to have friendly feelings towards Turkey either for its past or present activities. Likewise, we have no reason to think that Turkey will have a friendly or at least neutral position towards us in future. From this, one can come to the logical conclusion that we should break off relations with Turkey and, protecting our vital interests, enter into a struggle against it. I do not agree with that conclusion and because I consider that struggle beyond our strength"¹².

⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 7.

¹⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 7.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 6-7.

After the Armenian Genocide and depatriation, were the Armenian people able to choose another way, that is, to enter into a struggle against Ottoman Turkey, when the latter had a well-organized, disciplined army located in the territory of the Republic of Armenia? Moreover, Ottoman Turkey also held in its hands the main lines of communication and the centers of strategic importance. After the capture of Trabzon, Erzurum, Batumi, Kars and Alexandropol, the Turkish army had a large amount of weapons, ammunition and food at its disposal¹³. After all, the Turks had a strong support of the Muslim population in the Republic of Armenia itself, which strongly protected Ottoman Turkey. Thus, the prime minister, who does not go beyond the borders of reality, concludes. "What can we do against that tremendous power? Disintegrated fragments of former military units, exhausted, hungry, poorly armed... And the most important and the most terrible thing is that we do not have and cannot have a state mechanism in the near future. Our "... government cannot establish order even in the building where it is located. Can such a government wage war against Turkey? I can give only one answer to this question: no, it cannot"¹⁴. In his opinion, if there was still a chance to save the remnants of the Armenian people, then first of all it was necessary to reach an agreement with Ottoman Turkey. "This means that our demands and complaints should not lead to a conflict. This should be our policy towards Turkey"¹⁵. There was no alternative: this all dictated the dire state of the country. By the Treaty of Batumi after June 3, 1918, and the Peace Agreement after June 4, Ottoman Turkey drew a framework for the Republic of Armenia, which required strength, time, and superhuman efforts to overcome and enter a new phase. Being the first to recognize the independence of the Republic of Armenia and "welcoming the final solution of the Armenian Question", Turkish military and political authorities reported in the press pages at the end of June that "...they created Armenia and thus consider the Armenian Question finally closed"¹⁶.

The Armenian Question was Turkey's sword of Damocles for decades. The Great Powers used it to interfere in the internal affairs of that country, to establish their influence there. The Turkish state naturally sought to get rid of that big "headache" as soon as possible. That is why it chose the method of erasing Armenians and Armenia from the historical arena. So it was Pharisee on the part of the Turks to announce that they had solved the Armenian Question, when at a favorable moment they were ready to exterminate even the last part of Armenians. The Pact of reconciliation in Batumi was another step on that way.

The Republic of Armenia, squeezed into a small area, looked more like a vast prison than an independent state. Ottoman Turkey surrounded and isolated the country from the outside world. "Armenia was left alone, surrounded on all four sides by hostile or unfriendly forces, without any external support and help"¹⁷, writes Kajaznuni. And here, in violation of the peace agreement of Batumi, the Turks without any reason and without warning started regular military operations against the Armenian military units of Sardarapat and Etchmiadzin on July 7-9, capturing the villages of Khatunarch,

¹³ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 8.

¹⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheets 8-9.

¹⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheets 11.

¹⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 116-117.

¹⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 498, sheet 48.

Chobankeara, and Nejirlu (Hairenik 1928, 119). In June-August of 1918 and subsequent months, more than half of the territory of the Republic of Armenia was filled with Turkish troops, “the rest was in a state of confusion and chaos. The Armenian people lived in days of great anxiety. Intellectuality was in terrible conditions. The figures holding the mental balance were just numb” (Vratsyan 1924, 156-157). The Turks were a few kilometers away from Yerevan and could head there to deliver the final blow to the country. It is true that a reliable Armenian military unit stood against them both in numbers and in terms of internal organization and “discipline”, “but the latter,” writes A. Jamalyan - felt a severe lack of ammunition and therefore could not endure a long battle”¹⁸.

At the session of the Council, Kajaznuni also addressed the questions of the MPs, why the Prime Minister, when talking about the country’s foreign policy, does not say a word about relations with other states, except for immediate neighbors Ottoman Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia. He emphasized. “The answer is very short. First, from a legal point of view, our independence has been recognized by the above-mentioned three states so far, and the second, there is no technical facility to establish relations with other states. Starting wider political relations is a matter of the future” (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 17). And what did Kajaznuni mean, when he mentioned that “there is no technical facility to establish relations with other states”? It is noteworthy that the handwritten draft of the program of the government included the clause “What should our relations with Russia, England and Germany”¹⁹ be, but he did not speak about it in the parliament. It was no coincidence that in the parliament, Kajaznuni bypassed the official position of the government of the Republic of Armenia on the Armenian-Russian relations in the handwritten draft of the program. It contained quite realistic judgments. Russia’s departure from Transcaucasus is a real misfortune for Armenia. It was not desirable for us, and if Russia ever returns to Transcaucasus, it will have our support. However, our current policy cannot be built on the Russian orientation. At the moment, Russia cannot support us in any way. That is why I believe that diplomatic games with Russia can be destructive.

This will increase the suspicion of the Turks, and they will not hesitate to resort to appropriate measures to disrupt cooperation with Russia. The Russian orientation is a political direction that may be necessary in future, but now it may lead to new complications. A question arises: why Kajaznuni did not give an explanation in the parliament, and why were those main political motivations not included in the handwritten draft of the plan of the provisional government headed by him: “Diplomatic games with Russia can be destructive” for Armenia, etc.

The question is that back on June 3, 1918, the head of the Armenian delegation in Batumi Al. Khatisyan under the pressure of Ottoman Turkey, signed a document (deed of obligation) and assumed a certain obligation: “The Government of the Republic of Armenia undertakes not to maintain diplomatic relations with the states that are at war with the Ottoman Empire throughout the war”²⁰. It clearly follows from that document that the Republic of Armenia was committed, on the one hand, to not have ties with the

¹⁸ National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1, file 22, sheet 6, 19.

¹⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 11.

²⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 13, sheets 6.

Entente Powers, including Russia, during the entire war, and on the other hand, presenting that document to public opinion meant putting the credit of the Government of the Republic of Armenia to the ordeal, because “the Russian Armenians,” as A. Jamalyan writes, dreamed of the return of Russian rule” (Hairenik 1924, 78). The reality was that the existence of that document (obligation) was not known to the Armenian political and social circles.

The events of 1918 were still fresh in the memory of the Armenian people. These were the harsh conditions of the Batumi (June 4) Armenian-Turkish reconciliation agreement, which became known during the heroic battles of Sardarapat on June 6. The rebellious demonstrators gathered in front of the Armenian Council building came out against the pact, and Officer Vardan Arakelyan incited the people to disobey the government’s orders, urging them to continue the war. The demonstration was dispersed by police forces, and the next day he was sentenced by a military court to three years in prison and deprived of certain rights (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 20).

On August 10, 1918, at the sixth session of the Council of Armenia, it was decided to pardon officer Arakelyan with the following justification: he “did not aim to overthrow the government, but fulfilled his patriotic duty...to restore all his rights” (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 20).

I think it was in accordance with the commitment made on June 3 that Kajaznuni also bypassed the official position of the Republic of Armenia regarding England, a member of the Entente. The handwritten draft of the government’s plan states that it is obvious that even if England comes to us, it will be so slow that Turkey will have time to retaliate against us several times before the first English soldiers set foot in the Ararat Valley. It is possible that a small English contingent has already arrived or will arrive in Baku in the near future. It is possible that this first detachment will be followed by new English forces, smaller in number but stronger in material means. The oil region of Baku and the port, which is the gateway to northern Iran and Turkestan, are such valuable trophies that England will spare no forces to acquire it²¹.

According to the Prime Minister, England can provide serious support to Baku, but not to Armenia. If it had any significance to it, England would make a rapid march to the Jugha and then up the Araks. But such an invasion does not take place. The very fact that the Turks are not in a hurry to transfer their troops from Alexandropol to Julfa, but only send them to Elizavetpol, proves that they are not expecting an attack from Iranian Azerbaijan. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine what the British could be interested in in Yerevan province. According to Kajaznuni: “Would they undertake such a difficult and dangerous campaign from Mesopotamia through the territory of Iran to Central Transcaucasus for our interests? Having no reason to believe it, I think that the English orientation is still unrealistic and also destructive”²².

According to Kajaznuni, the situation in Germany is different. In his opinion, as a senior and powerful ally of Ottoman Turkey, Germany can force Turkey to do this or that. In addition, the German flag is already waving in Transcaucasus. Germany is a real force that makes it felt at every turn. At this moment, if anyone can protect Armenia from Turkey, it is Germany. Germany can help us if it decides to do so. And we must do

²¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 12.

²² *ibid.*

everything to get it on our side and get interested in our cause. But extreme caution is needed here. There are disagreements between Germany and Turkey regarding Transcaucasus, as their interests collide here. They are allies, but at the same time they are also rivals, and very jealous rivals at that. They watch each other closely, and the slightest deviation of each of them provokes the complaint of the other²³.

Kajaznuni thought. "We should ask for Germany's help only when we get its consent to give that help and when that support can really be given. In the absence of these conditions we must follow the policy of maneuvering between Scylla and Charybdis. A cautious policy towards Germany cannot be dangerous, because Germany will not suspect us of patriotism, while Turkey knows that we are ready to side with its opponents at any moment. That is why extreme caution is needed in order to attract Germany's attention in order to defend against Turkey ..."²⁴.

Concluding his speech at the fourth session of the Council of Armenia, Prime Minister Kajaznuni announced: "This is the policy that I intend to pursue. It is dictated by current situation. If the situation changes, and it can happen every minute these days, and there is a need for a drastic political turn, then I will give up my place to those who will better assess the current situation and lead the country on a new way..."²⁵. On August 6, with great reservations (11 abstaining), the Council of Armenia approved the plan of the provisional government. After the defeat of Ottoman Turkey and its allies in the First World War, the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia changed.

Attempts to establish relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia

The newly independent Republic of Armenia, being in an indescribably deep political and economic crisis, was forced to continue the struggle with its immediate neighbors Azerbaijan and Georgia due to their completely different political orientations, goals and territorial disputes. There were many complicated border and territorial disputes between the three republics, old mutual distrust, suspicion and fear, and radical differences in foreign policy orientation. Azerbaijan unconditionally and Georgia with minor reservations sought to get closer to Ottoman Turkey in order to create a common front against Russia, while Armenia considered Turkish dominance in the Transcaucasus as not only dangerous, but also a serious threat to its existence (Kajaznuni 1990, 15).

From the very beginning of the First World War, the Caucasian Tatars (Azerbaijani) were completely inclined to the side of Ottoman Turkey, with whom they shared religion and ethnicity, when "at the end of 1917, the Russian troops left the Caucasian front, and the Tachik army began its victorious campaign to the north, the Tatars, having almost unmasked themselves, went to the side of Turkey, writes Kajaznuni: not only did they not want to continue the war against Turkey, but they also did everything in their power so that Turkey would take over the Transcaucasus sooner or later"²⁶. After the establishment of the Republic of Armenia, "Azerbaijan (Transcaucasian Tatarstan),

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 13.

²⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 15.

²⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 498, sheet 40.

relying on the presence of the Turkish army, continues Kajaznuni, narrowed the eastern (partly northern) borders of Armenia and threatened to encroach on the Armenian population of those parts"²⁷. Not only did they threaten, but in the same period also put tens of thousands of Armenians to the sword (Ghaziyan and Mirzoyan 2003, 89). After the declaration of Georgia's independence, the Georgian government clearly expressed its foreign policy position towards the neighboring countries and Russia. After the conclusion of the Batumi Treaty, Georgia threatened the Republic of Armenia and demanded an end to Russian political orientation. That actually meant giving up the Armenian territories, adopting a German-Turkish orientation and through them accepting the dominance of Georgia in Transcaucasus.

For Georgians, there was no Turkish or Azerbaijani danger to threaten their physical existence and to search for ways of forced escape. The conditions for the Georgians were arranged in such a way that they did not have any acute, imperative need for foreign support (Darbinyan 1991, 74). In the handwritten draft of the Provisional Government of Armenia Kajaznuni notes: "Georgia has already made its choice. It openly focuses on Germany. It can do this without risk, because Germany was entrenched in its territory and protected its borders. To reach Georgia, Turkey will have to walk over the dead body of a German soldier, a step it will not take easily. Our situation is different. There are still no German soldiers, no German flags wave on our territory, and it is to be hoped that there never will be. Germans are interested in Batum-Baku and Poti-Baku railways, but not in Yerevan province. It is possible that the agreement between Germany and Turkey will take place at the expense of Armenia, and the Turks will continue to occupy the lands of Armenia. That is why rapprochement with Germany should proceed in such a way as not to cause Turkey's anger"²⁸.

Taking advantage of favorable external conditions, in the first half of June 1918, Noe Zhordania and Noe Ramishvili invited representatives of the Armenian National Central Council to Tbilisi on behalf of the Georgian National Council and the government. Our delegation was composed of Av. Aharonyan, Hovh. Kajaznuni, Al. Khatisyan, Kh. Karchikyan and H. Hakhverdyan (Hakhverdov). The agenda of the meeting was the discussion of the issue of dividing Borchalu province between Armenia and Georgia on ethnic basis (Melkonyan 2003, 285-289). Addressing the Armenian delegates, I. Tsereteli announced on behalf of the National Council of Georgia that Akhalkalaki, Ghazakh and Borchalu provinces and Pambak region of Alexandropol province will enter their borders. And "...all disputed territories with a mixed Armenian-Georgian population should go to Georgia. The former leader of the Russian revolutionary democracy gave the following reasoning: Armenians cannot form a more or less viable state after the agreement of Batumi writes in his memoirs, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia, General A. I. Denikin - and it is beneficial for them to strengthen Georgia so that it becomes a strong Christian state in the Caucasus, which will protect both itself and the Armenians with the help of the Germans"²⁹. Kh.

²⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 498, sheet 48.

²⁸ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 13.

²⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 4033, list 6, file 295, sheet 31; National Archives of Armenia, fund 198, list 1, file 15, sheet 18; National Archives of Armenia, fund 223, list 1, file 113, sheet 27; National Archives of Armenia, fund 276, list 1, file 96, sheet 125.

Karchikyan complained indignantly against I. Tsereteli's statement, stating that his proposal is nothing but a plan to divide Armenia between Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan, and this proposal is contrary to N. Zhordania's and N. Ramiashvili's assurances in the Armenian National Central Council that the mentioned territories belong to Armenians (Hairenik 1957, 1-2). It certainly could not happen that I. Tsereteli was not aware of those assurances. He openly expressed the real goals of Georgia, to occupy the Armenian territories, with the support of Germany. Moreover, he announced on another occasion in Tiflis: "What do you think about Armenia? Wouldn't it be better if a bigger Georgia was created and Armenians lived under its wing?"³⁰.

Georgia then improved its domestic and foreign political situation by accepting the real patronage of German Empire. On May 28, 1918, Germany and Georgia signed a secret agreement at Poti to determine their future relations. On behalf of the German imperial government, the agreement was signed by General O. von Losov, and from the Georgian government, Foreign Minister Akaki Chkhenkeli (Vem 1938, 84; Hairenik 1935, 103).

According to the agreement, Germany is sending a large contingent to Tiflis to maintain the country's internal order and ensure the security of its borders with Georgian troops. Throughout the First World War, the Georgian government allowed the Central Powers, Germany and Austria, to use the railway network in Georgia to transport troops and military equipment. For this purpose, a military commission was to be formed in Tiflis under the leadership of Germany, which, in consultation with the Georgian government, was supposed to regulate railway communication. Railway stations and military facilities were to be guarded by German guard soldiers (Vem. 1938, 84). The Port of Poti was to be handed over to Germany for 60 years of use. The latter also signed an agreement by which a loan of 50 million rubles was provided to Georgia³¹. On July 24, the Georgian government secretly confirmed the cooperation between Germany and Georgia in the military, economic, commercial, financial and other fields³².

The Georgian-German agreement gave a new quality and favorable course to the relations between Germany's ally Ottoman Turkey and Georgia. In this regard, Georgian military minister Georgadze's speech in honor of Halil Pasha, the commander of the Turkish troops of the Caucasian front, at the party organized in the building of "Georgian Club", in which he wished "success to the brave Turkish troops and their allies", is quite characteristic. In his reply, Halil Pasha stated that Turkey has the best feelings towards Georgia, and if an external enemy threatens the independence of Georgia, they should fight against him together³³.

The Georgian-German and Turkish alliance was primarily directed against the Republic of Armenia. Georgia and Ottoman Turkey sought to realize their conquest ambitions. That alliance was also directed against Russia. And it was no coincidence that in those days the Georgian press did not hide Georgia's anti-Russian position either. This policy was demonstrated towards the Russians living in Georgia. The government of Georgia, based on political motives, arrested a group of former high-ranking Russian

³⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 198, list 1, file 15, sheet 43.

³¹ Russian State Military Archive, fund 39720, list 1, file 49, sheet 5.

³² Russian State Military Archive, fund 39720, list 1, file 49, sheet 1-4.

³³ Russian State Military Archive, fund 39720, list 1, file 49, sheet 2.

soldiers and “suspicious” political figures. Thus, after the arrest of Generals Rubenau, Junkovsky, Durnov and others, the official Georgian newspaper “Sakartvelos Respublika” (Georgian Republic) announced in its issue of July 8, 1918 that “... the Minister of Internal Affairs discovered in Tiflis an organization fighting against the independence of Georgia, which aimed to restore ... in Georgia autocratic rule” (Sakartvelos Respublika 1918a). Russian officers, officials, Bolsheviks and representatives of other circles allegedly entered that organization. That organization allegedly included “Russian officers, officials, Bolsheviks and representatives of other circles. The means of activity should have been the blowing up of a number of institutions, terrorist actions, etc.” (Sakartvelos Respublika 1918a).

The same newspaper in the issue of August 18, 1918, criticizing the Russian orientation of the Armenians, declares that the relations between Georgia and Armenia will remain tense until the leaders of the Armenian people do not abruptly announce that their orientation and policy have radically changed (Sakartvelos Respublika 1918b).

Thus, after the proclamation of independence of the three nations of the Transcaucasus, a very favorable situation was created for Georgia and Azerbaijan. The direction of their foreign policy was also clear. Germany protected the interests of Georgia, and Ottoman Turkey protected the interests of Azerbaijan, and both to the detriment of the Republic of Armenia. The political situation of the Armenian people was radically different from the situation of the Caucasian Tatar and Georgian peoples since the historical moment when the Russians began to leave the borders of Transcaucasus.

Relations or conflict of interests of the republic with the central authorities for the period June-October 1918

Three newly independent republics were formed in the Caucasus, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, during World War I, in a difficult international political situation. These countries were in the focus of major powers in the context of new geopolitical realignments, sharp contradictions, military-political and economic conflicts of interest. Indeed, the struggle for control of the region was between not only the Central Powers and its individual allies, but also the Allies (Entente) and Soviet Russia. Each of them, openly or behind the scene, was shaping its policy for far-reaching geopolitical and economic goals.

On the verge of the forthcoming defeat of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey), the newly formed Republic of Armenia found itself in a deep political and economic crisis, continuing to remain in the most difficult vortex of Ottoman Turkey’s military and political tactics and diplomatic deadlocks. The requirements of the Batumi Treaty (June 3, 1918) posed serious obstacles for the Republic of Armenia to pursue an independent, free foreign policy and to establish diplomatic relations with the states of the Triple Entente and other neighboring countries. The point is that the Ottoman Empire put the Republic of Armenia in a circle with this treaty, allowing it to establish diplomatic relations only with its immediate neighbors, its allies in the framework of the Central Powers and those, which are loyal to this alliance.

Although a peace treaty was signed in Batumi on June 4, the Ottoman Turkey was not satisfied with its achievements. It remained real a threat to the newly independent Armenian state, which, in its turn, had quite a small territory. The threat of the military invasion of Turkey was becoming more and more real. Leo has written: "After the destruction of the Turkic Armenia, the young Turks were also destroying the Russian Armenia." (Leo 1925, 344).

Now we will make an attempt to present briefly the strategy and tactics adopted by the Central Powers in the region during the World War I. What were the reasons for the clash of the geopolitical and economic interests, as a result of which the Transcaucasus was divided between the two main allies regarding the sphere of influence, German Empire and Ottoman Turkey?

At the beginning of June of 1918 Turkey was close to defeat, but consistently continued to implement its strategic and tactical expansionist plans of pan-Turanism in foreign policy. After occupying all of Western Armenia in April, as well as Kars, Ardahan and Batumi, the Turks, in gross violation of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty (March 3, 1918), continued their military advancement, introducing new territorial claims towards the entire Transcaucasus, Iran, the Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia, striving to reach as far as China. It is quite obvious that the independent existence of the three Transcaucasian republics and the signing of separate treaties with each of them was directly in the interests of Ottoman Turkey to implement its strategic and tactical plans. All this was due to a number of favorable domestic and foreign policy factors in the region, which the Ottoman military-political leadership smartly used to call to life its belligerent and aggressive plans. The point is that the deep internal and external contradictions and conflicts between the three main nations of the region - Armenians, Georgians and Azerbaijanis, their different orientations in foreign policy and national-territorial border disputes, mutual distrust and intolerance, suspicion and fear. All these factors provided favorable conditions the Ottoman military-political leadership to deepen and split of the Transcaucasian Union. Of course, in the current circumstances, it was not possible to form a united front in the region to stop Turkey's military advancement. There is no need to say that Transcaucasus was unable to show any serious military resistance against the Ottoman regular army. The point is that the main burden of the Turkish-Transcaucasian war fell on the Armenian armed forces, so it turned into a Turkish-Armenian war. The Georgian military participation against the Turks was insignificant. They enjoyed German patronage, thus feeling safe from Turkish military attack. The Muslim division did not take part in the hostilities at all. Moreover, the Caucasian Tatars openly stated that not only would they not fight against their blood relative Turks, but they would unconditionally support them. They considered the victory of the Turks and the military territorial conquests to be the realization of their national-political aspirations³⁴. By the way, the Ottoman military units, taking advantage of the impossibility of creating a front with joint anti-Turkish forces, the defenselessness of the front, launched large-scale military operations in the direction of Sardarapat, Karakilisa, Bash-Aparan, where they resisted the Armenian people, left alone against the enemy, showed them serious resistance.

³⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 19, sheet 14.

The different foreign policy orientations of the three independent Transcaucasian republics were quite obvious. The Georgians adopted a German and the Caucasian Tatars an unconditionally Turkish orientation, and both pursued an openly anti-Russian policy. It is noteworthy that the foreign policy position of the Armenians was radically different. Its traditional orientation was Russian. "They understood very well that the most real thing for them," writes Leo, "is the Russian orientation, that without Russia they could not find peace in his historical homeland. That is why Georgians and Turks hated Armenians." (Leo 1925, 365). In fact, each of the major Transcaucasian nations was acting in its own interests, so it could not quickly and accurately analyze and resist the new conspiracies expected from Ottoman Turkey. It is not difficult to notice that because of all this it became impossible to conduct a common Transcaucasian foreign policy - flexible diplomacy.

Turkey, taking the advantage of the favorable conditions in the region, at the same time with military territorial invasions, threats, moral and psychological pressure, without the consent of its allies Germany and Austria-Hungary, on June 4, 1918, in Batumi, signed separate peace treaties with each of the three newly independent Transcaucasian republics. In this way, the Ottoman Empire actually had a wide opportunity to finally secure its military-political-economic influence in the whole region. The point is that the clearing and handing over of the railways to Ottoman Turkey on the basis of the additional protocols to the treaty began immediately after the signing of the treaty, while the full ratification of the treaty was to take place in Constantinople within a month³⁵. In fact, with that treaty, Ottoman Turkey was given a wide opportunity to quickly penetrate the Caucasus, Baku, Central Asia and beyond through Armenian territories. "Turkey," writes A. Khachatryan, even in spite of the usual politeness in the alliance, without the participation of its comrades-in-arms, had begun separate peace negotiations with the republics of the Caucasian peoples. Earlier, as the Bulgarian ambassador to Istanbul said, it had deceived his comrades-in-arms, saying that was sending a commission to the Caucasus to see the affairs in the Caucasus right on the spot, and not to sign a treaty. In the end, however, against their will, dividing this union by internal conspiracies, it signed a pact with each of them that only met his demands" (Khachatryan 2010, 114).

Thus, Turkey saw the signing of peace treaties with each of the three independent republics individually that met only its demands as a reliable buffer to ensure its security from Russia, which could become a real threat to it in the near future. As Al. Khatisyan writes: "For the Tajiks, the independent Caucasus was a coveted barrier between Turkey and Russia" (Hairenik 1924, 110-111). In fact, this tactic was one of the most important military-political summaries of the Ottoman Empire to protect itself from the Russian threat. Thus, favorable military-political conditions were created for Ottoman Turkey to advance to Baku, Kars-Surmalu-Nakhichevan-Zangezur (Syunik)-Karabakh (Artsakh) via the Yerevan-Julfa railway to penetrate Iran, and the Central Asian countries to implement the programs of pan-Turanism. After all, Ottoman Turkey was also threatening the military-political-economic interests of Germany, a major ally in the region. According to Kajaznuni "They are allies, but at the same time they are rivals, and

³⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 9, sheet 6.

they are very jealous rivals. They follow each other carefully, each of them slightly deviating from the other"³⁶. Turkey was blocking Germany from penetrating the Middle East, while depriving it of using so much-needed natural resources, available in this region. Germany was no less interested in economics than in military-political issues in the Caucasus. In 1918 the Chairman of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia to Berlin Hamo Ohanjanyan informed official Yerevan on July 26 (according to the explanation of the representative of Germany, the General O. von Losov). Germany is much less interested in Armenia than in Georgia, both in terms of policy and economy.

Politically, Georgia is much more interesting for Germany than Armenia, from the point of view of the advanced international law. They have already even lent money to Georgia. And Armenia, with its still undefined borders, between Azerbaijan and Georgia, with its uncertain policy, its undefined economic opportunities, is not very useful for Germany, only the moral side of our problem remains, the responsibility for the Armenian Question"³⁷. After all, German political and economic interests necessarily led it to take Georgia under its auspices. It was no coincidence that Ottoman Turkey's policies in the region angered Germany. The latter decided to moderate the excessive appetite of the Turks, not to allow them to violate the borders and conditions set by the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty. It is obvious that the railway network of the region was very much demanded by each of the parties, which would be in the sphere of influence and would contribute to the strengthening of that country. Though, the Germans were not interested in Eastern Armenia economically or politically, but a part of the railway junction of the region passed through that territory, where the military-political and economic interests of Turkey and Germany clashed. Based on this, the Germans made corresponding promises to 'support' the Republic of Armenia. However, as subsequent events, political events and diplomatic negotiations showed, German support was unrealistic. As mentioned above, Germany was not interested in Eastern Armenia economically or politically, so it was not in its interest to endanger for the sake of the Armenians, to deepen the already tense relations with its ally Turkey. Thus, it is not difficult to see why the two main allies in the region, the geopolitical and economic interests of Turkey and Germany, clashed. German interests necessarily pushed to take Georgia under his auspices. Germany demanded that the Turkish military-political leadership stop its military advance and territorial occupation in the region and start to negotiate with the representatives of the region. Under its pressure, on April 27, 1918 a secret German-Turkish treaty was signed in Constantinople, which divided Transcaucasus into the spheres of interest of Ottoman Turkey and Germany. According to the treaty, almost all the Armenian territories occupied by it in the Transcaucasus passed to the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Kars-Alexandropol-Julfa railway and Azerbaijan. The rest of the Transcaucasus, particularly Georgia, came under German influence. It was no coincidence that the German flag was already erected in Georgia³⁸. And this did not give rest to the Turkish military-political leadership; it contradicted its geopolitical and economic interests in the region. In response, on the same day, April 27, in order to circumvent the German-Turkish pact, Ottoman Turkey signed a secret alliance

³⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 12.

³⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 657, sheet 145.

³⁸ National Archives of Armenia, fund 199, list 1, file 10, sheet 12.

with the Musavat Party, which opened the way for the Turks to Baku's oil, the cotton of Turkestan and so on. In such an extremely difficult and tense military-political situation, a conference to be convened in Constantinople at the end of June by the diplomatic representatives of the Central Powers, other countries and the newly independent republics of the Caucasus: the new inevitable conflicts of interest was to appear in the horizon. In fact, a conference to be convened in Constantinople in June would mark the beginning of a new phase in Armenian-Turkish diplomatic relations. According to L. Shant, It would be madness for us to hope for the Turks' sincere attitude towards us. All this is nothing but a comedy, the Armenian knows very well that what he is doing at the moment is just a comedy, as the circumstances demanded.

Personally, I think that this game cannot be decisive, even a tacit reconciliation cannot be final, because the interests of us and Turks are diametrically opposed. This comedy of the Reconciliation Conference took place first between Trabzon-Batumi, then-Batumi-Constantinople and will now move from Constantinople to Berlin and from here again to the Caucasus. Thus, successively, as far as our struggle continues, the defeat of the Germans comes and the great world conference finally begins (Beylerian 2005, 330; Beylerian 1983). As mentioned above, on the same day, June 4, Ottoman Turkey signed peace treaties in Batumi with each of the three newly independent Transcaucasian republics. The last Article 14 of the Armenian-Turkish "Reconciliation and Friendship" Pact states: "The pact will be ratified; the exchange of the ratified copies will take place in Constantinople, within a month or earlier, if it is possible. It will come into force on the day of the exchange"³⁹. Therefore, on July 4, the one-month deadline for ratification of the peace treaties signed between Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the Turkish capital was to expire. So, the military-political leadership of the Ottoman Empire sought to legally consolidate its territorial occupation of the region. At the conference (National Archives of Armenia 2009, 177). to be convened in Constantinople on June 25 at the initiative of the German military-political leadership, it was planned to return to the revision of the provisions of the treaties, to the joint solution of all existing Turkish-Caucasian border issues, which were "interconnected"⁴⁰. The conference will be attended by the diplomatic representatives of the Central Powers and the newly independent republics of the Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Mountaineers of the North Caucasus). The leadership of the German Empire considered it necessary to invite Soviet Russia to the conference as a signatory to the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. That diplomatic move had a tactical significance. By doing so, the German government was implying that without the consent of Soviet Russia, it would not be possible to resolve any controversial issue concerning the former Russian territories at the conference. In addition, the participation of the delegation of the RSFSR could moderate the excessive demands of the Turks (Tumanyan 2012, 47-48).

Going forward, we should note that there was no alternative to resolving the issue of ratifications through diplomacy, so the treaties did not enter into force. The question arises: what were the main motivations and consequences of that tactic? Now we should make an attempt to answer those questions. As we have mentioned, the military-political government of the Ottoman Empire, grossly violating the terms of the Brest-Litovsk

³⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 10, sheet 6.

⁴⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 9, sheet 6.

Peace Treaty of March 3, 1918, without the consent and participation of its allies, signed separate treaties with each of the three newly independent Transcaucasian republics on June 4 in Batumi. The fact is that 28.6% of the 38,000 square kilometers of Transcaucasus, occupied as a result of a gross violation of the provisions of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, and this is 38,000 square kilometers with a population of 1,250,000 people (Zavriev 1947, 70-71; Sargsyan 1995, 56-57), the Ottoman Empire secured in the Batumi peace agreements that was incompatible with the geopolitical and economic interests of its allies in the region. And it is not at all accidental that all this had its logical reaction in the diplomatic negotiations to be convened in Constantinople.

On June 26, the Ambassador of Germany Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, accredited to the capital of the Ottoman Empire, held a meeting with the head of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia Av. Aharonyan and Al. Khatisyan (member). He stated the following during the meeting: "That issue should be left aside in the current period for now, because the Constantinople Conference is the continuation of the Batumi talks"⁴¹. And what did Johann Bersdorf mean, when he mentioned, that "the Constantinople Conference is the continuation of the Batumi talks". In fact, the conference was going to make a focus on the diplomatic revision and changing the provisions of Brest-Litovsk and Batumi Peace Pacts. Germany and Austria-Hungary instructed their ambassadors and representatives in Constantinople to make a joint effort at the conference to review, as mentioned above, amend the Batumi Peace provisions, which were incompatible with their interests and goals, to exert pressure on the Ottoman Empire to implement the terms and conditions of the violated Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. The final goal was not to ratify the demarcation of borders between Turkey and the newly independent Transcaucasian republics, which was enshrined in the relevant articles of the Batumi Peace Pacts and their additional protocols⁴².

Thus, at the conference to be held in Constantinople, Germany and Austria-Hungary, the ally of Ottoman Turkey, presented the following main demands: 1) To change the Batumi Peace Pacts, their ratifications; 2) To recognize the terms and conditions set out in the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty of March 3, 1918; 3) To withdraw the deployed Turkish troops from the occupied Caucasian territories to Kars, Ardahan, Batumi, the borders established by the peace treaty; 4) To stop the ongoing Turkish military invasions and territorial occupations in the region, etc.

However, these demands were not acceptable to Turkish diplomats, so they were openly rejected. "If Germany convenes a conference for this, the Turks do not need it. That's Turkey, - writes Khachatryan, did not give in to these demands in advance, but the relentless rhetoric of the war came to reach an agreement with his 'great ally'" (Khachatryan 2010, 116). It is important to note that the military-political events developed in such a way that the conference to be convened in Constantinople was postponed for days and weeks and never took place. The question arises, why? The first reason: the Ottoman Empire adopted a diplomatic strategy to delay the convening of the conference in order to renounce the above basic requirements of the allies Germany and Austria-Hungary. The second reason was the existing disputes and conflicts of interest between the Central Powers in the region. Internal divisions and disagreements gradually

⁴¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 13, sheet 4.

⁴² National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 13, sheet 1,4.

intensified due to new military failures of various German-Turkish factions and their imminent defeat in the World War I. Al. Khatisyan has written later: “On the big fronts of the war, there would be a fatal breakthrough. The fate of the war betrayed Germany and its allies” (Hairenik 1924, 108), “The greater those failures, the more the Turks and Germans avoided talking about the conference” (Hairenik 1924, 101). Diplomacy was no longer able to prevent the rapid course of events. In fact, convening a conference in the new military-political situation was no longer acceptable to the ally Germany. And it was not accidental that the latter was forced to abandon that diplomatic tactic. Thus, the convening of the Constantinople Conference finally failed.

However, a number of important and key issues to be discussed at the conference became the subject of discussion during the numerous private meetings and diplomatic negotiations in Constantinople, Berlin, Vienna, other cities, representatives of the various delegations of the Central Powers. Undoubtedly, in private meetings and negotiations, the Armenian Question should have been resolved by the same logic, in the realities of political and diplomatic disputes and conflicts of interest. It is not difficult to notice that new trials and hard days were ahead in the whirlwind of the difficult diplomatic struggle of the Armenian delegations.

Diplomatic efforts of the Armenian delegation between Constantinople and Berlin

Now let us focus on the coverage of numerous and complex private mutual meetings and diplomatic negotiation processes of the delegations of the Republic of Armenia aimed at resolving the Armenian Question.

On the evening of June 11, 1918, the Armenian National Central Council received a telegram⁴³ from the Minister of Justice and Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Khalil Bey, the head of the Turkish delegation at the Batum negotiations, inviting the Armenian side on behalf of Talaat Pasha to participate in the Constantinople Conference. “Representatives of our allies want to establish a friendly alliance with the states of the Caucasus. They are already in Constantinople. I also ask the representatives of Armenia to come and start negotiations in Constantinople”⁴⁴. On the next day, June 12, the telegram was discussed at the meeting of the council, it was decided to send a delegation to the Turkish capital, composed of the following members: Chairman Av. Aharonyan (Chairman of the Armenian National Central Council), members: Al. Khatisyan (Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia) and M. Papajanyan (MP of the State Duma of the former Russian Empire)⁴⁵. In addition to three delegates, General G. Korganyan (on the military issues), G. Khatisyan (on demographic issues) and M. Buniatyan (on the economic and financial issues) were appointed as advisers. H. Kocharyan was approved as the head-first secretary of the delegation’s staff, and T. Mirzayan was appointed second secretary, F. Takhtajyan was appointed secretary-translator, L. Lisitsyan was appointed assistant to the diplomatic attache of the secretary, H. Berberyan was

⁴³ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 116.

⁴⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 120, sheet 40.

⁴⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 12, sheet 1, 24; National Archives of Armenia, fund 222, list 1, file 141, sheets 253-254.

appointed diplomatic courier, and service personnel - A. Harutyunyan and Z. Simonyan. They were accompanied by bodyguards Colonel Shahbazyan and Lieutenant A. Aghababyan. The delegation was authorized to sign treaties, agreements, declarations, petitions, memorandums, as well as other international documents on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Armenia⁴⁶. Al. Khatisyan writes. "We have a mandate to be neutral and stay out of international conflicts"⁴⁷.

Earlier, in April-May, another delegation of the Armenian National Central Council, composed of A. Jamalyan, G. Melik-Karagozyan and L. Nazaryan, developed activities in Berlin (Hayruni 2013, 21-38). Armenian diplomats sought to find a solution to the Armenian Question in the complex realities of geopolitical, economic and diplomatic tensions and conflicts of interest between the Central Powers, in particular Ottoman Turkey and German Empire. As already mentioned, the Ottoman Empire, grossly violating the provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, invaded Transcaucasus, which was contrary to the geopolitical and economic interests of Germany and its allies in the region. That is why official Berlin and its allies have repeatedly demanded from the military-political leadership of the Ottoman Empire an immediate cessation of military invasions and territorial occupations in the region. However, the latter, ignoring the complaints and demands of the allies, persistently continued to implement its strategic and expansionist programs of pan-Turanism. On this occasion, the German military and political leader, Chief of the General Staff of the Army, General Erich Ludendorff, writes: "Enver Pasha and the Turkish government thought more about pursuing their goals of pan-Turanism in the Caucasus than about waging war with Great Britain." (Ludendorff 2014, 563). Meanwhile, Turkey continued to respond to the warnings and demands of official Berlin with baseless and false excuses, being well aware that allied Germany would never act from a military position. Another German military and political figure, Karl Mühlmann, in his remarkable work "The German-Turkish Military Alliance in the World War II" testifies to the numerous unfounded denials of Turkish military and political figures. For example, according to the author, the Minister of Defense of Ottoman Turkey, Enver Pasha, did not accept the warnings and demands of the official Berlin, "motivating" that: 1) The advance of Turkish troops in Transcaucasus is necessary to prevent the spread of the influence of Bolshevism; 2) To put an end to the Armenian 'atrocities' against Muslims in the region, a circumstance to which Turkey cannot look 'indifferently' (Mühlmann 1940, 199; Sargsyan 1994, 60).

In the current military-political situation, Germany and its allies, guided by their own interests and the logic of deep internal and external contradictions, sought to convince Georgia and Armenia of their sincere aspirations, and in fact 'persuade' (Sargsyan 1994, 61) them to raise their voices of protest in Constantinople and demand amendments to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, to withdraw the stationed Turkish troops from the occupied Caucasus to the borders of Kars, Ardahan and Batumi, to immediately stop military invasions into the region and "refuse to ratify the Batumi Treaty"⁴⁸. On June 23-26, German Ambassador to Constantinople I. Bernsdorf during the meeting with the Chairman of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia Av. Aharonyan and Al.

⁴⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 657, sheets 1,2.

⁴⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 116.

⁴⁸ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 117.

Khatisyan (a member of the delegation) suggests: “Now the problem is how to force Turkey to comply with the Brest Treaty”⁴⁹, “But there should be an opportunity to insist on it. It would be very good if Georgia and Armenia joined by mutual agreement on any grounds”⁵⁰. As we can see, the pronounced diplomatic tactics of Germany and its allies coincided with the demands of the new independent Transcaucasian republics in the region. Of course, each of these interests pursued completely different strategic and tactical goals. However, as subsequent events, military-political events and diplomatic negotiations in Berlin, Constantinople, Vienna and other places showed, the hopes of the Armenian diplomats regarding Germany and its allies were unrealistic and therefore did not receive any “tangible” support.

The Armenian delegation, relying on the assurances and support of the German government, sent an extensive memorandum to official Berlin with the goal of influencing the Turkish military-political leadership in order to withdraw its troops from the occupied territories of Armenia, which were not secured by the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty⁵¹ (Mikayelyan 1995, 506-507; Badalyan and Harutyunyan 1970, 178). In another memorandum, the Armenian the diplomats asked for Germany’s support in organizing the return of 600.000 Armenian refugees deported as a result of the Armenian Genocide to their homes and so on⁵².

However, for some reasons, the Armenian delegation interrupted its diplomatic mission and on May 30 returned to Tbilisi from Berlin (Avetisyan 1997, 259). Moreover, a few days later, another delegation with a similar diplomatic mission, consisting of the representatives of the Armenian National Central Council in Tbilisi, H. Ohanjanyan and A. Zurabyan, at the suggestion of the German representative, who participated in the Batumi negotiations, General O. von Losov, visited with him Berlin on June 3, which, to our mind, was not at all accidental. At the invitation of H. Ohanjanyan, Greenfield (his mother was an ethnic Armenian), as well as the great poet, prose writer, and diplomat Avetik Isahakyan, joined the delegation⁵³. After some time, the delegation spoke on behalf of the government of the Republic of Armenia, began its active and difficult diplomatic mission in Berlin, Vienna and other European cities, regularly informing the Armenian delegation in Constantinople about this. The delegation acted in Berlin for about five months, from June to early November. Let us now return to the delegation of the Republic of Armenia headed by Av. Aharonyan in Constantinople, which was to conduct its complex and difficult diplomatic negotiations in consultation with the Armenian delegation in Berlin. Its purpose was to present and defend the Armenian Question at the conference.

The main composition of the delegation, on the evening of June 13, 1918, headed by Av. Aharonyan, left Tbilisi and on the 19th of the same month, arrived in Constantinople

⁴⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 13, sheet 4.

⁵⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 13, sheet 1.

⁵¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 11, sheets 100-101.

⁵² State Archive of the RF, fund 446, list 2, files 39, sheet 63; National Archives of Armenia, fund 222, list 1, file 24, Part III, sheet 398; National Archives of Armenia, fund 222, list 2, file 11, sheets 2, 80, 102-103.

⁵³ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 656, sheets 121-124, 146-147; National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 11, sheets 100-101.

at 4 o'clock, and the rest of the Armenian diplomats arrived on June 24⁵⁴. On June 19, delegations from Georgia, Azerbaijan and the Highlanders of the Caucasus arrived in the capital of Ottoman Turkey⁵⁵. They were met by a special official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire, the former ambassador to Athens, Mukhtar Bey on the ship "General" in the port of Constantinople⁵⁶ (Zang 1918a).

According to the head of the delegation, First Secretary Hakob Kocharyan, Mukhtar Bey was instructed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to "receive the delegations of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan in order to take the necessary orders and take care of them."⁵⁷ It is also important to note that rooms have already been prepared for the delegations in the two best "Pera Palace" hotels. And "we were taken in their cars and made our check-in in the hotels, where we live with all conveniences. On the next day the same official informed us that two cars were at our disposal every day from morning to night, and two officials were also at our disposal to provide us with all kinds of conveniences"⁵⁸.

On June 23, Av. Aharonyan provided the National Central Council of Armenia with the following remarkable information. The arrival of the Armenian delegation to Constantinople makes a stunning impression on both Turkish and Armenian society. The news of the arrival is published in the newspapers as sensational news, completely unexpected for the whole of Istanbul, for the whole of Turkey (Zang 1918b).

The Turkish society was simply dumbfounded when they learned that an Armenian delegation was coming, because they are still used to reading that the Armenians were slaughtered in the Caucasus, that the entire Caucasus was subordinated to Turkey, and now they suddenly see that the Armenians were not completely slaughtered, but vice versa, this is a separate state, whose representatives arrived in Constantinople.

The Armenians of Constantinople are also shocked. They also thought that there was no longer an Armenian element in the Caucasus, that they were completely slaughtered, because the Turkish government and newspapers convinced them of this, and suddenly they find out that not only Armenians exist, but, on the contrary, they created their own state, sent a delegation to Constantinople. Armenians secretly go from house to house at night, whispering seemingly incredible news to each other and making sure of its veracity (Zang 1918b).

The conference, as already mentioned, was constantly postponed. The delegation of the Republic of Armenia had to stay in Constantinople from June 19 to November 1⁵⁹. Looking ahead, we should note that at that time the Minister of Foreign Affairs Al. Khatisyan and other members of the delegation, as representatives of the diplomatic mission, also actively worked in Constantinople on the appointment of foreign consular representatives of the Republic of Armenia in remote countries and cities where a large number of Armenians lived. Before returning to Yerevan, on October 21, Av. Aharonyan

⁵⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 117; National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 12, sheets 42.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 12, sheet 39.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 131.

sent a telegram to the Prime Minister, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Kajaznuni, proposing to appoint F. Takhtajyan as a temporary representative-translator of the Republic of Armenia in Constantinople⁶⁰.

On June 20, the German diplomatic mission in the capital of Ottoman Turkey handed over the Armenian delegation two telegrams from Berlin signed by H. Ohanjanyan and A. Zurabyan informing the Armenian diplomats that - a. the military and political leadership of imperial Germany “wants to improve its attitude towards the Armenian people... and they consider us friends”⁶¹, b. the holding of the Constantinople conference is being delayed, and it will probably start no earlier than three weeks⁶². In the conditions of the delay of the conference, it was acceptable to focus on the most important issues, which were subject to the upcoming discussions, during private meetings and separate diplomatic negotiations between the representatives of the Ottoman Turkey and the newly independent Transcaucasian republics⁶³. Al. Khatisyan notes that the strategic “main subjects of the many mutual meetings and diplomatic negotiations of the Armenian delegation in Constantinople were three in the period of four months: a) expedient borders for the creation of a viable Armenia, b) the Constantinople conference, c) the unbearable situation of Armenians in the Caucasus. We have talked about these issues continuously with all the official and unofficial persons we had the opportunity to meet in Constantinople” (Hairenik 1924, 100).

According to Al. Khatisyan in the conditions of postponed conference, the Armenian delegation pursued its strategic goals in three main diplomatic tactical directions: “a) our relations with the Turkish Council of Ministers, headed by Taleat Pasha and Enver Pasha, b) our relations with foreign ambassadors, the German ambassador Count von Bernstorff, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador Marquis Johann von Pallavicini and Bulgarian ambassador Kohlschef, as well as with the ambassadors of neutral states, Persia and Switzerland, c) our relations with the Committee of Young Turks, as well as influential Turkish state figures and representatives of press. Among them were Ahmet Riza Bey, editor of “Tanin” Huseyin Cahit Bey and Marine Minister Reuf Bey. We also had a meeting with the Sultan, to whom we were introduced by Enver Pasha. The subject of our conversation was the Armenian Question” (Hairenik 1924, 100). As mentioned, in coordination with the delegation of Constantinople, the Armenian delegation of Berlin carried out similar diplomatic, strategic and tactical difficult activities both in Germany and in other official European capitals. The delegation made diplomatic visits and held negotiations with the heads of states of the Central Powers, as well as the diplomatic representative of Soviet Russia in Berlin A. Ioffe and others. Accordingly, they regularly informed the Armenian delegation in Constantinople about their progress. It is important to note that due to the delay of the conference, all the most important issues related to the Armenian question and Transcaucasus in general were discussed mainly in Berlin⁶⁴, where each of the participants, in particular the main allies, German Empire and Ottoman

⁶⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 657, sheet 294; National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 12, sheet 102.

⁶¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 117.

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ National Archives of Armenia, fund 275, list 5, file 68, sheets 1-4.

⁶⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 12, sheet 59.

Turkey, consistently and diligently, pursued their geopolitical and economic interests in the region. At the same time, issues of clarifying disputed borders between the Ottoman Empire and the newly independent Transcaucasian republics, etc., were discussed in Constantinople. In fact, the main diplomatic strategic and tactical goal of the Armenian delegations in Berlin and Constantinople was to solve the Armenian Question. After three days of rest in Constantinople and some diplomatic preparations, the Armenian delegation, from June 22 to July 3, held meetings and negotiated with a number of high-ranking officials of the military and political leadership of the Ottoman Empire, as well as with the representatives of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and ambassadors of neutral states Persia (Iran), Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Holland and other countries accredited to Turkey. Meetings were also held with influential Turkish political and state figures and well-known representatives of press⁶⁵. “In general, I have to say,” writes A.I. Khatisyan, - that we used to divide the roles between each other and everyone would take it upon themselves to talk about some topics” (Hairenik 1924, 101).

The delegation first visited Grand Vizier Talaat and Minister of War of the Council of Ministers of Ottoman Turkey Enver Pasha, then Minister of Foreign Affairs Nesimi Bey, Minister of Naval Forces Djemal Pasha, Minister of Justice Halil Bey⁶⁶ and others. “Of course, it is understandable,” writes journalist of periodical “Zang”, “the difficult mental state of our delegation at that moment” (Zang 1918b): visits, diplomatic negotiations with some of the planners and implementers of the mass genocide of more than one and a half million Armenians and the deprivation of the motherland of more than six hundred thousand Armenians in Western Armenia and many other Armenian-inhabited places in Western Armenia and in many other Armenian-inhabited areas of Ottoman Turkey as a result of the Ottoman Turkey’s state policy, “who even today sought to exterminate the rest of Armenians by hunger within the borders of the small republic” (A-Do 2014, 540).

Undoubtedly, it is indisputable that Ottoman Turkey planned and implemented at the state level the strategy and tactics of mass genocide and statelessness in Western Armenia and many other Armenian-populated regions of the empire. The Turks viewed the Armenian population as a wedge separating Ottoman Turkey from the Turkic-speaking peoples of the Caucasus and preventing the implementation of Pan-Turkic, Pan-Turanian expansionist plans. The elimination of this obstacle became the goal of the Ottoman Turkish state policy towards the Armenian Genocide and statelessness, which was implemented during the First World War. In 1918, Ottoman Turkey, having invaded the Transcaucasus, continued the adopted policy of genocide against the Eastern Armenians.

It should be noted that on June 22, accompanied by a special representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ottoman Turkey, Mukhtar Bey, the chairman of the Armenian delegation Av. Aharonyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs A.I. Khatisyan and the military adviser of the delegation, General G. Korganyan visited Talaat Pasha⁶⁷. After mutual diplomatic compliments, Av. Aharonyan presented the main goals of the

⁶⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 117; National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 12, sheets 40- 41.

⁶⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 117.

⁶⁷ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 12, sheet 39.

delegation to the Grand Vizier: “Our territory is very narrow and limited... it will create an opportunity to secure territorial borders for our state, satisfying our legitimate aspirations, which, satisfying the principles of justice and ethnography, will make the new Armenian state viable and capable of political and economic development”⁶⁸. As a response, Talaat Pasha greeted the Armenian delegation with false kindness hidden under polite forms, assuring: “The imperial government fully shares the feelings and hopes of the Armenian people, and the young republic can be sure that the Ottoman Empire will support it in every way and do what is necessary so that this strong and hardworking nation can realize its plans”⁶⁹. Then answering the question raised by the delegation regarding the return of Armenian refugees who were deprived of their homeland as a result of the genocide and a number of problems of internal regulation, the Grand Vizier, openly falsifying the entire historical reality and the truth, publicly announced: “There were misunderstandings between the Armenian and Ottoman peoples, which led to very painful consequences”⁷⁰. This is how Talaat Pasha, one of the main figures who planned and implemented the mass Armenian genocide and deprivation of the motherland, expressed himself.

During the diplomatic discussions, Talaat Pasha deliberately avoided and diverted the main questions presented by the Armenian diplomats, again trying to falsify the entire historical truth. Delegation member Al. Khatisyan writes in this regard: “Of course, during the very first conversation he tried to throw off any responsibility for the massacre of Armenians. All the responsibility he assigned on the military government, Kurds and local authorities. “You should see for yourself,” he said, “how sometimes the officials arbitrarily violate the orders from higher officials.” He told how in the first days of the war he had asked the Member of Parliament Vardges to take the side of Turkey and how Vardges had remained silent in response. “Our enemies were the Russians,” said Talaat, “but when they aimed their guns at our soldiers, their bullets hit our soldiers’ feet. And when the Armenians, who were residents of the Ottoman Empire, the traitors of their homeland, started shooting, the bullets hit the hearts of our soldiers.” (Hairenik 1924, 101). “This meeting,” continues Al. Khatisyan - was a necessary torture for us. ... We worked to transfer the subject of our conversation from the past to the urgent issues of the present. ... The appearance of Talaat did not make a favorable impression: his haughty appearance, the face of an unintellectual one, his physical structure, his voice, which would emphasize a false friendship, could not be favorable. In the end, he asked to present the demands of Armenians to him in written form to send a report to the ministerial council, and promised to speak with the minister of foreign affairs. Talaat Pasha gave his approval to our demands in his speech, but he said that all issues will be decided by the conference (Hairenik 1924, 101-102). Talaat also informed the Armenian diplomats that “the conference will probably start in a week”⁷¹. It is clear that, it was no coincidence that Talaat Pasha clearly pushed the purposeful attempts of the Armenian delegation to a diplomatic impasse. The point is, as already said, that the diplomatic

⁶⁸ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 13, sheet 7.

⁶⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 13, sheet 7-8.

⁷⁰ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 13, sheet 8.

⁷¹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 2, file 34, sheet 2.

tactics of the military and political leadership of the Ottoman Empire was to disrupt the conference to be convened in Constantinople.

The delegation then paid a diplomatic visit to Enver Pasha, Minister of War of Ottoman Turkey. The following eloquent fact mentioned by the member of our delegation Al. Khatisyan about the behavior and some peculiarities of Turkish diplomacy is noteworthy: "As we entered the great reception hall, our attention was drawn to a huge collection of swords hanging on the opposite wall, inscribed in Arabic in golden letters: "You will find your paradise under the chains of swords.""⁷² Al. Khatisyan continues: "Enver Pasha received us immediately. He was a middle-aged and handsome man, who at first sight left an impression of a shy and very moderate person. His face was very stern and calm; his eyes were insightful and thoughtful. He was generally attractive in appearance. Looking at this man, it was hard to believe that he was capable of sentencing to death hundreds of thousands of people to death with a calm heart. The appearance of the Turks is so deceptive. That is why the Europeans are so easily deceived by their sweet and attractive algorithm of actions" (Hairenik 1924, 102).

Chairman of the delegation Av. Aharonyan after welcoming Enver Pasha announced the main and key issues that he had presented to Talaat Pasha. Enver, thanking and expressing mutual welcoming remarks, said: "That is what they expected from you. The truth is that you had put your hope in Russia, and more - England. Turkey has now given you independence and given it after much consideration of your situation. My signature is there and will never be deleted. You can be not only our good friends but also our allies. You will also come to that conclusion and you will see that it will bring the best results for the public welfare.

The issue of refugees - it is true, it is very sad and painful, like the war, but everyone suffered from it. Armenians are strong, hardworking and energetic people. Owing to these qualities, whatever wounds your nation has received from war, are treatable and must be treated. We are sure that our troops in the Caucasus will behave completely correctly according to the given order. I can say that the Turkish population also fled from Trabzon and other cities to Urfa and Adana, so we also want peace and tranquility"⁷³. This is how Enver Pasha, the other figure who had planned and implemented the mass Armenian genocide and deprivation of the motherland, expressed his thoughts. As mentioned above, answering the delegation's chairman Av. Aharonyan, Enver Pasha, of course avoiding and ignoring the diplomatic discussion of the main demands presented by the Armenian diplomats, called not only to establish friendship, but also to ally. In fact, he again circulated the proposal to create a military alliance (entente) with Armenia⁷⁴. Still in 1918 at the beginning of June, during the diplomatic negotiations in Batumi, the commander-in-chief of the Turkish army, Vehib Pasha, repeatedly requested the head of the Armenian delegation, Al. Khatisyan that "they will gladly enter into a military alliance with the Armenians, as they did with the Bulgarians, and that Armenia can benefit greatly from this"⁷⁵. In fact, the main purpose of the proposal was to include 10,000 Armenian soldiers in their forces to fight against the

⁷² National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 117.

⁷³ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 13, sheets 5-6.

⁷⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 117.

⁷⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 8, sheet 116.

Entente states at a time when the imminent defeat of the Central Powers in the First World War was approaching. However, the Armenian delegation diplomatically avoided it, taking into consideration the highly harmful and irreversible consequences of that proposal for Armenians.

Enver Pasha, realizing the fear and mistrust of the Armenian diplomats towards the military and political leadership of the Ottoman Empire, proposed other conditions in Constantinople on which his assumed military alliance should be based. "We, becoming comrades-in-arms," he says, "can't ask you to fight against the British in our ranks together with us" (Zang 1918b). "We know you won't do it. But we want to be safe: the rear of our army, if it starts a campaign against the British side, Persia - will not be endangered by you" (Zang 1918b). However, the chairman of the Armenian delegation Av. Aharonyan diplomatically maneuvered, saying: "It is a problem about which he does not have instructions from his government, and without it he does not consider himself entitled to show any attitude towards the problem" (Zang 1918b).

This was the end of the first diplomatic visit of the Armenian delegation and the negotiations with Enver Pasha, the military minister of Ottoman Turkey. And yet, during the Armenian-Turkish diplomatic negotiations taking place in Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire diligently continued discussions on creating a military-political alliance with the Republic of Armenia. While in July of 1918, German Empire demanded from its ally, Ottoman Turkey, to stop the discussions on the creation of that alliance. The German side put forward the following justification: the Ottoman Empire cannot sign pacts and agreements separately with other countries without the mutual agreement of the Central Powers⁷⁶.

Conclusion and discussion

Deprived of statehood and political institutions for centuries, the Armenian people had the opportunity to build their independence. However, each territory and public sector of the republic had its own local groups that approached all problems in their favor, due to which their own interest became the priority instead of the national interest. That is why it became difficult for national political consolidation and active participation of all in the processes of strengthening the statehood, so that everyone would turn from an observer into a participant.

During that period, the fact that individual individuals or small groups who came to Armenia forcibly or voluntarily from different countries and brought with them many unrealistic programs that were incomprehensible to the Armenian society, government and parties, continued to be a concern. Each of them often contradicted the government's reform moves and realpolitik, trying to embed their visions in the complex reality of domestic and foreign politics. The partial attitude of the Armenians, who were forced out of the First Republic of Armenia, who, risking their existence, wanted to help the construction of statehood with everything, was helpless, but in realpolitik it was impossible.

⁷⁶ National Archives of Armenia, fund 200, list 1, file 657 (2nd part), sheets 121-127.

The complex internal and external political situation created in the First Republic caused an atmosphere of mistrust among the majority of the threatened people towards independent statehood and public authority. The decisive imperative to bring the country out of the dire situation was the effective functioning of the newly formed state system and political institutions, but the harmonious and interconnected work of the various branches of the state power bodies was still missing. During that period, there were many disagreements between the Council of Armenia (Parliament), the government and the ruling party of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

The Prime Ministers of the First Republic adequately evaluated and imagined the solution to this complex problem, because they were carrying out consistent work for national unity so that the governing party of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation does not have a monopoly, but supports the increase of the role of the parliament and the government in the political field. Apparently, such a situation was inevitable, because the formation of a democratic political regime and state system was not an easy task in the conditions of such realpolitik. Thus, in the first months of the independence of the First Republic of Armenia, the country survived in socially, economically and politically destructive conditions, from overcoming the risks of which the main directions and priorities of the country's foreign policy strategy should be derived.

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