Tsarist and Bolshevik Policy Towards the Armenian Question
1912-1920

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Abstract

Using extensive primary sources, the thesis examines the direction, changes and ramifications of Tsarist-Bolshevik policy towards the Armenian question in the Ottoman Empire from 1912-20.

As background to the main theme of the thesis, the 19th century emergence of the Armenian question is discussed in the introduction. It also examines the conflicting political aims of Britain and Russia towards Turkish Armenia in the course of the widespread Armenian massacres of 1894-96.

Chapter two (1908-14) analyses the Young Turk ideology of 'Ottomanism' and the slogan of 'equality and brotherhood' within the faltering Ottoman Empire. It is argued that by using such methods, the Young Turk government tried to disguise its actual chauvinistic ideology in an attempt to fend off ethnic nationalist tendencies. The Armenian Reform question and the reasons for Russia's instigation of a Kurdish revolt are also discussed in detail.

In chapter three (1914-16) there is a discussion about Russian strategic and military interests in eastern Turkey and the question of the acquisition of Constantinople and the Straits. The wholesale deportation and massacres of Ottoman Armenians by the Young Turk government is examined in depth. Russian political aims towards Turkish Armenia after the latter had been conquered by Russia during the course of the war are discussed.

Chapter four examines pre-war Pan-Turanian ideology, its origins and impact on Turkish policy. The intense literary and political propaganda for the unification of all the Turkic people in a single Turanian Empire guided by the Young Turk government receives special attention. The favourable response of
the Ottoman War Council towards this union; the military operations to fulfil the
objective following the Bolshevik revolution of 1917; and the attempts of the
Western powers to use Armenia as a means to forestall this union, are fully
discussed.

The last chapter (1917-20) analyses Russian Provisional Government and then
Soviet Government policy towards the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian
question. The leading political events in Transcaucasia from the Russian
revolution to the sovietisation of the Republic of Armenia, in November 1920, are
analysed in some depth. The collaboration between Soviet Russia and Kemalist
Turkey against the Republic of Armenia sheds considerable light on Armenian
history.
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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used throughout:

ABHP Russian Foreign Policy Archives

CAB Cabinet

CIGS Chief of the Imperial General Staff

C. in C. Commander-in-Chief

DBFP Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939

DMI Director of Military Intelligence

EC Eastern Committee

FO Foreign Office, Britain

L/MIL Military Department

L/P & S Political and Secret

MP Member of Parliament

min. minute

n.d. no date

PP Parliamentary Papers, Britain

PRO Public Record Office, London

ГАОП Central State October Revolution Archives, Moscow

ГВИА Central State History of War Archives, Moscow

ГИА Central State History Archives, St. Petersburg
1 Introduction:

The Emergence of the Armenian Question and the
Conflicting Political Aims of Britain and Russia

The Armenian Question burst upon the international scene as a result of the accelerating oppression of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire in its terminal years. Paradoxically, the features of the Armenian question were reciprocal to that of the Eastern Question: as minority peoples in Europe achieved increasing success in their national movements, the plight of the Armenian people went from bad to worse. Thus, the key factors which propelled the Armenian Question to the fore of international diplomacy were the inability of the Ottoman Empire to modernise itself, the example of the success of the Balkan independence movements, and the conflicting and shifting interests of the great powers in their dealings with the Ottoman Empire.

After the first quarter of the nineteenth century, historic Armenia was divided between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, with Armenians living in Western or Turkish (Ottoman) Armenia and Eastern or Russian Armenia. Russia's engagement in a successful war against Persia in 1826-8, gained her the Armenian provinces of Erevan and Nakhichevan. By the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829, Russia acquired much of the Caucasus region along with some recognition as protectress of Christians under Muslim rule. Further Armenian territories were acquired by Russia following the Crimean war and especially during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8. Thus, prior to the First World War the provinces where Armenians lived in the Russian sector consisted of Erevan, Nakhichevan, Kars, the southern portion of the province of Tiflis, and the highlands of Karabagh, the latter conquered by Russia in 1805, and incorporated in 1813. Those in the Ottoman Empire, where the bulk of the Armenian population lived, comprised the six vilayets (provinces) of Van, Bitlis, Erzerum, Diarbekir, Kharput and Sivas. A large number of the Armenian community had also been living in
Map 1: The Administrative Divisions in Ottoman Armenia in 1914
Source: PRO, FO 925/17149
Cilicia on the Mediterranean coast. The roots of the Armenian presence in this region dated back to the eleventh century when the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia had come into existence. The foundation of the Cilician kingdom was contemporaneous with the major Seljuk Turkish advances in Armenia and Eastern Anatolia in the eleventh century.

According to the Russian statistics of 1909, the population of Armenians living in Transcaucasia was estimated to be one and a half million. But the population of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire still remains a debatable issue. Ottoman officials under the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and subsequently the Young Turk government of the Committee of Union and Progress maintained that in the six Armenian provinces Muslims were in an overall majority. Curiously, the Ottoman statistics do not provide separate figures for the Turks and the Kurds of the region; they are grouped as a single entity under the name of 'Moslems'. The official Ottoman statistics gave the number of Armenians in the whole of the empire as 1,294,851 of whom only 636,306 lived in the six vilayets, which was grossly inaccurate. However, Colonel William Everett's calculations suggest that the population of Armenians of all denominations in Anatolia was 1,167,734. A more thorough figure concerning the number of Armenians residing in the six


2. FO371/4229/86552, Vice-Admiral S.A. Gough Calthorpe to Lord G.N. Curzon, 24 May 1920, Enclosure; Tableaux Indiquant le nombre des divers éléments de la population dans l'Empire Ottoman au 1 Mars 1330 (14 Mars 1914), Constantinople 1919.

vilayets which also included Aleppo, was advanced from the Collective Note addressed by the great powers to the Sublime Porte in January 1895. The statistical table for the year 1880, produces separate figures for the Turks and the Kurds compared with that of the Armenians. It showed that the Armenians were in overall majority by 52.7 per cent. It was only in the vilayet of Sivas that the Turks dominated by 47.4 per cent over the Armenians with the Kurds. Moreover, the statistical figures portray a combined number of Turks and Circassians. If the latter are deducted from the total number of Turks, -reckoning them as a separate race- then the Armenians would clearly be in the majority. One should also bear in mind that during 1894-6, on the orders of Sultan Abdul Hamid, 'no fewer than' 200,000 Armenians had been massacred. In addition to this, the 1909 massacres in Cilicia had taken the lives of about 30,000 Armenians. Turkish misgovernment, repression and massacres had inevitably contributed to the Ottoman government's desire for Armenian dispersion. But despite the destructive nature of the Ottoman government, in 1912 the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople gave the number of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as 2,100,000 of which 1,018,000 were living in the six Armenian vilayets. With 38.9 per cent, as against 25.4 per cent Turks and 16.3 per cent Kurds, in the six vilayets the Armenians were in the largest group.

4. PP 1896, XCV (Turkey no. 1), Collective Note Addressed to the Porte, 7 Sept. 1880, P. Currie to Kimberley 10 Jan. 1895; FO424/181, P. Currie to Kimberley, 19 Jan. 1895.


Foreign Office, commenting on the Patriarchate's figures for the Armenians, stated that they were 'probably' too low rather than too high, since the existence of a capitation tax tends to make the Armenians conceal rather than exaggerate their own numbers.\(^8\)

Sergei D. Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister too, in his report of 1914, while discussing the Armenian population living in eastern Turkey, rejected the Ottoman statistical figures. Sazonov stresses that whenever a general census was conducted by the Ottoman authorities, the Christians tried 'as much as possible' to avoid registration, since the Ottoman system of taxation produced a 'grave loss' to the budget of a Christian family. Therefore, the Foreign Minister concludes that the Ottoman government while preparing its population figures used the 'most imaginary' data which were 'by far inaccurate'.\(^9\)

The remark made by the British Foreign Office and the statement of the Russian Foreign Minister are of significance. They challenge any Turkish argument that the Patriarchate's figures were deliberately exaggerated in order to justify Armenian national aspirations. On the other hand, the Ottoman government had resorted to minimising the size of the pre-1914 Armenian population in an effort to justify itself in refuting and concealing any deliberation

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which might have led to the creation of an autonomous Armenian state. To this effect, Sazonov maintains, the Ottoman administrative division of the provinces was carried out in such a way that the percentage of the Christians would 'not be too high'. The Foreign Minister stresses that the Ottoman government had resorted to artificially attaching purely Muslim regions to provinces inhabited by Armenians which lay outside the boundaries of Turkish Armenia. For instance, the Kurdish region of Hakkari was attached to the vilayet of Van -the cradle of Armenian civilisation. Sazonov goes on to argue that the Turkish scheme was put forward after the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8 when the Armenian reform question had emerged. The aim of the Ottoman government was to cancel any European demand for reforms under the Berlin decision of Article 61. The prime motive of the reshaping of the Armenian vilayets by the Ottoman government was 'not to permit Armenians to constitute a large majority in each vilayet'.

Anglo-Russian rivalry in the Near East and the Levant had received some impetus following the Mehmet Ali crisis and of political importance in the 1850s after the Crimean war. Imperial Russia's traditional policy of dismembering Turkey had induced Britain to stand as the foremost defender of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The geographical position of Turkey constituted for the British government mainly two significant factors of national interest. Firstly, Turkish control of the Straits gave British ships access into the Black sea, and thus countered a Russian naval offensive on India, Britain's most precious possession. Secondly, the Ottoman Empire's Asian territories formed a partial land barrier to Russian expansion in the Levant. Therefore, in some respects Turkish Armenia was of considerable strategic importance for both Russia and Britain. In a memorandum for the British Cabinet of 4 June 1892, Salisbury, the

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British Prime Minister wrote that:

The protection of Constantinople from Russian conquest has been the turning point of the foreign policy of this country... It has been constantly assumed both at home and abroad that this protection of Constantinople was the special interest of Great Britain. It is our principal, if not our only, interest in the Mediterranean sea; for if Russia were mistress of Constantinople and of the influence which Constantinople possesses in the Levant, the route to India through the Suez Canal would be so much exposed as not to be available except in times of the profoundest peace. ¹¹

Therefore, Russian military control of Asia Minor, would have risked British colonial interests in the Persian Gulf, by means of penetration through the Euphrates and Tigris valleys. Thus, it was in Britain's interest to assume the task of bolstering up Turkey in order to counteract Russian aggressive ambitions. And since Britain possessed a vast Muslim colonial empire, the Sultan's friendship, the Caliph of all Muslims, was assured.

European economic and financial interests in the Ottoman Empire was another major factor binding Germany, France and Britain in a common attempt to ensure Turkey's stability. Since the Ottoman government had neither the resources nor the ability to develop its own economic potentiality, the nineteenth century was a period of European involvement in developing virtually every aspect of the

Turkish economy. France was struggling with Germany for economic ascendancy, while on the other hand Turkey was encouraging British investors to continue to buy Ottoman loans.\textsuperscript{12} Competition among the European powers was so intensive that economic values had weighed heavier than humanitarian issues. This attitude was expressed by Sir Henry Elliot, the British ambassador at Constantinople in his despatch to Salisbury.

The situation of the Armenians is desperate. The great powers are concerned more with their national interests than the Armenian question. France has 120,000,000 [francs] invested in this country, would she allow this money to be lost? While England with 40,000,000 in Turkish stocks and railway, and with an important commerce equal to 60 per cent of the exports and imports, see her money vanish and assist in the ruin of her trade? Will Germany, Austria and Italy, who, if their interests are not equal to those of the two Western Powers, have a large stake in the country sit still with their arms crossed while the 'unspeakable Turk' aided by his false friend the Russian, goes headlong to this ruin and drags with him all those who have a stake in the country?\textsuperscript{13}

Financial and economic interests did in fact influence the conduct of policy on the question of the Armenian reform programme which had come into effect after the Congress of Berlin in 1878. The great powers, who had an immense economic stake in the Ottoman Empire, seemed to be cautious in their decision-making. A solution of the Armenian tragedy would lead to the loss of their financial


\textsuperscript{13} FO424/189, Elliot to Salisbury, 16 Oct. 1896.
investments.

The Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8, was Russia's second major attempt after the Crimean war, to break up the Ottoman Empire. This time victorious, Russia occupied the Armenian districts of Kars, Ardahan, Bayazid and Alashkert, as well as the non-Armenian sea port of Batum. Considering the shape of British foreign policy, this acquisition was met with the latter government's profound indignation.

The Preliminary Peace Treaty signed between victorious Russia and Turkey at San Stefano on 19 February/3 March 1878, had divested the Ottoman Empire of most of its Christian subjects. The Sublime Porte was constrained to recognise the independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Romania, the granting of autonomy to Bulgaria and Russian annexation of the Caucasus border districts. The Armenians had made no comparable gains but having suffered under Ottoman misrule, they had reason to feel encouraged. The treaty stipulated that although the Russian army was to withdraw from the eastern Ottoman vilayets, the operation would begin only after the enactment of genuine reform in Turkish Armenia. To this effect Article 16 of the treaty read:

As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they occupy in Armenia, and which is to be returned to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry out into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security from the Kurds and
Naturally, the contents of the treaty was vigorously opposed by the British Cabinet, and it was certainly unacceptable to the rest of the Western powers. Premier Benjamin Disraeli and Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury, were convinced that the vital interests of the British Empire were jeopardised by the settlement. Disraeli proposed to declare a state of emergency by putting a force into the field, and to send an expedition to occupy Cyprus and Iskenderun (Alexandretta). This move was intended to counterbalance the alleged effect of Russian gains in the Caucasus. Lord Salisbury, in his circular of 1 April 1878, to the Western powers, maintained that the acquisition of the stronghold of Armenia would place the population of that province under the immediate influence of Russia. That, while the 'extensive' European trade which passed from Trebizond to Persia would, in consequence of the Russian occupation of Alashkert and Bayazid, their commercial system would be liable to be interrupted by prohibitive barriers. Salisbury also stressed that it was 'impossible' for Britain to look upon these changes with indifference and without making an effort to 'avert them'. However, he recognised the salient fact that the Ottoman government was an 'alien conqueror', resting more upon actual power than upon the sympathies of common nationality. Salisbury also expressed fear that the mere retention of Batum, Kars and Ardahan by Russia would exercise a 'powerful influence in disintegrating' the Asiatic dominion of the Porte. Since the Russian government remained firm in

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14. PP, 1878, LXXXIII (Turkey no. 22), Preliminary Treaty of Peace between Russia and Turkey, signed by Ignatiev, Safvet and Sadoullah at San Stefano on 19 Feb./3 March 1878, p.262.

maintaining the prevailing situation, Salisbury considered that the only provision which could furnish 'substantial security' for the stability of Ottoman rule in Asiatic Turkey, was that any further encroachments by Russia upon Ottoman territory in Asia be prevented by force of arms. Such an undertaking was believed to be effective in preventing the recurrence of the contingency which would have led to action. At the same time this would instil in the population of the Asiatic provinces the requisite confidence that Turkish rule in Asia was not destined to a 'speedy fall'.

The Sultan was taken aback by Russian military designs on Ottoman territory and fearing future aggression, sought the protection of a European power. Britain had been the foremost defender of Ottoman territorial integrity and was certainly considered to be the best choice. However, the Sultan was compelled in return to cede the island of Cyprus which was to be occupied and administered by Britain. The secret bilateral deliberations between Turkey and Britain over future Ottoman territorial security and the handing over of Cyprus—a military base in the Levant—included Britain's affirmative attitude that she was not prepared to tolerate Turkish misgovernment and oppression of its Christian subjects. To this effect, the Cyprus Convention signed on 4 June 1878 was of momentous significance as regards both the responsibility of Britain and the aspirations of the Armenians for the secure government of Turkish Armenia. Its first Article asserted that:

If Batum, Ardahan, Kars, or any of them shall be retained by Russia, and if any attempt shall be made at any future time by Russia to take possession of any further territories of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan

16. PP, 1878, LXXXII (Turkey no. 36), Salisbury to Layard, 30 May 1878.
in Asia, as fixed by the Definitive Treaty of Peace, England engages to join His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in defending them by force of arms. In return, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan promises to England to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers in these territories; and in order to enable England to make necessary provision for executing her engagement, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan further consents to cede the island of Cyprus which was to be occupied and administered by England.\(^\text{17}\)

The decisiveness of the Western powers in seeking to amend the preliminary peace treaty of San Stefano, led Russia to resolve her differences with the great powers in a definitive peace treaty. Tsar Alexander II, already plagued by a grievous internal crisis, appalled at the prospect of continued hostilities, agreed to the summoning of an international conference to review the Eastern question. With German Imperial Chancellor Otto von Bismarck issuing the invitations and acting as the 'honest broker', the diplomats of Europe gathered in Berlin in mid 1878.

Armenian leaders, however, had not remained inactive amid the crisis which European plenipotentiaries had resolved to tackle. It was believed to be an opportune moment to make their grievances heard and bring about the amelioration of Armenians' living conditions in Anatolia. Headed by ex-Patriarch Khirimian, an Armenian delegation set out in March to acquaint European capitals with their proposals about the future status of Turkish Armenia. The major issue presented was the realisation of some form of local self-government within the

\(^{17}\) PP, 1878, LXXXII (Turkey no. 36), Convention of Defensive Alliance Between Great Britain and Turkey, signed 4 June 1878; ibid., Salisbury to Layard 30 May 1878; ibid., Layard to Salisbury, 5 June 1878.
framework of the Ottoman Empire and for the strengthening of the forces of law and order. But European leaders showed little interest in the cause of the Armenians, a people who had remained pacific, despite Turkish misgovernment and oppression. Even worse, the Armenian delegation was not given a hearing at the Congress of Berlin. Nor were the schemes of General Loris Melikov, (himself of Armenian origin), for an Armenian state to include the Armenians of Transcaucasia and Turkish Armenia under Russian supremacy, acceptable to the Russian government. Especially after the death of Tsar Alexander II, the Russian government was resolved more on Russianising its Armenian subjects rather than fanning their national sentiments.

With the resolution of the Congress of Berlin of 13 July 1878, Russia agreed -under concerted pressure- to revert to Turkey Bayazid and the valley of Alashkert, though the districts of Batum, Kars and Ardahan were to remain in Russian possession. Relating directly to the Armenian question, the coercive aspect of San Stefano's Article 16 was superseded by Berlin's Article 61 which read:

The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the ameliorations and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds. It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application.


19. PP, 1878, LXXXIII (Turkey no. 38), Despatch form the Marquis of Salisbury Inclosing a copy of the Treaty signed at Berlin, 13 July 1878.
It is significant to note that, the nature of supervision remained undefined by the Western powers, despite the insistence of Count Shuvalov, the Russian ambassador to Britain, that the evacuation of the Russian troops would be the signal for 'serious disturbances' were it to take place 'before the establishment of these promised reforms'. But Salisbury's proposal that the article adopted modifying that of Article 16 of the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano, to separate the measures to be taken by the Sultan with regard to reform in Armenia from any promises given especially to Russia, had prevailed. The British government was not prepared to accept the Russian terms; which made the occupation of the Russian troops dependent on the concession of reforms by the Sublime Porte. Salisbury maintained that it was the responsibility of the powers themselves to supervise the execution of those engagements and not to be dependent on Russia. Count Shuvalov eventually agreed to Salisbury's insistence that:

Russia will come to an ulterior agreement with the six other Powers as to the scope of this engagement, and the measures necessary to put it into execution.

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20. PP, 1878, LXXXIII (Turkey no. 39), Congress of Berlin, sitting of 4 July 1878; Salisbury to FO, 8 July 1878.

21. PP, 1878, LXXXIII (Turkey no. 39), Congress of Berlin, sitting of 6 July 1878.
Maps 2: The Ottoman Frontier According to the Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin
Source: PRO, FO 925/2847
Evidently, Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin had transformed the Armenian question into an international issue, but the Armenians gained no advantage from that status. The evident weakness of Article 61, was that no guarantees had been attached for carrying out the amelioration and reforms demanded by local requirements. The despatch by the British government of Military Consuls under Colonel C.W. Wilson between 1878-81, which had the aim of making the Sultan keep his promises to introduce reforms, was feeble. The power of the Military Consuls was very limited. As a matter of fact, Sultan Abdul Hamid disregarded the clauses entirely and rejected those suggested to him by the British government. But Turkish commitments had a bearing upon the defence of Turkey-in-Asia. Reforms in Turkish Armenia intended primarily to prevent conflict which Russia might have been used as an excuse to intervene. The occupation of Cyprus was intended to check future Russian military encroachment in the Levant.

If one compares Article 16 with that of Article 61, there is not much difference. In both instances, the Sublime Porte was persuaded to carry out 'effective reforms' in the provinces inhabited by Armenians and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds. In reality, however, the difference was of immense significance and badly disappointed the Armenians. In comparison with the undertaking to Russia -as shown in Article 16- that to Britain was feeble, since in the former case there was an occupation army whose military power was

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effective, whereas there was no such British force to force the hand of the Sultan. This transformation was skilfully exploited by the Sultan. In 1891, the Sublime Porte, fearing serious danger emanating from the promised introduction of reforms, and from the anticipated hostility in war time of Armenians living in the provinces bordering upon Russia, resolved to improve the situation. The Sultan created the Hamidieh cavalry, a new fighting force bearing his name. The troops were composed exclusively of Kurdish tribesmen, whose task was to foment trouble throughout the eastern provinces, and to depopulate the bordering regions of Armenian inhabitants, resettling them with Muslims. This move was also intended to reduce the size of the Armenian population so that there would be no need for reforms. Neither the petitions of the Armenian Patriarch, nor the establishment of more European Consular posts in Turkish Armenia served to alter the serious situation. During the initial period after the Congress of Berlin, European powers cooperated under the joint responsibility of Article 61. With the issue of collective and identical notes, they reminded the Sublime Porte of its treaty obligations. But in 1881 Austria-Hungary declared that there was no need for any further communication and Germany added that a solution to the Greco-Turkish boundary dispute and other crucial issues should take precedence over the complex Armenian question. Evidently both Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin and Article 1 of the Cyprus Convention became entirely a dead letter. It was only during 1894-6 that the attention of Europe was concentrated on the widespread Armenian massacres. Even during those calamitous years the great powers did little to stop the bloodshed. The lack of concerted action and the disunity of

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European statesmen as to the means of inducing the Sultan to exercise restraint proved to be disastrous to the Armenian people. However, it was mainly due to Russian indifference and opposition to any form of military coercion against the Ottoman government which encouraged the Sultan to disregard European threats and continue unhindered in its policy of ridding the Ottoman Empire of its Armenian subjects.

According to several Turkish sources, Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire had been classed as the 'most loyal subjects', and were known as the 'millet-i sadika' (the faithful people). Kemal Midhat Bey, the leading figure of the Ottoman League of Peace and Liberation asserted that Turkey was 'indebted' to the Armenians for their 'superior services' rendered in the economic and commercial fields as well as for their intellectual and artistic developments. Arnold Toynbee of the British Foreign Office was of similar opinion when he stated:

The Armenians, during the centuries they have been under Turkish rule, have been characterised by the extraordinary patience with which they have borne that rule, and by their unrequited fidelity to the Turkish government. Indeed they have long ago earned in Turkey the name of the 'Loyal Race'. They are, nevertheless, remarkably progressive in their character and eminently suited by their


intelligence, industry, thrift and sobriety for settled civilised life.\textsuperscript{27}

Indeed, it was with 'extraordinary patience' that Ottoman Armenians suffered under Turkish ill-treatment and oppression. Grievance had reached a point of exasperation and loyalty had its limits.

General Fenwick Williams, RE, the British Commissioner and later a pasha within the Turkish army, despatched to Kars during the Crimean war to organise its defence against Russia, had in 1855 described the machinery of the Ottoman government in the Turkish Armenian provinces as 'an engine of tyranny perhaps unequalled in the world'.\textsuperscript{28} While the Duke of Argyll, blamed the British government for abandoning the Christian subjects of Turkey in Asia Minor to an 'incurably barbarous and corrupt government'.\textsuperscript{29} In 1858, the situation in the province of Trebizond had reached such an unbearable situation that James H. Malmesbury, the British Foreign Secretary could not remain indifferent but instructed his ambassador at Constantinople to advise the Porte to halt the 'supine course' of the governor and strongly to 'deprecate the harsh and vexatious' treatment of Christians by the Ottoman authorities. It seems that the Ottoman government had remained indifferent to British pressure, since six months later the British Foreign Secretary had repeated to H. Bulwer, his ambassador to induce the Porte to cease its 'ill-treatment' of Armenians in Trebizond.\textsuperscript{30} Moreover,

\textsuperscript{27} Bodleian Library, Toynbee Papers, Box 44, 'Pamphlets on the Armenian Question, Draft Memorandum on the Political Future of Armenia', 1917.

\textsuperscript{28} PP, 1877, XCII (Turkey no. 17), Fenwick Williams, RE to Clarendon, 25 Feb. 1855.

\textsuperscript{29} Argyll, Our Responsibilities for Turkey, (London, 1896), p.78.

\textsuperscript{30} PP, 1877, XCII (Turkey no. 17), James H. Malmesbury to H. Bulwer, 29 Nov. 1858; ibid., J.H. Malmesbury to H. Bulwer, 9 June 1859.
the action of the British government was also motivated by fears that Armenians would be driven to resort to Russian protection, something which was very undesirable. Reports about the deplorable living conditions of Armenians had also been streaming from various Consulates in Anatolia. Writing from Erzerum in 1869, Consul J.G. Taylor, reported that throughout the Armenian provinces he found the Armenians bitter in their complaints against the Ottoman government. That 'ample cause' of discontent was afforded by the

really wretched system of Turkish provincial administration, the unequal imposition of taxes, scandalous methods of levying them and the tithes, persistent denial or miscarriage of justice, and practical disavowal of the Christians' claims to be treated with the same consideration and respect as their equals among Muslims.

The Consul further stated that the subordinate officers of the local government were 'aided' and 'abetted' in their 'disgraceful proceedings' or 'encouraged in persistent indifference' to these 'crying wrongs', as much by the 'criminal assistance' as by 'wilful apathy'.

Not being able to tolerate any longer Turkish injustices, in 1876 the Armenians forwarded a statement of their grievances to the Porte. Their complaints referred primarily to the exactions to which Armenians were being subjected by the tax gatherers, and to the depredations which they suffered from the Kurds, against which the government afforded no protection. Although a Commission had been

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appointed to inquire into the matter, 'nothing had been done'.

The corrupt and vicious conduct of the Ottoman government towards its Armenian subjects continued to prevail even after the Congress of Berlin, during which the Sultan had 'agreed' before the European signatories to carry out 'genuine reforms' in the Armenian provinces. This pledge had not been kept; on the contrary, the situation throughout the 1880s had worsened and in the 1890s the Sultan had resorted to massacring Armenians. Reporting from Van in 1880, Captain Clayton described the condition of the Armenian provinces to be of a 'very unsatisfactory' nature. The widespread robberies by the Kurds was assuming extreme proportions, and the Ottoman government had 'given up' all attempts to prevent or punish the guilty. The lamentable situation remained the same during the preceding years. The same tune of reports of 'ill-treatment', 'misgovernment', 'oppression', 'injustices', 'robberies', 'killings' etc. reached the European Foreign Ministries without any sign of improvement. It seemed that the Western powers were not prepared to take serious measures against the Sultan. They had confined their action solely to 'reminding' the Sublime Porte of its treaty obligations and nothing more. In 1888 a report from Erzerum by Consul Wratislaw warned that the state of insecurity was becoming 'worse and worse'.

The Armenians at Van, desperate to bring to an end the unfortunate state of affairs in Asiatic Turkey, made a direct appeal to Lord Salisbury. In the letter entitled 'The Cry of Armenians', reference was made to Article 61 of Berlin and

32. PP, 1877, XC (Turkey no. 1), H. Elliot to the Earl of Derby, 23 Sept. 1876.

33. PP, 1881, C (Turkey no. 6), Captain Clayton to Major Trotter, 12 & 26 Oct. 1880.

34. PP, 1889, LXXXVII (Turkey no. 1), Consul Wratislaw to W. White, Erzerum 15 March 1888.
Turkey's specific obligation to introduce indispensable reforms. But dissatisfaction was expressed about the fact that, as years elapsed, not a single European power, nor even Britain, interested itself in ameliorating the condition of Armenians. That:

not only does the Turkish government not carry out a single one of its promises as regards the Christians, it not only deprives them of many religious immunities ... but with renewed boldness it intensifies its oppressions, without pity, without fear, deceiving all Europe and even Great Britain.

The appeal had more to say about the condition of the Armenian peasantry. The latter was subjected to such oppressive land laws and such heavy taxes, that they were unable to withstand them any longer. Many of them were 'obliged' to sell all their belongings and depart to distant provinces in a quest for work, never to return. Due to this policy, entire regions were being depopulated by the Armenians and their place taken by Kurds and Turks who were exempt from laws, taxes and even regular military service. But most of all Turks and Kurds were not under any constraint, on the contrary, they enjoyed exceptional privileges and security of life.35

The Emergence of Armenian Revolutionary Parties

It was due to such unbearable and humiliating conditions and the inability or lack of interest of the great powers to induce the Sultan to abide by the Cyprus and Berlin obligations that there resulted the emergence of Armenian revolutionary parties. Certainly Armenian intellectual awakening and the nationalist renaissance coincided with the growing intolerance of the Ottoman authorities. The agitation of the Bulgarian and Macedonian movements were also a major factor which contributed to the resurgence of a revolutionary movement. In a despatch to the Earl of Kimberley, Philip Currie, the British ambassador at Constantinople, had retorted that:

... The Turkish policy of controlling intellectual developments by Muslim standards; the inability of the officials to distinguish between harmless criticism and active sedition, their system of making indiscriminate arrests to extort money by means of baseless charges and the frequency with which the official class combine to secure the acquittal of officials or other Mulsims accused by Christians have increased discontent to the point of exasperation.36

Three Armenian political parties came into existence after the second half of the nineteenth century. The Armenakan party was organised at Van in 1885, which did not seek independence but aimed at the economic and political freedom of Ottoman Armenia within the framework of the Ottoman Empire. The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party was formed in Geneva in 1887 by seven Russian Armenian students whose purpose was the political independence of Turkish

36. FO424/178, Currie to Kimberley, 27 March 1894.
Armenia. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or Dashnaktsutiun was founded in Tiflis in 1890. It was a merger of various Armenian groups primarily in Russia which strove for the economic and political freedom of Ottoman Armenia. Both the Hunchakian and the Dashnaktsutiun were very strongly influenced by the Russian Narodniks. Significantly, the founders of the main two revolutionary parties, the Hunchakian and the Dashnaktsutiun, were not Turkish Armenians. But concern about the plight of their co-patriots in Ottoman rule, had sparked their revolutionary formation. The Hunchakians believed that nationalism had been instrumental in galvanising into effective action the Greeks, Bulgarians and the Serbs in casting off a despotic foreign regime. Since other non-Turkish subjects had benefited through the working of their scheme, they argued that the Armenians should initiate the same move in the hope of gaining some freedom and possibly independence. Determined to achieve this end, one of the members of the Hunchakian revolutionary party had stated that:

Armenians are determined to be free. Europe listened to the Bulgarian horrors and made Bulgaria free. She will listen to our cry ... We are desperate, we shall do it.38

Such straightforward reasoning had its serious flaws and drawbacks. Some of the revolutionary leaders, zealous but inexperienced, were either unaware of, ignored, or at least minimised the difficulties attending the peculiar situation of the


38. FO424/178, Memorandum by the Rev. Dr. Hamil, Founder and first President of Robert College, 25 Dec. 1893.
Armenian people living in the eastern provinces, and placed an undue reliance upon the presumed benevolence of the concert of Europe. They had even underestimated the geographical position of the six vilayets compared with that of the Balkan countries. The latter were part of Europe, while the Armenian provinces were situated in the far end of Asia Minor, away from the immediate reach of the European powers' intervention and under the paw of the Sultan. Nor did they seem to have realised that in the 1890s it was in the national interest not only of the Western powers but also of Russia, to keep the Ottoman Empire intact. Ottoman military defeats in the late seventeenth century and rebellions throughout the Ottoman domains during the first half of the eighteenth century, notably by Muslim chieftains in Egypt, Syria, Baghdad and Basra, and later the revolutionary turmoil in the Balkan states had proved that Ottoman power was on the decline. Anxiety as to whether Armenian revolutionary activities would in the long run condemn the Anatolian provinces to a similar fate as the Balkans, had promoted growing intolerance on the part of the Ottoman government not to lose the very heartland of its domain. Therefore, exaggerated statements on behalf of the revolutionary parties, had aroused the fear and suspicion of the Sultan. Ismail Kemal Bey,\(^\text{39}\) described the Sultan as 'cruel by nature and yet pusillanimous to a degree', who had resorted to the 'extermination of an entire people by organising fearful and wholesale massacres'.\(^\text{40}\)

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\(^{39}\) Ismail Kemal Bey was a veteran statesman, who for more than fifty years was engaged in the administrative and political service of the Ottoman Empire. He was distinguished for his Liberalism and his struggle for a Constitutional regime. As the chief of one of the oldest and most distinguished families of Albania, he led that country in its declaration of independence from the Ottoman throne on 28 November 1912, and was made President of the Provisional Government.

Certainly revolutionary activities were used as a 'pretext' in resorting to the extermination of a part of a nation. But it seems to be impossible to justify a government which wreaks its vengeance on whole communities for statements, acts and even 'plots' of some of the members of these communities mainly operating from abroad.

Although the emergence of the three Armenian revolutionary parties coincided during the same period, each one of them functioned independently. They were involved in many activities, notably the demonstration of Kum Kapu in Constantinople in 1890, the 'rebellion' of Sassoun in 1894, the demonstration of Bab Ali in Constantinople in 1895, the 'rebellion' at Zeitoun in 1895-6 and the seizure in August 1896 of the Ottoman Bank. All were desperate attempts which were aimed at arousing European interest with a view to the drastic implementation of Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin. Notably, the Sassoun 'rebellion' and the seizure of the Ottoman Bank were the most salient incidents underlining the reasons for indulging in revolutionary action.

In the region of Sassoun, Armenians had been paying tribute (hafir) to the Ottoman government and an additional unofficial tax to the Kurds as a means of assuring themselves of Kurdish protection and assistance. In June 1894, the Armenian peasantry of Talori told the Kaimakam (sub-governor) of Kulp, a village to the west of Sassoun, that they were prepared to pay government taxes if the government would put an end to unofficial Kurdish exactions. The Kaimakam, who was accompanied by zaptiyes (policemen), infuriated by this decision, began to abuse and maltreat the peasantry of Talori. The latter, after beating

41. FO424/178, Currie to Kimberley, 11 March 1894, see also inclosure, Consul Cumberbatch to Currie, 26 Feb. 1894.
Kaimakam, drove him and his zaptiyes from the district. This act inevitably provoked further aggression which was secretly encouraged by the Ottoman government. Kurdish raids against Armenian villages were countered by Armenian resistance. The Sultan, interpreting the stand of Armenians as a rebellion against the Ottoman state, sent troops to quell it. Armenian resistance however, proved to be feeble in combating the far superior Turkish forces who eventually succeeded in subduing the Armenians and carrying out indiscriminate massacres on a large scale. So as not to rouse the sentiments of the European powers, the Ottoman government used 'infinite pains' to 'prevent news leaking out'. It had gone to the lengths of sending back from Trebizond many merchants from the Moush region, preventing them from witnessing the disastrous enveloping the region of Sassoun. The Ottoman government had also resorted to 'strict censorship' telegrams and the Post Office to exclude information reaching the foreign embassies at Constantinople. Despite the strenuous efforts of the Ottoman government to conceal the whole truth, eventually it did reach the European capitals. Naturally, the Ottoman government denied the salient facts as 'rumours' and 'exaggerations'. To be more persuasive, in January 1895, the Sultan instructed Abdullah Pasha, ex-president of the Sassoun Commission to confer with Philip Currie, the British ambassador at Constantinople. Abdullah Pasha maintained that:

only 150 Armenians were killed during the fight. The murder of women and children and the destruction of the villages were absolutely

42. C.J. Walker, Armenia: The Survival of a Nation, pp. 140-1.


44. FO424/181, Said Pasha to P. Currie, 1 Feb. 1895.
unfounded. But the actual lamentable episodes at Sassoun were revealed by Consul Graves who had obtained first hand information. The report of Consul Graves stated that:

Suleiman, a Turkish ex-sergeant, in regard to the massacres of Armenians at Sassoun, confirmed [me] that the story of the nocturnal butcheries was true. Suleiman was told to act as a butcher, and says that the whole slaughter was about 5,000 persons.

The Ottoman government had refused to grant permission for British and other foreign newspaper correspondents to travel in 'certain portions' of Turkish Armenia to inquire about the Sassoun incidents.

As to whether Armenians had really risen in insurrection or whether they had offered armed resistance to the Ottoman troops, Currie was convinced after several 'confirmed reports' that Armenians had actually offered resistance. Consul Graves, reporting on the 'horrible barbarities' at Sassoun stated that:

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45. FO424/181, Currie to Kimberley, 15 Jan. 1895.


I venture to say that no intelligent person in these provinces not being a Turkish official, would think of doubting that they were indeed committed by Turkish troops. 48

And Lord Kimberley, the British Foreign Secretary had come to the conclusion that:

The danger to the Turkish government did not, I observed arise from agitation but from corrupt and vicious administration. 49

The Hunchakian revolutionaries, considered the Sassoun 'rebellion' a victory for their party as well as for the Armenian cause. They believed that because of their courageous activity, though it cost the lives of thousands of Armenians, succeeded in bringing the intervention of the European powers who presented to the Sultan on 19 May 1895, the Armenian reform programmes. But unfortunately, time showed that the programme was not worth the loss of thousands of human lives. With renewed boldness and ferocity, the Ottoman government continued to carry out its massacres on an unprecedented scale, without bothering at all to take notice of the great powers' urgent call for reforms.

The incident of the seizure of the Imperial Ottoman Bank on 26 August 1896, 50 by the Dashnaktsutiun revolutionary party, is another example, if not the most sensational, of all the exploits. The threat to the Bank in which European

48. PP, 1895, CIX (Turkey no. 1), Currie to Kimberley, 4 Nov. 1894; Consul Graves to Currie, 15 Nov. 1894.

49. Ibid., Kimberley to Currie, 7 Nov. 1894.

50. FO424/188, Herbert to Salisbury, 26 Aug. 1896.
powers had great national interests, was aimed at diverting the attention of Europe to the Armenian reform question, which had fallen comparatively flat on account of the lack of resolution on the part of those entrusted with its execution.\footnote{1} The revolutionaries threatened to blow up the premises of the Bank with a hundred and eighty one hostages, if the immediate implementation of the promised reforms was not carried out. The collective note addressed to the embassies at Constantinople by the Dashnaktsutiun committee the day before the occurrence read:

The blood shed by our 100,000 martyrs gives us the right to demand liberty. Despite all the misfortunes imposed on us by our enemies, we are seeking nothing but the strict necessities... We shall not retreat until our demands are met. We declare ourselves exempt from all responsibilities. We grieve in advance for all those people, strangers or natives who will be the victims of the general alarm. We regret those victims, but we cannot take into consideration the fractional losses in front of the general misery and grief. We know that we shall die, but the revolution which has penetrated into the bones of the Armenian nation, will continue to menace the throne of the Sultan until we achieve the fulfilment of our human rights.\footnote{2}

The collective note clearly indicates that the revolutionaries had felt they had to act. Seeing no hope whatsoever for the promised amelioration of the conditions of Armenians, they had no other choice but to engage in terrorist action simply to demand their 'human rights'.

\footnote{1} Ibid., Herbert to Salisbury, 27 Aug. 1896.

\footnote{2} Ibid., 'The Armenian Revolutionary Committee to the Embassies', Herbert to Salisbury, 25 Aug. 1896.
The great powers, alarmed as they were, immediately acted in concert to calm the situation. After intense deliberation, it was decided to entrust Maximov, the first dragoman of the Russian embassy, with the task of negotiating with the revolutionaries who had seized the Bank. The great powers agreeing to comply with the proposed demands and the revolutionaries feeling satisfied, were induced to leave the Ottoman Bank under safe conduct from the Sultan. It was evident that the coup was well organised. The Turkish government made no attempt to prevent the departure of the revolutionaries on the French steamer to Marseilles. Nor did the foreign representatives condemn too strongly the whole episode, because of the hundreds of innocent Armenians murdered in the past few days.53

Peace did not reign in Constantinople after the Ottoman Bank incident, nor did any reforms ensue. Instead, the Sublime Porte secretly prepared a brutal retaliation. Knowing beforehand of the proposed Dashnak project, the Sultan had taken the necessary action to welcome the opportunity for an Armenian massacre in Constantinople. The Armenian revolutionaries had clearly stressed that they had no wish to make a demonstration either against the Bank or against the Porte, but direct it against the great powers who had left the Armenians to their fate.54 On the day of the demonstration mobs of ruffians connived with government soldiers and the police, and launched an 'indiscriminate slaughter' of the Armenian population at Constantinople. Many of the Ottoman activists were police agents disguised as softas (Muslim theological students). The reign of terror persisting in the capital for two days, brought the toll of those who perished to more than

53. Ibid., Herbert to Salisbury, 27 Aug. 1896.

5,500 unarmed Armenians,\(^5^5\) despite the great power's collective note of 27 August to stop the massacres and take proper measures to restrain the mob. Consul Herbert a personal witness of the 'shocking outrages' in his despatch to Salisbury stated that:

The Armenians were being hunted down like rabbits.\(^5^6\)

Sadly enough, effective measures had not been taken by the great powers to bring to an end the designs of the Sublime Porte. The powers had restricted themselves to sending only collective notes but not real force. The Sultan, encouraged by the feeble attitude of the powers, had massacred Armenians even in the capital, before the eyes of European diplomats.

One still tends to ponder whether the Armenian revolutionary movement was responsible for the slaughter of Armenians between 1894-6. Certainly there was some provocation in a few instances by them. However, the Ottoman government exaggerated the activities of the revolutionaries and used it as a pretext and justification for the extermination not only of the perpetrators but also of the Armenian population as a whole. Sir Henry Bulwer, the British Vice-Consul, and Colonel A. Peshkov, the Russian Military Agent at Constantinople, were of this opinion, who stated that there was 'no doubt' that the massacres throughout Asiatic Turkey and those within the capital itself were 'pre-arranged'.\(^5^7\) In their


\(^5^6\) Ibid., Herbert to Salisbury, 27 Aug. 1896.

\(^5^7\) FO424/191, Vice-Consul H. Bulwer to P. Currie, 15 Dec. 1896; ABIIP, Politarkhiv, L. 1, File 3449, Report by the Russian Military Agent at
collective notes of 27 August, 31 August and 15 September, the great powers had acknowledged the salient fact that the Ottoman government had organised and directed the massacres. The Ottoman Bank reprisal was merely a pretext for barbarous aggression. Salisbury on the other hand, had maintained that:

The reports which have reached us show that the Sultan is mistaken in his belief that the Armenians have provoked these disorders. We are informed that in nearly every occasion this was not the case, and in too many instances the Turkish Authorities and troops have encouraged and even taken 'active' part in the outrages which have occurred.\(^{58}\)

While the British ambassador, Philip Currie, was definitely convinced that:

The charge against the Armenians of having been the first to offer provocation cannot be sustained.\(^{59}\)

Undoubtedly the massacres were part of a deliberate policy, for in almost every case they were done with the connivance of the authorities. They were confined as a rule to the Armenians since the Greek and Syrian Christians were


\(^{59}\) PP, 1896, XCV (Turkey no. 2), Currie to Salisbury, 13 Dec. 1895.
not molested, and no European was killed. Therefore, the object of the Ottoman government was to exterminate or greatly reduce the Armenian population in the six provinces where the Sultan had promised under pressure to introduce reforms. To this effect, Said Pasha, the Turkish Foreign Secretary, conferring with Currie, had quoted a statement made by the Sultan:

... the Armenian question must be settled not by reform but by blood.

Said Pasha added that:

At first I did not understand his [the Sultan's] meaning. I thought he referred to war with a foreign power, but I found that the Sultan meant massacre.60

Even the German General, von der Goltz, who had been a honorary Aide-de-camp of the Sultan and instructor at the Military College at Constantinople, stated that the massacres could not have taken place 'without the Sultan's cognizance'.61

While the Turkish Liberal Party of Sabah-ed-Din maintained that:

It is notoriously evident at Constantinople that Abdul Hamid was the main organiser of these crimes ...62

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62. FO371/3058/118321, Horace Rumbold to Lord Cecil, 6 June 1917, encl. 'An Open letter Addressed to Prince Lvov by the Prince Sabahaddine of the Turkish Opposition'.
In 1897, when the Armenian question had become a dead issue, the Armenian revolutionaries had come to realise that they had been 'bitterly deceived'. That the loss of hundreds of thousand of innocent Armenians had not shaken the 'platonic attention' of Europe. A joint manifesto by the revolutionaries to all the embassies at Constantinople had this to say:

Despite bleeding to the end, we did not lose hope. We were satisfied that the bleeding of the martyrised Armenians was reaching the ears of the Europeans and were hoping that a helping hand will be extended to us ... But the torrential blood of the Armenians did not shake the European powers ... Unfortunately we had a bitter deception. Perhaps the platonic attention of Europe encouraged our oppressors to be more cruel. The Armenian patronomy was transformed into a huge butchery and mountains and valleys have been dyed with the blood of the martyrs ... But all these were not enough to awaken the conscience of sleeping Europe and remind them of Christian mercy ...

The Armenian revolutionary groups believed that by organising demonstrations and engaging in terrorist acts might result in the intervention of the European powers. But the Armenian revolutionaries were under something of an illusion. They were mistaken in relying on the sincerity of the European powers which had made commitments for reforms in Ottoman Armenia in Article LXI of the Treaty of Berlin.

The failure of the concert of the great powers to act unanimously and with decisiveness was another major reason which enchanced the determination of the

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63. FO424/192, 'Manifesto of Revolutionary Armenians', Currie to Salisbury, 26 Aug. 1897.
Sultan to carry out a policy of Armenian extermination. The period of the 'Concert of Europe' of 1878 had long passed. The great powers could not agree on a specific policy. Conflicting political and national interests among the great powers had resulted in a general discord. While the use of military action initiated by the British government as a last resort in inducing Turkey to forestall its widespread massacre, was strongly objected to by the Russian government. A.B. Lobanov-Rostovksy, who had succeeded N.G. Giers as Foreign Minister, was a narrow minded reactionary. He was not prepared to collaborate with the other great powers in concerted action against the Sultan in favour of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Although Prince Lobanov held office for a year, his successor, Prince G. Golitsyn, continued to maintain an anti-Armenian stand, since Tsarist policy had shifted to the right after 1895. The shift of Russian foreign policy in the Far East in the 1890s until her disastrous defeat against Japan in 1905, Russia showed lukewarm interest in the Armenian cause. In fact, Russia's share of responsibility for the disastrous effects on the entire Armenian population in Turkey was immense. The Russian government had blocked the path of reform, had ruined the 'Concert of Europe' by opposing the naval demonstration in the Dardanelles and by rejecting Lord Salisbury's ideas at Balmoral during the Tsar's visit to Queen Victoria in September 1896. The Turkish Liberal Party of Sabah-ed-Din had gone as far as blaming the Russian government for having 'secretly' and 'energetically' encouraged the Sultan to take repressive measures against the Armenians. The Russian Cabinet of Lobanov-Rostovsky was interested not in the fate of Ottoman Armenians but the land of Turkish Armenia without its Armenian inhabitants.

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64. FO371/3058/118321, H. Rumbold to Lord Cecil, 6 June 1917. See also, Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 132, 'Armenia 1900-1909'.

65. Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia [Former Party Archives], Fond 4033, L. 2, File 899, acquired from AOP CCCP,
The Armenian Massacres and Russian Reluctance to Coerce the Sultan

The problem of reform in the Ottoman Empire, had become a concern for the Concert of Europe by its inclusion in international pacts. However, not all the powers in the concert were seriously involved in the task of trying to induce the Sultan to carry out his treaty obligations. Nor did they show an equal degree of interest. The British government in particular was labouring under the burden of an uneasy conscience for having undertaken both singly and collectively an onerous responsibility.

The Anglo-Armenian Association in London concerned with the plight of Armenians, in a letter to the British government condemned the retrograde policy of the Sultan, and the 'systematic persecution' and 'cruel atrocities' to which Armenians were subjected. It also called the government to take a more decisive attitude upon the Armenian question which the Ottoman government had neglected despite its pledge in the Berlin treaty. But the continued massacres throughout 1895, produced one more proof of the strong diplomatic position of Turkey and the complete failure of the powers to agree on the subject of intervention.

Russian Armenian efforts too in inducing the tsarist government to take drastic measures in favour of the Armenians in Turkey seemed to have failed. The journey to St. Petersburg of Catholicos Khrimian, the Supreme Head of the Armenian church in early 1895, with the object of soliciting the support and intervention of the Russian government on behalf of the Armenians had fallen

Fond 1318, L. 1, File 40, Note about Turkish Armenia, 30 Nov. 1917, p. 5.

flat. The Catholicos was refused an audience with the Tsar on the grounds that the 'time was inopportune' for a personal interview. The request of the Catholicos to confer with the Tsar had come at a time when news about the widespread Armenian atrocities had been reaching serious proportions. However, it was in Russia's interest to abstain from actively associating itself with the Armenian cause so as not to give rise to certain developments which might lead to the formation of a 'new Bulgaria' on her frontiers.

As the crisis in 1895 mounted in intensity, some form of international action against the Ottoman Empire on behalf of the Armenians proved to be inevitable. The problem was what the form of the action would be. The Armenian community in London and elsewhere aimed at the creation in Asia Minor of a district in which the Armenians would enjoy exceptional privileges, and which would form the nucleus of a future independent Armenia. Although Gladstone, the former British Prime Minister, was in favour of this scheme, Lord Salisbury had his own 'Armenian Question' in Ireland. British advocacy of Armenian autonomy could have destroyed Salisbury's domestic position on Irish home rule. More important however, Russia was the first to reject the idea of creating an autonomous state of Ottoman Armenia. The Russian government's anxiety was that, if such a scheme became a reality the large but turbulent Russian Armenian community in Transcaucasia would want to join it and their planned 'rigorous programme of

67. FO424/181, Consul Stevens to Kimberley, 26 Feb. 1895.
Russification\textsuperscript{71} aimed at forestalling such a move would fail. As nationalistic ideas spread across Europe from west to east fears grew in St. Petersburg about a threat to Imperial unity, especially if the minorities' disaffection was to be encouraged in time of war by foreign enemies. Partly for this reason and partly in response to Russian nationalist sentiments, the government, after the second half of the nineteenth century began to enforce the introduction and spread of Russian language, culture, and religion into some of the non-Russian areas, at the expense of the local ethnic majorities.\textsuperscript{72} Referring to the Armenian question, the British ambassador at St. Petersburg, in a despatch to Lord Salisbury, had stressed that:

\begin{quote}
... it was impossible for Russia on account of her geographical position and the large number of Armenians living on Russian territory to countenance any scheme which might lead to the creation of anything in the nature of an autonomous state in Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

Prince A.B. Lobanov-Rostovsky, the reactionary Russian Foreign Minister, had made it clear to the British government that Russia was prepared to see an improvement of the Turkish administrative system and greater security of life and prosperity of the Ottoman subjects. But the Russian government objected to the

\textsuperscript{71} FO371/3504/204335/55708, 'Historical and Ethnological Notes on the Armenians', General Staff, War Office, 5 Apr. 1918; FO 424/182, Gosselin to Kimberley, 5 Apr. 1895; British Library, Department of Manuscripts, D.S. Northcote Papers, Add.57560, 747D, Armenia, 1926, p. 19.


\textsuperscript{73} FO424/183, Lescelles to Salisbury, 3 July 1895; see also FO424/186, 'The Armenian population of the Caucasian provinces are a growing source of anxiety to the Russian government', Goschen to Salisbury, 10 Feb. 1896.
creation in Asia Minor of a territory where the Armenians would enjoy 'exceptional privileges'. An important fact that Roy Douglas points out concerning the idea of Armenian separatism, is that it would spark off disruptive activities in Syria, Arabia and elsewhere which would eventually involve the interests of the great powers to a profound extent. In fact, the balance of power in the region was so precarious that the great powers preferred to leave the Ottoman Empire in Asia intact.

At this stage the British government was convinced that a much less drastic solution to the Armenian difficulty would be to persuade the Ottoman government to introduce major reforms. Sir Philip Currie, called the attention of the Sultan and endeavoured to impress upon him the extreme gravity of the situation and the danger of forcing on a crisis which might prove disastrous to the Ottoman Empire. P. Currie urged the Sultan to act with the greatest circumspection, and treat all classes of the population with justice and moderation. He even warned that every act of injustice and violence would place the British government in a difficult position, which would be responded to with the 'severest condemnation'.

A project of major reforms for the eastern provinces of Asia Minor presented by the dragomans of the ambassadors of Britain, Russia and France on 11 May 1895, were resisted by the Sultan and his advisers. Currie’s report to Kimberley noted that:

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76. PP, 1896, XCV (Turkey no. 1), Currie to Kimberley, 17 Apr. 1895.
The Sultan refuses all the proposed guarantees, the High Commissioner, the Commission of Control, the veto on the Vali ... The Admission of Christians to the administration is limited, the provincial Councils-general are refused, and also the proposed reforms of the Tribunal, gendarmerie and police. Judicial Commissions, amnesty, reparation of victims of massacres, inspection of prisons or provisions for Armenians in other provinces.\textsuperscript{77}

The Sultan's negative attitude had not moved the feelings of the Continental powers. The Kaiser's reaction showed that the Triple Alliance countries would not interfere with any action on which the others had agreed. There was also abundant evidence that France would follow Russia in refraining from joining in any coercive measures. Lobanov-Rostovsky was able to exert great personal influence over Gabriel Hanotaux, his French counterpart on this issue.\textsuperscript{78} Russia had gone even to the point of refusing to support Britain's demands for reforms in Armenia, interpreting the objects of Britain to be in gaining influence over the Armenian communities in Persian and Russian territory. On 29 May, Lobanov-Rostovsky, informed the British government that 'in no case would the Russian government associate itself with measures of constraint upon the Sultan'. While on 4 June, Russia refused to present the Reform Scheme of the ambassadors as an ultimatum to the Sultan.\textsuperscript{79} Direct responsibility for the administration of Asia Minor should be avoided by Britain. The Russian government, fully aware of the Porte's policy of extermination, insisted on placing undue reliance on the

\textsuperscript{77} FO424/183, Currie to Kimberley, 17 June 1895; PP, 1896, XCV (Turkey no. 1), Currie to Kimberley, 3 June 1895.


\textsuperscript{79} Hansard, HC Deb., 4th Series, vol. XXXVIII 1896, 3 March 1896, col. 58.
Sultan to introduce necessary reforms, since according to Lobanov Rostovsky, the scheme of reforms drawn up by the ambassadors at Constantinople was 'unworkable'.

Blocked diplomatically, the British government felt that collective action between the powers was for the time out of the question in bringing to an end the Armenian misery. Salisbury's problem was to decide on the next step and he correctly surmised:

We cannot cook so unsavoury an omelette as that which has been bequeathed to me by my predecessors, without breaking a monstrous number of eggs.

Returning to office at the end of June 1895, Lord Salisbury resumed his diplomatic activities to end the sufferings of the Armenians. Convinced that the Sultan had no intention of ameliorating the condition of Armenians in Asia Minor and that more massacres were to be expected, the Prime Minister, began to explore the possibility of a tougher course: a unilateral display of force. The British Cabinet approved of a military showdown against the Sultan. Salisbury asked Currie whether a naval demonstration on the Tigris river would be feasible. Such an action, the Prime Minister believed, would frighten the Sultan more than any other step. This would also strike a blow at the allegiance of the Sultan's Arab subjects which was already fragile enough. But above all, Salisbury thought that this naval demonstration would demonstrate British concern to the Armenians.

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80. FO424/183, Durand to Salisbury, 7 July 1895; Salisbury to Lascelles, 7 Aug. 1895; Lascelles to Salisbury, 9 & 16 Aug. 1895.

and hearten them. This idea was dropped because the Tigris was not sufficiently deep. However, it seemed more likely that the suggested occupation of Jeddah on the Red Sea would be more practical 'to bring down the Turkish Empire with a run', surmised Salisbury.\(^2\)

One of the most useful pieces of advice concerning the collective naval action of the great powers was rendered by the German emperor:

> It is no use seizing Smyrna or bombarding any place on the coast. This would only have a local effect. But by seizing Smyrna and perhaps one or two of the islands, and if then, in addition, the news reached Constantinople that the British fleet had entered the Dardanelles, the Sultan would be on his knees, and your conditions be received without a murmur. Remember that you are dealing with an Eastern people. They understand nothing but force.

The Kaiser went on to say that he supported this action on condition that the Berlin signatories should know beforehand the proposed resolutions regarding the fate of Turkey after such an action had been taken. Moreover, the German government was to refrain from sending a fleet so as not to ruin the existing friendship with the Sultan.\(^3\)

Having won Germany's support, Salisbury engaged in discussions with the other


\(^3\) CAB 37/40/44, E. Malet to Salisbury, secret, 30 Aug. 1895; FO424/184, Colonel Needham to Ford, 16 Nov. 1895.
powers on the need for action. At the same time measures were taken to reassure the continental governments that Britain would not act on her own. By November 1895, Austria-Hungary and Italy had also agreed on a joint action of the fleet. At this stage, it was left to Russia and France to support the British scheme. Considering the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1893/4, it was a matter of inducing Russia which would have led France to take a positive stand. But the dynamic blow came from Russia with her negative attitude towards the whole scheme. The Russian government refused to accept the idea of forcing the Dardanelles by other foreign ships. Considering it as an infringement of the Paris Treaty, the coercive measure against the Sultan was considered to be 'extremely repugnant' to the Tsar. Lobanov Rostovsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, stressed that the holding of a demonstration of the combined squadrons near the Dardanelles was most likely to weaken the Sultan's authority and give 'too much encouragement' to the Armenians which the Russian government 'utterly objected to'. At the same time Russia readied her Black sea fleet to sail through the Bosphorus in the event any other fleet entered the Dardanelles. While in the Caucasus borders, 60,000 Russian troops began to take position between Kars and Sarikamish and an additional 30,000 troops between Batum and Kars with reinforcements between Tiflis and Erevan. The Russian threat diverted the attention of the British government from moral consideration to a political question of the neutrality of

84. FO424/184, Gosselin to Salisbury, 17 Nov. 1895; Herbert to Salisbury, 16 Nov. 1895.
85. FO424/189, Goschen to Salisbury, 4 Nov. 1896.
86. FO424/184, Monson to Salisbury, 16 & 18 Nov. 1895; Goschen to Salisbury, 19 Nov 1895; FO424/189, 'For the Russian government the idea of coercion implied by Salisbury was extremely distasteful', Goschen to Salisbury, 4 Nov. 1896.
87. FO424/186, Durand to Salisbury, 10 Jan 1896; for concentration of Russian troops in the Caucasus see also FO424/184, Herbert to Salisbury, 19 Nov. 1895.
the Straits, thus ruining any hope of ending the sufferings of the Armenians.

Salisbury's eloquent appeals for collective action through the 'Concert of Europe', 'the federation of mankind', fell flat due to Russia's negative response. The Prime Minister had come to realise that 'there was not a soul from Archangel to Cadiz who cared whether the Armenians were exterminated or not', except in Britain where the feeling approached 'frenzy in its intensity'. Naturally the failure of the Concert to cooperate was a stunning blow to the Armenians. It certainly encouraged the Ottoman government to defy the great powers by carefully manipulating the one against the other and to deal with the Armenians through massacres.

Disappointed by the lack of support, the timidity of the navy and the collapse of Anglo-Russian cooperation, during 1896, the British Foreign Office had no other choice but to co-operate with Russia. Writing to George Goschen, the British ambassador at St. Petersburg, Salisbury wrote that:

I cannot but feel that the responsibility incumbent upon the Powers of Europe is very great if they do not make some effort to amend the calamitous state of things prevailing in the Turkish Empire. ... It is of great importance that the Russian government, if it can be induced to do so, should instruct Nelidoff [Russian ambassador at Constantinople] to co-operate with his colleagues in their efforts to find a remedy for these evils.  

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89. FO424/186, Lord Salisbury to G. Goschen, 7 Jan. 1896.
But the Russian government could not be induced to bring pressure against the Sultan. Russia's reactionary Foreign Minister, A.B. Lobanov-Rostovsky refused to collaborate with the great powers. He remained firm on his anti-Armenian policy.

Philip Currie expressed his conviction that the disorders and discontent which reigned in all parts of the Ottoman Empire and in all departments of the Ottoman administration, would, unless some means of remedy were found, inevitably lead to a general breakdown of the machinery of government. In such a situation, Currie believed it was not only the right, but the duty of the signatory powers to do their utmost to aid in the task of restoring order, and to prevent disturbances and the continued recurrence.  

Under these circumstances, Lord Salisbury, considered it of the utmost importance that the ambassadors of all the treaty powers at Constantinople should consult together in devising some form of remedy for the 'evils' that 'undoubtedly existed'. However, the Russian government refused to sanction any course of conduct which might lead to European interference in the internal affairs of Turkey. The Russian Foreign Minister, was content to 'trust in the goodwill of the Sultan' to bring about an amelioration in the condition of his subjects, and preferred to abstain from exercising any further pressure. Lobanov-Rostovsky further argued that interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire was 'distinctly forbidden' by Article IX of the Treaty of Paris and forbidden, by

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90. PP, 1896, XCV (Turkey no. 1), Goschen to Lobanoff, 3 (15) Jan. 1896.

91. Ibid., Salisbury to Goschen, 29 Jan. 1896; Goschen to Lobanoff, 3 (15) Jan. 1896.
implication, by Article LXIII of the Berlin Treaty.\footnote{FO424/186, Memo. of the Contents of a Despatch from Prince Lobanoff, St. Petersburg, 10 (23) Jan. 1896; PP, 1896, XCV (Turkey no. 1), Salisbury to Goschen, 29 Jan. 1896; see also FO424/184, Currie to Salisbury, 25 Nov. 1895.}

At this stage it had become abundantly evident that despite the Armenian massacres, the Russian government preferred to leave the calamitous state of affairs in Turkish Armenia as they were. Even, during the commencement of massacres at Sassoun in 1894, Lobanov-Rostovsky had categorically refused an Armenian appeal for support against Turkey.\footnote{Krasnii Arkhiv (Red Archives), vol. 26, 1928, Vorontsov Dashkov to Nicholas II, 10 (23) Oct. 1912, henceafter, Krasnii Arkhiv.} Russia was fully aware that a change in the conduct of Ottoman policy towards the Armenians was highly unlikely. Time had showed that despite the extensive warning of the European powers to stop the bloodshed of Armenians the Ottoman government had the courage to remain unmoved. Therefore, it was useless on the part of Russia to 'trust' in the 'goodwill' of the Sultan for improvements in Asia Minor. In fact diplomats of the Russian Cabinet of Lobanov Rostovsky, believed that the more massacres of Armenians there were the 'better' it was for Russia. Since in the event of Turkey's dismemberment, Russia would then gain 'an Armenia unencumbered by Armenians'.\footnote{Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 4033, L. 2, File 899, acquired from \[\Gamma]\ AOP CCCP, Fond 1318, L. 1, File 40, Note about Turkish Armenia, 30 Nov. 1917, p. 5; Lambeth Palace, Davidson Papers, Eastern Churches 1896-1920, vol. 294, f.86.}

Moreover Russia's treatment of its Armenian subjects in the Caucasus was not enviable. Consul Stevens having visited Tiflis and Baku found that the repressive measures towards the Armenians which he had previously reported had by no
means been relaxed, but on the contrary were being 'more vigorously' applied. Suspicion of the Russian authorities throughout the Caucasus of all Armenians had considerably increased. Domiciliary visits to houses and apartments occupied by Armenians had become a matter of 'daily occurrence'. The 'slightest suspicion' of an Armenian being in communication or actively sympathetic with their compatriots in Turkey resulted in imprisonment for an 'indefinite period' without any explanation or reason for the 'harsh treatment' they were subjected to. Until the 1880s, the Tsarist authorities had in general favoured the Russian Armenians. Armenians had enjoyed security and progress under Russian rule. Armenian allegiance to the Tsarist government had secured them six Armenian commanders in the Russian army in Asia. General M.T. Loris-Melikov, who later became Alexander II's last Chancellor, was in overall command of the Asiatic front. General Ter-Gukasov, was in command of the Erevan force. Among those beside them were Generals Lazarev and Shelkovnikov (né Ipekjian). All four had made an important military contribution to the victory of the Russian armies during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8. With the death of Tsar Alexander II, the 'Tsar-Liberator' in 1881, the fortune of the Armenians in the Russian Empire began to decline. Alexander III was an inflexible reactionary who strove to expand the power of Russian and Orthodox elements throughout the empire. Significantly, after 1895 the Russian policy was one of intense Russification of the Armenian population in the Caucasus.

Russia's stand of non-intervention on behalf of the Ottoman Armenians

95. FO424/188, Consul Stevens to Salisbury, Batum, 20 July 1896; see also Consul Stevens' despatch no. 3 of 23 Jan. 1896.


97. FO424/182, Gosselin to Kimberley, 5 Apr. 1895.
continued to prevail throughout 1896 despite the fresh outbreak of violence which had engulfed Constantinople in August after the Ottoman Bank incident. Conditions throughout Turkish Armenia had showed no improvement. Consul Fitzmaurice reporting from Urfa and later from Adiaman, had this to say about the state of affairs ranging in the region:

Many Armenian men secreted themselves at the bottom of wells in the hope of escaping from their would-be destroyers, but the latter hurled down jars and stones and then fired down revolver shots, or flung down matting saturated with petroleum which they then set on fire. In several cases women and girls were mercilessly cut down while trying to shield their male relatives. When all the men had been killed in a house, the mob proceeded to plunder in the most minute way, pouring kerosene on and burning corn, barley, woodwork and whatever they could not carry away, and only leaving bare walls and floors.

Fitzmaurice added that the 'same plan' was followed as in other 'recent massacres' in those regions.\footnote{PP, 1896, XCVI (Turkey no. 5), Fitzmaurice to Currie, 16 & 25 March 1896.}

The first reaction of the German Emperor, William II, to the news of Armenian massacres in Constantinople was; 'The Sultan must be deposed'. Salisbury too felt that this would be a satisfactory solution. By replacing Abdul Hamid with a new Sultan, the Prime Minister believed that the new Sultan would realise that if he disregarded the will of the powers a similar fate might await himself.\footnote{M.M. Jefferson, Lord Salisbury and the Eastern Question 1890-1898, Slavonic and East European Review, vol. 39, (1960-61), p. 53.} To gain support for this plan, Salisbury conferred with Nicholas II,
who was paying a visit to Queen Victoria at Balmoral. During the conversation, Salisbury stressed that in order to prevent a recurrence of the 'recent cruelties', that whatever the six powers were all agreed upon the Sultan should be compelled to accept. He further suggested that the six ambassadors should be instructed that a change of Sultan was 'probably' a desirable expedient. However, the Tsar's attitude and language on the question of replacing the Sultan was 'without warmth'. Nicholas II argued that the deposition of the Sultan was 'too big a job'. Considering the grave political danger likely to follow a disruption of the Ottoman Empire, it was in Russia's interest to maintain Ottoman integrity for 'as long as possible'. And as far as the Armenian reform question was concerned, the Russian government made it explicitly clear that it was 'not prepared' to ask more than the execution of reforms which had already been granted on paper. The Russian Cabinet, recognising the intolerable state of affairs in Turkey, was averse to any real amelioration of the situation. Having focused their attention on the Far East, Russia did 'not wish' the final breakup of the Ottoman Empire to come before they themselves should be prepared for it.

Evidently, Russia had backed the authority of the Sultan against any attempts by Britain to extend international intervention on behalf of the Armenians. Russia had also refused to coerce the Sultan into radical reforms.

Lacking Russian support, and with the outbreak of Greco-Turkish war in April 1897, the solution of the Armenian question was parceled and left in abeyance. It

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100. CAB 37/42/35, Report of Meeting with the Tsar, Sept. 1896.


102. FO424/189, Milbanke to Salisbury, 30 Nov. 1896.
was not until 1908 that Armenians were disillusioned once again, this time believing in the sincerity of the Young Turk ideal of 'equality' and 'fraternity' which resulted in the attempted biological extermination of the entire Armenian population in Turkish Armenia in 1915.
The Ottoman Armenians were among the subject nationalities to be jubilant at the overthrow of the despotic regime of the 'red Sultan' Abdul Hamid II. The Young Turk revolution of 1908, advocating the ideal of 'liberty', 'equality' and 'fraternity'; brought into effect with the collaboration of the most prominent Armenian Revolutionary Party at the time, the Dashnaktsutiun, was greeted with especial enthusiasm. Armenians had based their hopes on the notion that with the disappearance of the Hamidian autocratic regime, a new era of security for life and of prosperity was to be inaugurated. However, time showed that Armenians were to be dismally disillusioned in their aspirations. After a brief period of political realism, the Young Turks switched their promises to an anti-Armenian policy, which eventually led to the perpetration of massive deportations and the massacres of 1915.

Armenian leaders had justifiably pledged their support and cooperation to the Turkish Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), since they had played an important part in bringing into effect the Constitution. This was eloquently born during the CUP general congress in Paris in 1907, when a new attempt to create a united front was discussed. It was brought about by the Dashnaktsutiun. 1 This was also ascertained by the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, who in his report to the Foreign Ministry, held the Armenians 'responsible for the important changes made towards the creation of the Constitutional government'. 2

The first impulse of the CUP towards the inauguration of the Constitution is


2. Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 143, Armenia 1910-1915, 2 March 1914.
seen in Enver's (the latter one of the most influential members of the CUP) declaration of July 1908:

We are brothers ... under the same blue sky we are proud to be Ottomans.\(^3\)

The sincerity of the CUP in putting into effect some of its promises, at least during the very early stages in power, was shown in the case of the Armenians. With the new Constitution, Armenians had the right to nominate their representatives in the Ottoman Parliament. In September 1908, the Armenian National Assembly was reassembled after its suppression by the Sultan in 1891. The cultural life in some of the Armenian vilayets made new headway. Schools and libraries were opened, newspapers came into circulation with open criticism of Abdul Hamid's regime.\(^4\) It seems that these embryonic concessions to the Armenians had a major political motive: the latter might have intended to forestall for the moment any form of nationalistic movement, so that the newly born government would be able to gain time to further consolidate its power.

One other major change in Armenian life in Anatolia was the CUP's temporary success in curbing the Kurdish raids and pillages. The tribal Kurds scattered throughout the Armenian vilayets had been organised in the Hamidieh irregular cavalry regiment as a counterpoise to the Russian Cossacks in the event of


aggression from the north. The Sultan had pampered and favoured the Kurds and had connived at their pillaging, thus causing much misery to the Armenians. In March 1909, Akimovich, the Russian Consul at Bitlis had cabled that:

During the past few months, due to the new government's policy the Kurds have been unrecognisable. They have stopped their looting and killing in the Armenian vilayets, something which is difficult to expect from them.  

However, not all Ottoman officials in the Armenian provinces welcomed the change in policy to be adopted towards the Christians. They had been deprived of their special privileges. Therefore, the implementation towards the realisation of amendments was very slow indeed in many areas of Anatolia.

The avowed political creed, 'Ottomanism', most ardently advocated by the Young Turks, was not in reality what had been intended: a blueprint for the complete transformation of the Turkish Empire, in which the oppressed races would become equals, and national and religious differences would subside in a common citizenship. It actually served as a decorative veil to cloak their true intentions. The true meaning of 'Ottoman' for the Young Turks was the assimilation of the non-Turkish element. Uriel Heyd, referring to the question of 'Ottomanism', applies it to the request of Ziya Gokalp, a member of the extremely influential Central Council of the CUP, who emphasised that:

The Young Turks used the idea of Ottomanism as an instrument for the Turkification of the Ottoman empire, that for the Young

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Turks the name Ottoman language meant nothing else but the Turkish language. The Young Turks aimed at consolidating the sovereignty of the Turks.\textsuperscript{6}

Furthermore, Pavel Miliukov, the prominent Russian statesman and historian, referring to the slogan 'a single Ottoman nation', maintains that it took on the narrow national meaning of 'Turkey for the Turks'.\textsuperscript{7}

It was not long before the chauvinist character of the Young Turks became evident. The statement made by Enver at the end of 1908 to the editor of the Bulgarian newspaper 'Kabana',

\ldots the schools must only be Turkish and to prepare only Ottomans for the future administration \ldots The union of the Ottoman empire must exterminate anything which recalls national seperatism,\textsuperscript{8}

is a clear indication to the direction in which CUP policy was heading. Therefore, a scheme initiated by Prince Sabah-ed-Din, the nephew of the Sultan and an opponent of the old regime, advocating a policy of 'decentralisation and personal initiative', was vigorously combated by the CUP. Specifically, Sabah-ed-Din desired to get rid of the Macedonian and Armenian question by some system of autonomy. He had argued that such a policy would enable the Turkish government to


\textsuperscript{8} Marunov, Politika Mladaturok po Natsionalnomu Voprosu, p. 166.
concentrate its attention upon the nucleus of the empire. But adopting such a course would have cut across the policy of the government who saw that to grant autonomy in the Macedonian and Armenian provinces would be to sacrifice them altogether. Significantly, CUP determination to allow no sacrifice of territory was crystallised after the loss of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, and the declaration of full Bulgarian independence.

The course of 'Ottomanisation' was further emphasised during a meeting of the CUP leaders at Salonica on 6 August 1909, where Talaat, the future Minister of the Interior and Grand Vizier, stated

According to the constitution all subject people, Muslims and Christians, are equal before the law. But you one and all know that this is an unrealisable ideal ... There can therefore be no question of equality, until we have succeeded in our task of Ottomanising the Empire.

Talaat also maintained that they had no intention of violating Muslim tradition. Equal rights of Muslims and Christians could not be established since it was in contradiction with the Shariat; the canonical legislation.

Towards the end of 1910, the Committee had already fallen far from its original ideal and had decided at their annual congress that all national activities were to

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be suppressed by force if necessary, and that Muslim supremacy was to be maintained at 'all costs'. It was also acknowledged that Ottomanism could not be accomplished by gentle methods. Muslim domination was considered to be essential. The Caliph was the head of the nation; other religions might retain the right of worship but the right of organisation and of language was to be denied to all except Turks.\footnote{11} This new trend of CUP internal policy was further elaborated at a special Congress held in October 1911, where the resolution passed ran as follows:

The character of the Empire must be Mohammedan, and respect must be secured for Mohammedan institutions and traditions. Other nationalities must be denied the right of organisation, for decentralisation and autonomy are treason to the Turkish Empire. The nationalities are a negligible quantity. They can keep their religion but not their language. The propagation of the Turkish language is a sovereign means of confirming the other elements.\footnote{12}

This was a complete reversal of traditional Ottoman policy. Evidently, the CUP had shaped its internal policy in Turkifying all subject nationalités. The declaration of Dr Nazim, one of the influential leaders of the Young Turks, is another clear indication to this effect.

Our state must be purely Turkish, because the existence of other nationalities inside our bodies give only an excuse to foreign powers for intervention on their behalf. We must Turkify non-Turkish

\footnote{11} FO371/1249/19795, Memorandum Respecting the New Regime, 7 Dec. 1910.

\footnote{12} L/P & S/11/106, P3640, Memorandum on the Pan-Turanian Movement, Department of Information, Intelligence Bureau, 7 Sept. 1917; \textit{__________}, Turkey, Russia and Islam, 'The Round Table', vol. VIII, December 1917, p. 115.
In short the 'union' which the Young Turk Committee claimed as one of their two chief objectives was to be effected by violent methods. Equality was to be secured by the reduction of all to the level of the lowest; Ottomanisation was to take the form of Turkish military supremacy.

Therefore, the term 'Ottomanism' meant nothing else but Turkification and it substantially alienated the interests of national minorities. The CUP was convinced that Turkification was an effective process by which the Ottoman Empire could be re-created and raised to the status at which they aimed. But launching on a policy of obliterating the national sentiments and rights of the non-Turkish peoples and endeavouring to create and impose by force an artificial and non-racial patriotism under the banner of Ottomanism, had its serious repercussions.

The Adana Massacres

The short breathing space which the Armenians enjoyed came to a sudden end in April 1909, when in Cilicia the Armenians experienced a renewed outbreak of massacres. This marked the advent of Armenian disillusionment with the government. In the new upheaval it was estimated that some twenty to thirty thousand lives were lost, whereas, the material losses were 5,189 burnt houses, 17 schools and 12 churches destroyed, many shops and commercial centres devastated.

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14. CAB 1/30, Influence of Pan-Turkish Political Aims on Turkish Military Policy, 1914-1918, pp. 5-6.
The Turkish argument was that the Armenians had armed themselves, that certain members of the Hunchakian Revolutionary Party and the Armenian Bishop had openly urged the people to fight the Turks and set up a Principality. Major C.H.M. Doughty-Wylie, the British Vice-Consul at Mersina, who had been present in Adana, categorically dismissed the idea that Armenians had provoked the disorders. He maintained that:

The massacres began in very distant places, on the same day and at nearly the same hour. The local provocation at Adana could not have effected this. I am inclined to think that some, at any rate, of the authorities knew of the intended massacre beforehand.

Furthermore, Major Doughty-Wylie expressed his astonishment at the part played by Mustafa Remzi Pasha, a Turkish General, who displayed 'pitiable cowardice' and who could have scattered the 'howling, fanatical mob' if the latter had been resolutely handled in the first hour. While Zinoviev, the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, had cabled to Charikov, the Russian Foreign Minister that:

The Turkish soldiers sided with the local Muslim authorities and residents, and began to kill the Christians without any discrimination of sex and age, looted and set fire to the houses.

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17. АВП, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3456, Zinoviev to Charikov, 18 Apr. (1 May) 1909; see also, ibid., File 3459, Mavromati to Giers, 8 (21) Sept. 1912.
Map 3: Cilicia
The involvement of Turkish troops in the massacres at Adana was also reported by the Caucasian regional army head officer:

In all cases of the massacres and pillaging the soldiers actively participated; this fact was obtained from many witnesses and from a certain Commission which operates at Adana. The first contingents of the III corps arriving at Mersina, who were under the command of the Young Turk generals committed such cruelties as had done their companions of the other corps. These events were not repudiated and the Young Turks threw the blame on Sultan Hamid.  

The Young Turks naturally blamed the Sultan for the terrible events, since during the period of the massacres between 13 and 16 April, they had been ousted from power and the reactionary regime had been reinstated on 24 April. But Marling, the Charge d'Affaires at Constantinople maintains that the CUP was directly involved in organising the massacres.

It may seem difficult to believe that, in the 20th century, massacres can be deliberately planned with the intention of laying the blame on others, but the Adana massacres, organised to justify the deposition of Abdul Hamid, are surely sufficient recent testimony.

The Russian Vice-Consul at Adana was also convinced of CUP complicity in the massacres.


... the massacre at Adana is the work of the CUP and not of the previous government.

That the members of the local CUP organising the massacres were the provincial governor Djevdet Pasha, inspecting officer Eshref Pasha, and the editor of the local paper of the CUP 'Ittida' (Moderation), Ihsan Efendi and others.\textsuperscript{20}

Interestingly the tone adopted by some of the Muslim deputies in a debate in the Chamber on 3 May, about the disorders and massacres at Adana and elsewhere, indicated a distinct disinclination to tolerate in practice equality of race and creed. Krikor Zohrab, the Armenian deputy of the Turkish Chamber, in a speech argued that he had seen the telegram from the Ministry of the Interior concerning the tragic events at Cilicia and its purpose was in keeping with the traditions of the old regime. Zohrab added that the telegram did not say 'kill the Armenians', but 'restore order' a formula used under the despotic regime, similar to those sent with the disastrous results during the 1894-96 massacres. Zohrab held Adil Bey, the Vice Interior Minister, responsible for having had the message despatched.\textsuperscript{21} However, one should not disregard the fact that, during the months preceding the violence, Moushegh, the Archbishop of Adana, had urged his people to buy arms at any price. It later became evident that he had a commercial

\textsuperscript{20} ABIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3459, Russian Vice-Consul Adana, Mavromati to Giers, 8 (21) Sept. 1912; see also,\textsuperscript{4} ГБ\textsuperscript{4}А, Fond 2000, L. 1, File 1004. The names of CUP agents organising the Adana massacres are also found in FO371/3657/1922/512, G.H.Q. to D.M.I., rept. to G.H.Q. Constant., 28 Dec. 1918.

\textsuperscript{21} FO 371/772/17613/13941; Lowther to Grey, Pera, May 5, 1909, pp. 73-4.; FO 371/772/17775/13941; Summary of the Debate in the Chamber of Deputies on the Adana Massacres, Lowther to Grey, Constant., 4 May 1909. pp. 96-7; see also minute, 'their speeches express the views of the "intellectuals" of Turkey, and everything tends to show that their feelings of "brotherhood" for non-Turkish people are not shared by the Muslim populace'.

interest in the sale of arms.22

It seemed obvious that the attacks were planned not only in the region of Cilicia but throughout Asia Minor. At Kharput and Kayseri there were disturbances, but the firmness of the local governor prevented any trouble. At Van a late snowstorm put a blanket over the plans for killings.23

After the recrudescence of April 1909, Armenians lost faith in the government, but were still prepared to co-operate with the Young Turks. The Dashnaksutsiun in particular held on to their hopes for an accord with the Young Turks, and on 6 September 1909, both bodies signed a five-point circular. They agreed to work together to put the constitution into effect, and to consolidate progress in the country; to act with united resolution against any possible reactionary movement; to eliminate gossip in public that Armenians aimed at independence. They also declared themselves in agreement on the subject of extending privileges to the provinces; and finally, warned by the counter revolution and the 'regrettable disaster in Adana', to work hand in hand to bring into effect the foregoing points.24

Marling, commenting on the agreement between the two, stated that:

If the Committee remains in power long enough to carry out this policy, they would probably proceed to disarm and 'reform' the Armenians as they did the Bulgarians, with the result that the

Dashnaktsutiun would be disillusioned.  

Despite the agreement, CUP tendencies towards the Armenians, especially after the Adana massacres, changed sharply. Unstable conditions within the empire in the Balkans, the nationalistic tendencies towards freedom and inner political antagonism for power necessitated this change in policy. On 25 July 1910, Vice-Consul Geary reported that, at a Congress of the Young Turk party which was held at Monastir, bitter complaint was made that an attempt to satisfy the aspirations of one section of the community was always resented as inimical to the interest of some other section. That it would never be possible to afford universal satisfaction. It was therefore considered necessary to accept the inevitable and to preserve peace by 'deliberately' playing off the various nationalities one against the other. It was argued that such a policy would possess the overwhelming advantage of leaving the Turks supreme.

Therefore, inclination to favour Kurdish sympathy as against the Armenians and the gross injustices between Christians and Muslims, paved the way for renewed Armenian demands for reform. The Kurds continued their old policy of pillaging and looting, spreading terror in the Armenian provinces.

The Agrarian Question

The chief source of conflict between the Armenians and Kurds was the land question. During the massacres of 1894-96 some 200,000 Armenians were killed or forced to emigrate, their lands being seized by the Kurds. With the revolution of 1908 most of the emigrants returned and sought restitution of their lands. The

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authorities promised to give satisfaction, especially in the case of Armenians who held the title deeds to the property claimed by them. Where the Kurds had been in possession for nearly fifteen years, they refused to comply.

The various schemes proposed for restoring the lands taken from the Armenians under the old regime ended in talks. The government deliberately continued the Hamidian policy of ousting the Armenians from the lands they still possessed in order to settle Kurds and Circassians thereon. In fact Circassian immigrants were being granted pieces of land belonging to the Armenians by title-deeds and in accordance with Turkish law. The policy of despoliation, however, assumed a more active development and was general throughout the vilayets of Erzerum, Sivas, Bitlis, Van, Diarbekir, and Kharput, being pursued on the largest scale in the vilayets of Van and Bitlis.27

The Commission of Inspectors sent to enquire into the grievances of the dispossessed Armenians turned out to be a farce, which was evident from the fact that the inspectors confined themselves entirely to collecting such information as the local officials chose to supply. The Armenians flatly rejected a scheme of monetary compensation as being wholly inadequate and unacceptable. The Ottoman government instead of making any effort to restore lands unlawfully held by Kurdish interlopers, it tried to deprive the Armenians of what they still possessed. Moreover, the governor-general of Erzerum informed McGregor, the British Consul, about the views entertained at headquarters, that 'the outlook cannot be considered promising', and admitted that 'nothing was being done towards the solution of the problem'. And the claims made for the restitution of land were met with the stereotyped reply that, 'nothing can be done until a Bill has

27. FO371/1250/33712/27809, McGregor to Marling, 7 July 1911; FO371/1250/27809, Safrastian to McGregor, 18 June 1911.
been passed in Parliament'. The Turkish deputies in the Anatolian vilayets were as averse as the Kurds were to the question of land restitution to the Armenians.

Hakki Bey, a delegate of the Constantinople Union and Progress Committee (there were two CUP Committees, one in Salonica and one in Constantinople), visiting the district of Diarbekir in mid 1909, had stated that the Committee's policy was to 'support the Muslims in all cases against the Christians'. He explained that, as there was keen rivalry between certain of the great powers, the anti-Christian policy could be pursued with safety. The local deputy of Diarbekir, Feizi Efendi, who made a tour during the summer months of 1909, in the north of the district, told the Kurds that they should not give way to despair, promised that 'so long as they did nothing very flagrant, the government would close its eyes to the oppression of the Christians'.

The attitude of the government towards the Kurds was one of humouring and pampering, and had the natural effect of encouraging their predatory instincts. On the other hand the government feared that energetic repressive measures would provoke a 'general uprising', and wished to avoid alienating from itself the sympathy of the Kurds, so that the government would have them on their side and call when the occasion should arise.

In September 1912, tension rose dramatically. The fall of the CUP administration had provoked unrest among the Kurds. As troops were taken from eastern Turkey to the Balkans and Armenian divisions were also called to the

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Balkan front, the Armenian peasantry was thus left without military protection. Corruption and incompetence became more conspicuous than in the days of Abdul Hamid, and the situation of Armenians turned out to be insecure, due to constant murders. The number of crimes in the vilayets of Van and Bitlis, for the months of August and September 1912 had increased by 50 per cent.\textsuperscript{32} The continued harassment and the neglect of the use of laws safeguarding their rights as equal citizens had brought utter destitution and misery. Therefore, setbacks in the Balkan wars gave the Armenians of Turkey the opportunity to prepare the ground for the resurgence of the Armenian reform question in European diplomatic circles.

**Russian Interest in the Armenian Question**

The accelerated rate of Ottoman disintegration during the Turkish disasters of the First Balkan War and at the same time the prevailing intolerable living conditions in Turkish Armenia, served as an opportune time to bring the Armenian reform question to the fore. Though diplomatically entangled in the Balkan imbroglio, Russia energetically took the initiative in reviving the question of Turkish Armenia. But it seems curious that Russia, for whom in 1895 the question of Armenian reforms had been utterly distasteful, should now be the protagonist in resurrecting it.

There were several distinctive reasons in late 1912 for satisfying the Armenians. As Russian challenges either by means of war or by diplomacy to acquire the Straits were contested by the European great powers, she considered

\textsuperscript{32} FO371/1484/42899, Lowther to Grey, 9 Oct. 1912; FO371/481/48/44, see minute, 'There is no doubt that there is very little improvement in the situation and that the new regime is as cheesy of tackling the Kurds as was the old, and meanwhile the unhappy Armenians no longer can have the representatives of the Embassies in their favour', 11 Jan. 1912.
it best to use the question of misrule of Ottoman Christian subjects to favour her interests. This is where the Armenian question, which since 1878 had been left dormant and considered to be a distasteful one emerges in Russian diplomatic circles and receives prominence. It was by making good use of the Armenian outcry for reforms that Russia stood a chance of penetrating into the political affairs of the Porte and accomplishing her ambition through the back door. With an effective influence in Turkish Armenia Russia could have also controlled whatever was of importance to her in North West Persia. By reviving the Armenian question in the Ottoman Empire, the Russian government also aimed to regain the loyalty of its Armenian subjects and at the same time prevent any possible anarchy in Transcaucasia.33 The Russian government feared that her own Armenians might be inspired to rise, even the Armenians in the Russian sphere in northern Persia, to help their brethren in Turkey and try to form a state, spreading conflagration across her borders. This Russian anxiety is clearly revealed in Vorontsov Dashkov’s (the Viceroy of the Caucasus) secret despatch to S. Sazonov. Dashkov urged help to the Armenians in Turkey, not only to draw them into Russia’s side, but to forestall any possibility of turning the Russian Armenians against them. The Viceroy even suggested giving arms to the Turkish Armenians ‘purely for defensive purposes’; that if they failed to supply arms, Armenians in the Caucasus and in Turkey would be oriented towards the Western powers. Vorontsov Dashkov further stressed the utmost importance that:

We have to work for the establishment of absolute Russian influence over our neighbouring vilayets. Since the inhabitants in those regions

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are mainly Armenians and Kurds, we have to win them to our side.  

An earlier despatch by Dashkov to Tsar, Nicholas II concerning the reasons for promoting a change in Russian policy towards the Armenians is of interest. The Viceroy explained that if the Russian government did not take the initiative of Armenian reforms and left it to the will of the Western powers, it would have a damaging effect on Russian prestige with irreversible consequences. The impact of Russian indifference towards the Christians of Asia Minor, more especially to Armenian appeals for reforms would make the latter resort to other foreign powers, away from Russia. Dashkov concluded that under the present circumstances it was 'necessary' to prepare the population of Asia Minor who 'willingly or not' will fall into the sphere of Russian war operation.  

André Mandelstam, the first dragoman of the Russian embassy in Constantinople, and Sergei Sazonov the Russian Foreign Minister, explained that their interest in the Armenian question was purely 'humanitarian'; to guarantee the condition of 'civilised existence' to the Turkish Armenians. The forces working behind the tsarist government's decision to bring the Armenian question to the fore were on no account motivated by humanitarian reasons as André Mandelstam and Sazonov had expressed. The immediate object was the

34. ABIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3461, (secret), Vorontsov Dashkov to S. Sazonov, 2 (15) May 1913; see also, ibid., Collection of Fonds, File 40, Sazonov to the President of the Ministers of Council, 9 (22) Dec. 1913.  


establishment of Russian control over reform administration in Turkish Armenia leading to the secession from the Ottoman Empire. Talaat Pasha, the Turkish Minister of Interior, and Djemal Pasha, the Minister of Marine, knew only too well that Russia's aim was not reform but the 'surrender' or 'snatching' of Turkish Armenia to Russian rule.37

The Turkish statesmen were correct in their judgement. In the pre-war years, Russia was certainly not concerned with the fate of Ottoman Armenians but she was indeed concerned with their land -en route to Alexandretta on the Mediterranean coast. Therefore, Russian hegemony over the eastern vilayets of Turkey turned out to be a prime objective after the disastrous Russo-Japanese war of 1905. Russia felt compelled to compensate her disasters in the Far East by success elsewhere. In 1907 Russia had succeeded in winning a sphere of influence in Persia but had failed to secure gains from the Balkan wars. Access to Russian warships through the Straits had also turned out to be an impossibility due to the century-old staunch opposition of the Western powers. Ice blocked passage during the greater part of the year, preventing access to the Straits; therefore the control of Turkish Armenia provided the only possibility for Russia to reach warm waters. This political ambition is eloquently expressed in one of Sazonov's reports who asserted that:

Since it has become a matter of historic moment for Russia to have an outlet to the Mediterranean, Turkish Armenia constitutes a knot in Russian Near Eastern policy. In order for Russia to establish political and economic hegemony over Asia Minor a route is needed from the Caucasus to the Mediterranean.

37. Talaat Pashanin Hatiralari, p. 54; Djemal Pasha, Memories of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919, pp. 246, 271, 275.
Turkish Armenia is of vital political interest to Russia since she constitutes a route from the Caucasus to the Mediterranean sea.\textsuperscript{38}

Military occupation was contemplated if reform efforts failed. Sazonov warned the Ottoman government in early December 1912, of the danger of the Armenian situation and hinted at intervention. If hostilities in the Balkans were resumed, and if, in consequence disturbances were to occur on the Russo-Turkish frontier, the Russian government warned that:

they could not declare out of the present that Russia would be able to guarantee her neutrality.\textsuperscript{39}

Demands for reforms in Turkey were championed by Armenians in Russia, notably by Mikayel I. Papajanov, the Armenian deputy in the State Duma. In one of his speeches before the Duma, M.I. Papajanov declared that the European powers were 'powerless' to protect the Armenians and in the name of the people of Armenia he called upon Russia to carry out effective reforms in Turkish Armenia. Papajanov stressed that:

It is towards Russia that our eyes and aspirations turn. From her we await the solution of the problem. All the desires of the Russian Armenian population are aroused in the hope that Russia will carry

\textsuperscript{38} State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, File 667, Report by Sergei Sazonov, 1914, pp. 11, 20, 26.

\textsuperscript{39} FO881/10412/1333, Russia: Annual Report 1913, Buchanan to Grey, 4 March 1914; see also, Russia, Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del, Sbornik Diplomaticheskikh Dokumentov; Reformy v Armenii, 26 Noiabria 1912 goda 10 Maia 1914 goda, [Collection of Diplomatic Documents; Reforms in Armenia, 26 November 1912 - 10 May 1912] (Petrograd, 1915), nos. 1, 2, 3. This is the official Russian Orange Book on the Armenian crisis.
out reforms in the Armenian vilayets of Asia Minor.^^

Great concern towards the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was also expressed by the supreme head of the Armenian Church, Catholicos Kevork V. In a letter to Vorontsov Dashkov, the Viceroy of the Caucasus, he asked for the Tsar's assistance and protection of his flock, to take Turkish Armenians under Russian influence.^^

Turkish Armenian orientation towards Russia was certainly gaining considerable ground. The inability or unwillingness of the Ottoman government to enforce security and order in its Asiatic domains had compelled Armenian leaders in Turkey to seek Russian protection. Krikor Zohrab, a former deputy of the Ottoman Parliament, and Mardigian, the representative of the Armenian Patriarchate, conferring with Giers, the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, stated that the Armenian people saw no other way for salvation but to appeal to Russia. They further stressed that the Armenians had lost 'complete faith' in Turkish reforms even if they were to be under European auspices.^^ The massacre of Armenians at Rodosto and Malgara (in Bulgaria), coming after the sacrifices of the Armenian divisions during the Balkan wars, had further helped to engender a desperate frame of mind among the Armenians, to make them seek Russian assistance. The Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople had resigned as a protest against the conduct of Ottoman troops at Malgara and Rodosto and the

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42. Ibid., File 3459, Giers to Sazonov, 26 Nov. (9 Dec.) 1912.

An active Russian policy, therefore, with regard to Turkish Armenia could have practical value. In December 1912, one of the Duma deputies in a speech before the Assembly maintained that:

> The condition of the Armenians of the vilayet of Van and its environs is a matter to which we cannot remain indifferent. These localities are as important from an economic point of view -as commercial outlets- as from a strategic standpoint.\footnote{Lambeth Palace, R.T. Davidson Papers, Eastern Churches 1896-1920, vol. 294, f.86.}

The Russian Foreign Minister was in full concurrence with this view, and considered the Armenian question as one which affected the 'vital interests of Russia'.\footnote{FO371/1815/31062/19208, Buchanan to Grey, 6 July 1913. See also, State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, File 667, Report by Sazonov, 1914, p. 26.}

Certainly the strategic importance of Turkish Armenia, which far overshadowed the economic, offered to Russia free access to the Mediterranean. Holding this view, the Russian government sought to turn the plight of the Armenians in the eastern provinces also inhabited by Kurds to their own advantage. Therefore, conjointly with the Armenian reform deliberations the Russian government fomented Kurdish unrest. Failing to achieve control over
Turkish Armenians through reforms, Russia was prepared to instigate a Kurdish uprising followed by Russian military intervention leading to the occupation of the region.

**Russia and the Kurdish Movement**

Russian policy was to keep the Armenians of eastern Turkey under the constant menace of massacre. Such a state of affairs would have provided her with the diplomatic initiative of intervention in a region so vitally important to her. Knowing too well about the strife between the Armenians and Kurds worked to widen the gap and cause distrust towards the Ottoman government. It seems that Russian attempts had succeeded in fostering Armenian and Kurdish animosity towards the government. To this effect, the Russian Vice-Consul at Van in a despatch to Giers, reported that a few influential Kurdish chiefs had told him that:

Due to skilful Russian policy, not only the Armenians but also the Kurds were made to take up a hostile attitude towards the Turkish government, who two years ago still believed in the good faith of the government.\(^{46}\)

By 1912, the majority of Ottoman Armenians had become pro-Russian, but the tsarist government aimed at enlisting Kurdish sympathy towards Russia, thus eventually paving the way for a Russian occupation of eastern Turkey. Therefore,

\(^{46}\) Darkest Russia, vol. II, no. 104, 24 Dec. 1913, p. 3. 'Darkest Russia' was a periodical of reformist tendencies published in London with occasional interruptions from July 1891 to July 1914.

\(^{47}\) ABIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 1605, Russian Vice-Consul to Giers, Van, 10 (23) Jan. 1912.
efforts to make the various Kurdish tribes side with Russia received some prominence in Russian policy. To this effect the Russian Vice-Consul at Bayazid in a secret despatch to the Foreign Ministry at St. Petersburg, suggested that it would be 'wise' to raise the cultural and economic standards of the Kurds in the Caucasus, where in the Ottoman Empire they were backward.

In this way we can easily win to our side the Kurds of Turkey.48

During a secret meeting of two Armenian representatives of the St. Petersburg community with Sazonov, the question of Kurdish hostility towards the Armenians in Turkey was raised. The Russian Foreign Minister stated that his government regarded the Kurds as a 'potential force' to further Russian interests in the future. Sazonov added that ties were being established with the Kurds and it was possible that the Kurds could turn out to be 'useful for the Russian government'.49

Therefore, the instigation of a Kurdish uprising against the Ottoman government accompanied by the massacre of Armenians had actually been entertained by the political mind of the Tsarist government. It would have served as an excellent pretext for Russia to intervene militarily. To prepare the necessary ground for such an operation, the Russian government on more than one occasion warned the Western powers and the Ottoman government alike, that she would not remain militarily indifferent in case serious disturbances flared up on Russian border regions. Specifically, Sazonov warned both the British and German governments that his government would not repeat the mistake committed by

48. ABIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3459, Russian Vice-Consul to Foreign Ministry, Bayazid, 9 (22) Nov. 1912.

49. State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 2, File 669, Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar Pasha, 9 (22) Jan. 1913.
Prince Lobanov in 1895 by remaining passive in the face of Armenian massacres.

It is impossible that Armenians should live any longer under the constant menace of such occurrences,\(^{50}\)

Sazonov had maintained. In July 1913, the Russian Foreign Minister had once more brought to the attention of Buchanan that:

It was in Turkey's own interest that pressure should be brought to bear on her to accept really effective reforms, as otherwise there would be massacres and disorder followed by Russian intervention.\(^{51}\)

But the Russian scheme of 'effective reforms' provided for a 'regional military service', therefore placing eastern Turkey within the influence of Russia. In a sense, Sazonov hinted that if Russian terms were not met there 'would be massacre and disorder followed by intervention'. It seems that the British government had grasped the real intentions of the Russian government. A minute at the Foreign Office asserted that:

Sazonov's point of view is not easy to understand unless he is seeking a pretext to annex the Armenian vilayets, for it is certain that the Turks would never consent to employ Russian officers so

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\(^{50}\) FO371/1775/4344/253, Buchanan to Grey, 28 Jan. 1913; ibid., no. 4433, Grey to Buchanan, 27 Jan. 1913; FO371/1814/25212, O'Breine to Grey, 27 May 1913; FO881/10412/1333, Buchanan to Grey, 4 March 1914, encl. Russia: Annual Report 1913.

\(^{51}\) FO371/1815/32199/19208, Buchanan to Grey, 13 July 1913.
that, according to Sazonov's plan, Russian intervention becomes inevitable.\(^52\)

Contact between Russian emissaries and influential Kurdish chiefs had been particularly active since 1910. Abdur Rezak, an influential Kurdish chief, and one of the notorious and most turbulent Bedrkhan clan was in constant contact with the Russian authorities. Since August 1910, Rezak had been publishing pamphlets and disseminating the idea of a Kurdish principality and preaching the 'blessedness of the Russian rule'. Abdur Rezak had gone as far as convincing the various Kurdish tribes that a rising against the Ottoman government would have the support of Russia.\(^53\)

Nazim Bey, the CUP chief at Erzerum, disturbed over the revolutionary fomentation among the Kurds, stated that he had 'no doubt' that the equivocal attitude of the Vali of Diarbekir had encouraged the Kurds to make that province the centre of their revolutionary propaganda. The CUP chief attributed the unrest to emissaries paid by Russian police authorities in the Caucasus.\(^54\)

Disturbing also was the report from Bitlis. The British Vice-Consul reported that Russian propagandists were doing a 'good deal of business' among hundreds of discontented Hamidieh officers at Malazgerd and Bulanik, as a means of paving the way for a 'Russian occupation of the territory'. There appeared also striking proof that the Russian cause among Kurdish malcontents was making widespread

\(^{52}\) FO371/1814/25212, minute initialled by D.M.O., 27 May 1913; also in, L/P & S/11/60, P2529, O'Breine to Grey, 27 May 1913.

\(^{53}\) FO371/1289/28882/22643, Marling to Grey, 18 July 1911.

\(^{54}\) FO371/1009/28552/14070, McGregor to Lowther, 20 July 1910.
By early 1912, it was well established that large quantities of arms had been brought in from Russia and distributed among the Kurds. Government officials in the Moush region were convinced that Russian officers had been seen disguised as Kurds, and that Russian influence was responsible for the covert agitation perceptible among the various tribes in the eastern districts. A successful Kurdish revolt crucially depended on the unity of the various Kurdish tribes scattered throughout the eastern provinces. Abdur Rezak, aware of this weakness, was in constant communication with the various chiefs to bring about Kurdish unity in the event of a revolt. It seems that Russia was directly involved in promoting Abdur Rezak's efforts for a Kurdish confederation. The Kurdish sheikh of Barzan (a territory included in the caza of Akra), in a private meeting with the British Vice-Consul at Mosul, stated that Russia was already by mid 1912 in league with eight influential Kurdish chiefs. That the whole country from Van to Rowanduz was ready to go over to Russia on a 'very small pretext', because the Kurds were 'sick of the Turks'. Overtures made by the Russians to the sheikh of Barzan, offering him financial subsidy and protection if he became

55. FO371/1491/4966, Lowther to Grey, 31 Jan. 1912; encl. Turkey: Annual Report 1911; FO371/1263/50565/49367, Safrastian to McGregor, 17 Nov. 1911; see also minute initialled by R.P.G., 'It will be well to keep an eye on the matter', 29 Dec. 1911.

56. L/P & S/11/14, Knapp to McGregor, 26 Feb. 1912; FO371/1484/12553, Knapp to McGregor, 26 Feb. 1912; FO371/1493/15581, Lowther to Grey, 10 Apr. 1912; FO371/1489/7048, McGregor to Lowther, 30 Jan. 1912; FO371/1484/12553/44, minute initials illegible, 'We have already heard reports that the Kurds are receiving arms from Russia and that Russian agitators are working among them, but these reports have not previously been so circumstantial', 2 Apr. 1912; FO371/1805/20509/14478, Lowther to Grey, 30 Apr. 1912.

a 'Russian subject', were turned down.\textsuperscript{58}

Even the Constantinople journal of the Armenian Revolutionary Party, the Dashnaktsutiun, had maintained that Russia had taken into her pay all the principal frontier chieftains. As anti-Christian feeling was high in most Armenian provinces, the Bedrkhan chieftains were trying to profit by Turkey's difficulties in the Balkans in order to establish an autonomous Kurdistan under Russian tutelage.\textsuperscript{59}

These convictions were true. Russia could have gained possession of Turkish Armenia only through a united Kurdish revolt, since Turkey was three times stronger than Russian military power on the Caucasus front.\textsuperscript{60} The Russian Consul at Erzerum in a secret despatch to the Foreign Ministry, reported that the Kurdish Committee centred at Khnous was organising a revolt and for this purpose there were 70,000 well armed Kurds. The Russian Consul added that the Kurdish Committee lacked the necessary amount of money to carry out the revolt and based its hopes on the Russian government because:

they know that the Russian government has 50,000 Liras at the Russian embassy in Constantinople to organise a Kurdish revolt.\textsuperscript{61}

The Ottoman government had not remained inactive amid the Russian intrigue

\textsuperscript{58} FO371/1509/34839, Vice-Consul Hony to Lowther, 7 July 1912.

\textsuperscript{59} FO371/1484/37855, Marling to Grey, 4 Sept. 1912.

\textsuperscript{60} ГВФА СССР, Фонд 2000, Л. 1, Ф. 3789, Сазонов to the President of the Ministers of Council, 31 Jan. (13 Feb.) 1912, encl., 'Report on the General Political Situation of the Caucasian Military Front'.

\textsuperscript{61} АВИП, Фонд Политархив, Ф. 1648, The Russian Consul at Erzerum to The First Department of the Foreign Ministry, 6 (19) Aug. 1912.
and the Kurdish unrest. Effective measures had been taken to combat and counter Kurdish separatist tendencies. The appointment of Hussein Pasha of Patnots to the rank of Major-General of the XVIth Regiment of Tribal Light Cavalry was one of those decisive measures. The reorganisation of the Tribal Light Cavalry initiated by the Ottoman government had caused discontent among the Kurds. This move was intended to form various Kurdish tribes into one unit, thus depriving them of their hereditary prestige, and at the same time to bring the conditions of military service into line with those of a regular army. The appointment of Hussein Pasha had made a 'painful impression' on Armenians and had an even 'worse' effect on the Kurds. Hussein, who had played a significant part in the Armenian massacres of the 1890s, was a 'notorious Kurdish chieftain' and one of the most distinguished of Abdul Hamid's 'instruments of oppression'.

The local Ottoman authorities placing little reliance on the loyalty of the Kurds, as it had become evident that the Russians were trying to buy over the Kurdish chieftains. When Major W. Tyrrell, the British Military Attache, asked one of the CUP General Staff the reason for this 'extraordinary appointment', the Turkish Colonel replied that no one had regretted more than he that such appointments should be made.

But it is the fault of you foreigners. Why can't you leave us alone?
The Russians are buying the Kurdish chiefs, and we have to bribe men like Hussein Pasha to keep the Kurds away from the Russians.  

During 1913, conjointly with the Armenian reform deliberations, the Kurdish

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movement which rose and waned according to the needs of Russian policy, received new impetus. But what strengthened the conviction of the Russian government of the need to secretly inflame the Kurdish revolutionary movement was the incipient diplomatic crisis with Germany. The despatch of General Liman von Sanders to Constantinople, and Sanders's request that he be given command of the Turkish First Army Corps which formed the garrison of the Constantinople area, was made known in St. Petersburg at a ministerial conference on 31 February 1913, as was the engagement of over forty German officers to hold executive posts in the Ottoman army. Nicholas II interpreted the despatch of General Sanders' mission as an attempt on Germany's part to imprison Russia in the Black sea. While the Russian Cabinet took this as a deliberate German move to dominate the Straits and to outflank Russia by converting the Turkish army into an instrument of German aggression.

It seemed that Russian anxiety was not exaggerated. The German emperor Wilhelm II had specifically instructed von Sanders that the reason for the mission was the creation of an army accountable to the Kaiser. I.K. Grigorevich, the Russian Minister for the Navy, in a despatch to Sazonov, had stressed that Russia could not permit a foreign power to dominate the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

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63. FO371/1805/20509/14478, Vice-Consul Hony to Lowther, Mosul, 3 Apr. 1913.

64. FO371/1773/2815/173, minute initialled D.M.O., 'Russia has a considerable interest in Kurdish affairs in general'. 21 Jan. 1913; ibid., minute initialled A.N., 'The Kurdish question may become very important'. 31 Jan. 1913.


The Straits in the hands of another state would mean the control of the economic development of southern Russia by a foreign power and the transfer to that state of hegemony over the Balkans and the key to Asia Minor. Furthermore, Grigorevich advised that Russia should politically and militarily be prepared for the seizure of the Straits.\footnote{Krasnii Arkhiv, vol. 7. 1924, I.V. Grigorevich to Sazonov, 9 Dec. 1913, pp. 33-4.}

The possibility of seizing the Straits by force seemed impracticable, due to the superiority of the Ottoman fleet, lack of suitable transport vessels and the inadequacy of the military forces. Instead, Sazonov and the Russian General Staff came to the decision to strengthen their garrisons in the Caucasus and Central Siberia. This was aimed not only at forestalling a future advance of the Turkish armies, but to cope with German intrigue. It was also thought that the most effective way in which they could counter the Liman von Sanders appointment was by adopting a threatening attitude towards Turkey on her Transcaucasian frontier. The latter was a possible measure since Russia was in effective control of northern Persia and in contact with frontier Kurdish chiefs. Therefore, for the necessity of the military build-up, it was argued that only a single line of rail led from Russia to the neighbourhood of the Ottoman frontier, and that the despatch of troops from other Black sea ports to Batum depended on the command of the sea which might be regained by Turkey.\footnote{FO371/1744/8951, Buchanan to Grey, 24 Feb. 1913; ibid., no. 10994, Lieutenant-Colonel Knox to Buchanan, 5 March 1913; ibid., no. 18743, Buchanan to Grey, 23 Apr. 1913; also in L/P & S/11/52, P1601, Knox to Buchanan, 5 March 1913; C.J. Smith, The Russian Struggle for Power 1914-1917, (New York, 1956), p. 66. See also, FO371/1745/22463, Russian Military Policy by General Staff, WO, 28 May 1913; about the increase of Russian military power. I.V. Bestuzhev Russian Foreign Policy, February-June 1914, Journal of Contemporary History, 1/3, 1966, pp. 95-6.}

Vorontsov Dashkov strongly argued that Russia should prepare for war against the Ottoman empire. That an additional railway should be built which would have a 'direct connection with
The Liman von Sanders affair had enticed the Russian government to place utmost importance on the establishment of Russian power in Asia Minor, adjoining the Transcaucasus. Sazonov stressed the necessity for the realisation of military reinforcement in the Caucasus in the event of military action. The Russian Foreign Minister attached the conviction that:

These measures should be fulfilled in secrecy so that neither Turkey nor the Western powers suspect that Russia is taking serious military steps against the Ottoman Empire.

In addition Sazonov stated the 'Armenians should not place much hope on Russia'. Thus, Russia was not prepared to come to the rescue of Armenians in the event of war with Turkey. It only suited Russian interests to make good use of the Armenian outcry for reforms and at the same time inflame Kurdish sentiments against the Armenians and the Ottoman government for her own political ambitions. But the Kurdish movement was the most effective weapon for Russia to make headway in the region. Therefore, both Kurdish resentment towards Armenian reforms and the Turkish government were skilfully fostered by Russia.

As the Armenian reform deliberations were in process, the Kurdish chiefs showed a hostile attitude. They feared that the introduction of a strong

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69. Krasnii Arkhiv, vol. 34, 1929, pp. 185-86

70. State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Collection of Fonds, File 40, Sazonov to the President of the Ministers of Council, 9 (22) Dec. 1913.
administration would bring the death blow to their personal power. Holding this view, Abdur Rezak tried to make the Kurds submerge their tribal difference by instilling into them the idea that once the Armenian reform question had been settled, their national existence would be in danger. Abdur Rezak, skilfully playing on these arguments, worked on a united Kurdish revolt against the Ottoman government at the same time propagating the idea of a 'Kurdish autonomy under Russian suzerainty'.

According to Shirkov, the Russian Consul at Bitlis, the Kurdish revolutionary unrest in Diarbekir and the environs was becoming pronounced and in the near future clashes were expected to occur. The Kurdish masses under the immediate influence of Abdur Rezak were convinced that the present moment was 'most opportune' to revolt against the Turkish authorities in the region. On this question, the Russian Consul advised the Foreign Ministry that:

Russia could settle this whole matter with five thousand troops.

The Ottoman scheme for reforms was naturally very far removed from any consideration of Armenian autonomy. Certainly the Russian government would have prevented the inauguration of an autonomous Turkish Armenia, since an autonomous or semi-autonomous Armenian province dividing Turkey from Russia would have formed a very effective barrier against Russian expansion in that

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72. FO881/10376/19793, Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, 4 Apr. 1913; FO371/1773/35485, Marling to Grey, 25 July 1913; FO371/1815/31543/19208, Buchanan to Grey, 7 July 1913; FO195/2450/4679, Monahan to Mallet, 31 Oct. 1913, encl. 'The Kurdish Movement, The Pamphlet of Abdur Rezak'.

73. ABIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 546, Shirkov to Foreign Ministry, 8 (21) Apr. 1913.
direction. Besides, Russian Armenians would in future want to join with Turkish
Armenia. But Abdur Rezak tried to make the Kurdish tribes believe that reforms
in eastern Turkey would eventually lead to the autonomy of Armenia, threatening
the national existence of the Kurds. In this propaganda campaign, Rezak was
believed to be in 'thorough understanding' with the Russian authorities. And it
was also widely believed that the Russian Consul at Khoi was openly encouraging
the idea of autonomy among the Kurds, simply to bring about a general discord
between Armenians and Kurds. This would have convinced the Western powers
that a Russian scheme of reforms was a must. If the latter failed, a Kurdish
revolt accompanied by the massacre of Armenians would have caused a pretext
for Russian intervention. A Consular report had gone as far as to state that
Russian agents were touring the Kurdish settlements trying to arrange 'a little
massacre' of Christians in order to give the Russians a pretext to intervene.

The Ottoman authorities were thoroughly alive to the danger of a Russian
armed intervention. They had sufficient proof that the Russian government was
keeping the Kurds on the Persian frontier in a state of unrest and encouraging
them to make raids into Ottoman territories. In support of this they pointed
out that Ismail Agha (Simko) and Abdur Rezak, who were working in combination,

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74. FO195/2449/2296/45, Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, 8 May 1913; FO88/10376/19793, Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, 13 Apr. 1913.

75. FO371/1783/19793/1168, Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, 4 Apr. 1913; ibid., see
minute, 'The despatch is disquieting and it is evident that anything may happen in
those regions at almost any moment. The only means of restoring order in the
event of an outbreak appears to be by Russian troops'. FO195/2449/2100/45,
Fontana to Lowther, 30 Apr. 1913.

76. FO195/2449/2317/45, Hony to Lowther, Mosul, 27 Apr. 1913; rept. in
FO371/1805/24938/14478, Hony to Lowther, 27 Apr. 1913.

77. ABIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 1605, Russian Consul at Van to Giers, 20 Apr.
(13 May) 1913.
had been received with honour and decorated by the Russian authorities at Tiflis. While the Viceroy of the Caucasus had supplied them with money.\footnote{FO195/2449/1587/45, Fontana to Lowther, Aleppo, 25 March 1913; FO371/2773/111837/42233, 'The Russian and the Kurds', report by Mark Sykes, 5 June 1916.}

After repeated Consular reports from eastern Turkey Lowther and then Mallet, the successive British ambassadors at Constantinople became convinced that Abdur Rezak with the 'assistance of Russia' was organising a Kurdish revolt between Van, Bitlis and Mosul.\footnote{FO881/10376/22513, Lowther to Grey, 12 May 1913; see also, ibid., no. 10468/53075, Mallet to Grey, 12 Nov. 1913.} The concentration of Russian troops at Karaurgan\footnote{FO371/1842/35678/35660, Consul Stevens to Grey, Batum, 2 Aug. 1913.} had compelled the British government to inquire into the matter through George Buchanan, the ambassador at St. Petersburg. Sazonov told Buchanan that a report of a contemplated advance in Turkish Armenia was 'quite unfounded'. Moreover, Sazonov added that:

> The Russian government has now settled a definite plan of action in certain eventualities, but it will not be on the side of Armenia.\footnote{Ibid., no. 36375, Buchanan to Grey, 6 Aug. 1913.}

It seems that the Russian government did not favour the Armenians and placed undue reliance on the Kurds.

The Ottoman government, however, 'dared not' and 'could not' use effective pressure against the Kurdish separatist movement. Any attempt on the part of the government to use military force to crush the Kurdish revolutionaries would have been suicidal. It would have resulted in a form of conflagration where
Russian intervention would have been inevitable. Therefore, the Young Turk government attempted to avert the possibility of a general Kurdish uprising and succeeded in balancing the influence of the one Kurdish chief against that of the other.  

During the first few months of 1914, the Kurdish revolutionary movement was still turbulent. Revolts on a local scale did occur. On 28 February, the Kurds had temporarily succeeded in capturing part of the town of Bitlis but were only driven out when Ottoman reinforcements arrived. Mollah Selim and some of his Kurdish followers had found refuge at the Russian Consulate. Similar Kurdish subversive activity had also occurred in other parts of eastern Turkey which only had a local effect. But the Kurdish revolutionary movement headed by Abdur Rezak failed to establish a unilateral front. No matter how well the Russian authorities were intriguing with various Kurdish chiefs filling them with false hopes of an autonomous Kurdistan, the attempted confederation of the Kurdish tribes under the Bedrkhan family failed to fulfill Russian expectations. The various Kurdish tribes were disunited and mutually suspicious. Some tribes wanted an autonomous Kurdistan under Russian tutelage. Others aimed at ensuring effective reforms only for them. Another faction worked against the realization of Armenian reforms and a few tribes simply wanted to drive the Turks away.

82. FO371/1783/19793/1168, Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, 4 Apr. 1913; FO371/1805/24938/14478, Hony to Lowther, 27 Apr. 1913; FO371/2130/11985/5748, Smith to Mallet, 14 Feb. 1914. See also, State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 5, File 67, Bishop Kalinian to Catholicos Kevork V, Bitlis, 3 (13) March 1914.


from their territories.85

The Armenian Reform Deliberations

Ottoman defeats in the first Balkan War had brought the ousted CUP back into power with the successful coup of 23 January 1913. Enver, thrusting himself into the Council of Chambers, shot Nazim Pasha, the Minister of War, and forced the Cabinet to resign. Mahmud Shevket Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier and Talaat Minister of the Interior. Talaat, aware of the fact that Armenian grievances and demands for reforms in European diplomatic circles would bring further embarrassments for Turkey, tried to divert Armenian national aspirations away from dependence on foreign governments. Talaat even warned his close Armenian acquaintances, two of whom were deputies in the Ottoman Parliament, that their people had fallen under the sinister spell of the Europeans, the true enemies of Turks and Armenians alike. But the rift between the CUP and Dashnaktsutiun had become so deep by 1913, that the Armenian leaders were convinced that without external intercession the collective future of the Turkish Armenians would remain bleak. The geographical proximity of Russia and the peace and prosperity enjoyed by the two million Armenians in the contiguous Russian provinces of the Caucasus, were convincing indications to Ottoman Armenians that the only real reforms should be mainly through Russian auspices.86

As the government in Constantinople had been absorbed in securing its own position, the peril of the Armenians in the provinces had become imminent.  


Grave fears of widespread massacres were expressed by a number of Consuls in Anatolia. Specifically, Dr C.A. Gates, one of the Principals of Robert College, reported that:

The hour of peril for the Armenians in the provinces has come. In Kharput the Beys gathered for a massacre. The same kind of reports come from Van and Diarbekir.  

At this stage some members of the British Foreign Office had realised that the annexation of Turkish Armenia was the 'best way' to ameliorate conditions. It was even believed that it was quite impossible to prevent massacres in Armenia except by the occupation of those provinces by Russian troops which was 'undesirable' for other reasons. Although it was fully recognised that the only power which might stop the massacres was Russia, she was not allowed to intervene. It was feared that a Russian occupation of the Armenian provinces might break the status quo and might spark off a process of partition. The Western powers were not prepared to see the scrambling of the Ottoman Empire. They preferred to follow a safer course where the integrity of the Ottoman Empire would be preserved. Therefore, reforming Turkey was what they were prepared to embark on.

The Armenian National Assembly, preparing what was regarded to be a workable reform programme, presented the draft to André Mandelstam, the chief dragoman of the Russian embassy. In mid 1913 the principal features of the plan were incorporated into a formal proposal that ambassador Giers relayed to his British, French, German, Austrian and Italian counterparts at Constantinople.

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88. Ibid., no. 6219, Minute initialled E.G and A.N., 10 Feb. 1913; ibid., minute signed by the Private Secretary, 12 Feb. 1913.
The Russian government was doing all in its power to assume the leading role over the Armenian reform question. This motivation is partly revealed in the secret despatch of the Russian Vice-Consul at Van to Giers in which he emphatically stressed Russia's importance in taking the initiative.

We must not allow Britain to oversee the realisation of reforms in Kurdistan and Turkish Armenia which lie in the sphere of our political influence. A Russian protectorate for Turkish Armenians is a must; this gives the possibility for the Russian government to have a permanent influence in Turkey. This is one way to penetrate by peaceful means.\(^89\)

Giers had also expressed very similar opinions about the importance of the Armenian question for Russia. He urged Sazonov to make the Armenian Catholicos at Etchmiadzin and the Patriarch at Constantinople believe that the tsarist government would come to the aid of the Armenians in time of need. The Russian ambassador was convinced that such 'elaborate' promises would 'avert' Armenian petitions for help to other European powers.\(^90\) To this effect, Vorontsov Dashkov asked the Catholicos Kevork V, to use his influence on Boghos Nubar, the President of the Armenian National Delegation in Paris, to work within the European diplomatic circles in creating a 'favourable mood' where the sponsorship of Armenian reforms be reserved for Russia.\(^91\)

The Russian draft proposal of June 1913, provided for the creation of 'one

\(^{89}\) ABIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 1605, Russian Vice-Consul at Van to Giers, 1 (14) Jan. 1913.

\(^{90}\) State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Collection of Fonds, File 33, Giers to Sazonov, 26 Nov. (9 Dec.) 1912.

\(^{91}\) Ibid., L. 2, File 669, Kevork V to Boghos Nubar, 4 (17) Jan. 1913.
province' composed of the six Armenian vilayets, to be placed under a Christian Governor-General, preferably European, appointed by the Sultan with the consent of the great powers, for the term of five years. The Governor-General was to have full power to appoint and dismiss all officials and provisional judges, the command of the gendarmerie and the disposal of the military forces for the maintenance of order. The Governor-General was to be assisted by a consultative council, including European technical advisers. The Provisional Assembly was to contain Christians and Muslims in equal numbers. The police and gendarmerie were to be recruited from among the inhabitants of the province, and half of them to be Christians. Natives of the province were to perform their military service within its boundaries. The Kurdish Light Cavalry was to be disbanded. Officials were to be half Christians and half Muslims, and the arrangements were to be made for the use and recognition of the local language.  

Germany at once characterised the Russian scheme as a violation of Ottoman sovereignty and the signal for the partition of Anatolia. Germany was convinced that the Russian proposals went too far and feared that this would lead to the creation of a completely autonomous and separate Armenia, entirely free from the rest of Asiatic Turkey. Significantly, article twelve of the Russian proposal which advocated 'regional military service', was vigorously combated by Germany and Austria. Wangenheim, the German ambassador, argued that it would be tantamount to creating a Russian sphere of interest in those regions which would inevitably lead to a Russian occupation, and be the stepping-stone on the way to the taking of Constantinople itself. It was further believed that this scheme would be a bad precedent, and would make for the break-up and not for the


93. L/P & S/11/60, P3146, Marling to Grey, 12 July 1913; FO371/1815/31062/19208, Buchanan to Grey, 6 July 1913; ibid., no. 34337, Grey to Granville, 22 July 1913.
consolidation of the Ottoman dominions. Germany and Austria were determined not to allow the creation under Russian auspices of a specially privileged Armenian province in Anatolia. For them a reformed Armenia based on the principle of the Russian scheme meant a 'Russian Armenia'. Nor did this proposal meet with the entire approval of the French government.

The British government too viewed the whole affair as the first step to the partitioning and the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The British Foreign Secretary and the Cabinet were of the opinion that for the time being the only safe policy was to preserve the Ottoman rule in Asia. But the Prime Minister, while agreeing, expressed 'a strong opinion' that it was only a question of time and not a long time before the same causes of 'instability' and 'rottenness' which had led to the practical expulsion of the Turk from Europe, would bring about the same downfall in Asia. Britain, he maintained, ought to face those probabilities.

As the Armenian reform question had received some prominence and had finally become the subject of deliberation among the great powers, German agents were active, particularly in Cilicia, to win Armenian sympathy for Germany. To

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94. FO371/1815/401701, minute initials illegible, 23 Sept. 1913; L/P & S/11/60, P3146, Marling to Grey, 12 July 1913; FO371/1815/31062, Buchanan to Grey, 6 July 1913; ibid., no. 40170/19208.

95. FO371/1815/31227/19208, Grey to Goschen, 3 July, 1913, also see minute, 8 July, 1913: 'M. Sazonov continues his plan for Entente action instead of action by all the Powers, as he wants the provisional measures proposed by Sir E. Grey -the appointment of officers of a minor Power- to be discussed by the three and not by the six Ambassadors'. K. Bourne & D. Cameron, British Documents of Foreign Affairs, Reports and Papers From the Foreign Office Confidential Print, Part 1, Series A, Russia, vol. 6, 1910-1914, (U.S.A. 1983), p. 366.

this effect, Sir Gerard Lowther, the British ambassador at Constantinople, had ample evidence. He reported that German agents were holding out promises to the Armenians that the German government would force Turkey to put into execution the reforms promised by the Treaty of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention, 'which Britain had failed to have carried out'. Prominent Armenians who were in direct contact with the German agents showed scepticism as to the efficiency of the would-be reforms under German auspices, and argued that as Britain had failed to secure the execution of Turkish promises in the matter, there was small likelihood that Germany, who had schemes for eventual German colonisation in the districts of Cilicia would now bestir herself and keep up the continuous effort that would be required to secure any betterment of the lot of the Armenians. Furthermore, Armenians argued that Germany had exhibited a 'callousness' during the massacres of 1894-96, which the Armenians could not easily forget.\textsuperscript{97} It was also believed in Armenian circles that the Baghdad Railway concession obtained by Germany had been 'at the price of Armenian blood'.\textsuperscript{98}

Articles published in the 'Osmanischer Lloyd,' the German organ in Constantinople, coincided with the statements made by the German agents, even Wangenheim's, who considered Cilicia to be of considerable importance for Germany.

If Russia were to have a sphere of influence in Armenia, Germany would claim a similar position in Cilicia.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{97} FO371/1773/17972, Lowther to Grey, 14 Apr. 1913.

\textsuperscript{98} FO371/1805/40170, Memorandum by G.H. Fitzmaurice, Constant., 10 Aug. 1913.

\textsuperscript{99} FO371/1815/33999, Marling to Grey, 12 July 1913; FO371/1773/19328, Lowther to Grey, 24 Apr. 1913.
Sazonov states that the Berlin Cabinet was not averse to the idea of making itself popular with the Armenians, who, being 'good businessmen', were considered as 'most important' factors in the economic life of the Ottoman Empire. Nicholas II and Sazonov were convinced that Germany was pursuing the economic conquest of Cilicia. Reports reaching St. Petersburg stated that, with the initiative of the German government, the Armenian-German cultural and economic Union was founded in Berlin in early 1914. Anxiety was felt in the Russian Cabinet for they had recognised the fact that German ambition was to spread its political influence over the Turkish Armenian provinces. It was also feared that through this union, the German government was preparing the ground for inducing the Armenians to side with Germany as against Russia in the event of war in the region. That the German statesmen working behind this scheme were Wangenheim, Graf Schulenberg von Berg at Tiflis, Litten at Tabriz and Vice-Consul Anders at Erzerum. One other major factor which must have motivated the German government to win Armenian sympathy was the Berlin-Baghdad railway project. Once this project had been completed, Armenian merchants were expected to provide a substantial economic boost.

The discussions among the great powers for the settlement of the Armenian question had provoked friction in both Turkish and Kurdish circles. The

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101. For German-Armenian Cultural ties see, State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 457, L. 1, Files 1-14, 1900-1927.

102. ABIIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3484, The Assistant of the Chief-Quartermaster of the Supreme Military Headquarters to N.A. Bazili, Vice-Director of the Foreign Ministry, 9 June 1914; ibid., no. 4140, The Head of Police Department at Tiflis to Vorontsov Dashkov, 15 July 1914. See also, State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, File 669, National Defence Central Committee to His Grace Jevahirian, 5 Aug. / 18 Sept. 1913.
ambassadors of the great powers received daily reports from their Consuls on the spot, informing them of the 'ceaseless oppression', and 'violence' of Turks and Kurds. The Russian Foreign Minister asserted that the Ottoman government, far from preventing this lawlessness, secretly encouraged it. The British Foreign Office believed that by the time a decision was reached by the powers there would be 'far fewer Armenians left to help'.

It was reported from several reliable sources that, Yakub Jemil, the delegate of the CUP, with three men, two of whom being Ottoman officers were touring the villages around Adana with the object of inciting the Muslims to attack those Armenian centres that had escaped the massacres in 1909. While Sheikh-Zadeh Hajji Ali, a member of the CUP, had stated that it was 'necessary to prune the Armenians again'.

The Ottoman authorities did not hesitate to use even some of the Kurds occasionally to harm the Armenians. The situation at Diarbekir, especially in the district to the east of the town, was threatening; several Armenians had been killed in the villages. The British acting Vice-Consul believed that the Turkish authorities were secretly conniving at those outrages, and pretending that, in the absence of sufficient armed forces, they were unable to restrain the Kurds. A similar situation prevailed in the vilayet of Bitlis, where the authorities were 'unable' to provide any protection. While the Russian statesman Pavel Miliukov, commenting on the systematic raids stated that it was as if the Turks and the

103. Sazonov, Fateful Years, p. 144.

104. FO371/1773/13668, minute by Private Secretary, 27 March 1913; see also, ibid., no. 19502, minute initials illegible, 'Delay may mean the loss of thousands of lives', 27 Apr. 1913; ibid., no. 46836, minute initialled A.C., 16 Oct. 1913.

105. FO371/1773/19328, Mathews to Lowther, 16 Apr. 1913; L/P/ & S/11/54, P2204, Vice-Consul Mathews to Lowther, Adana, 28 Apr. 1913.
Kurds were following the principle that ‘the solution to the Armenian question lies in exterminating the Armenian people to the last man’.\textsuperscript{106}

The subsequent bilateral deliberations about reforms in Turkish Armenia became the subject of voluminous international correspondence, but a settlement was finally achieved. The Young Turk government assented to the reform act on 8 February 1914, with several modifications to the compromise measure. The reorganisation of Turkish Armenia into ‘two regions’ rather than ‘one’ and the inclusion of the Trebizond vilayet and several peripheral districts was regarded as a significant concession to the CUP. This arrangement was obviously intended to forestall the Russian proposal involving the creation of a ‘single Armenian province’. Two foreign Inspector-Generals were to be appointed with the consent of the powers, and they were to be given authority to nominate as well as dismiss all officials, including the Valis. However, no mention was made of restitution for Armenian losses; exclusion of Muslim immigrants, extension of similar reforms to Cilicia, or enforcement of the measure by the European powers.\textsuperscript{107}

Thus, the Ottoman Empire was saved from being partitioned. Instead she had to assent to a reform plan which required minimum foreign control. Although the February Act did not fulfil all Armenian expectations nevertheless Armenians gained something which promised to be more than mere paper. Russia must have felt frustrated at not having gained all the control over Turkish Armenia which she regarded as her right and necessity. But Russia had at least succeeded in thwarting a purely Anglo-German reform of Anatolia, with Anglo-Indian officers

\textsuperscript{106} FO371/1773/24352/173, Lowther to Grey, 23 May 1913; Ibid., no.25340, Note Communicated by the Russian Embassy in London, 2 June 1913; P. Miliukov, Political Memoirs, pp. 265-66.

\textsuperscript{107} R.G. Hovannisian, The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire, p. 25; FO371/2137/79138, Turkey: Annual Report 1913, Beaumont to Grey, 4 Dec. 1914; FO371/1815/32583/19208, Marling to Grey, 8 July 1913.
in control of eastern Turkey. Germany was able to avert the Russian threat to the Berlin-Baghdad railway sphere. As for France, Britain, Austria and Italy, they had succeeded in avoiding the partition of the Ottoman Empire. But the Armenian Reform Act did not stand a chance of being implemented due to the outbreak of the First World War.

The authors of the Young Turk revolution who had claimed to work for the regeneration of the country, in reality rendered its condition worse than before, since some of them were more corrupt, more unscrupulous, and more brutal than their predecessors. Particularly from 1913 onwards, the Young Turk organisational machinery developed into a 'party dictatorship', which was 'no less autocratic' than Abdul Hamid's.\(^\text{108}\) Under such conditions the Armenian element was the victim of the regime. Ziya Gokalp, the ideologist of the Young Turks, and a member of the Central Committee of the CUP, admitted that the Young Turks were not sincere in their recognition of the national rights of the various communities, but used the ideal of Ottomanism as a cloak for the Turkification of the state.\(^\text{109}\)

It seems that nor was the Russian government sincere towards the betterment of the Armenian people in Turkey. Although Russia had shown the utmost concern in instituting reforms in eastern Anatolia, in reality she pursued a different aim. The establishment of Russian control over the region was the

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\(^{109}\) U. Heyd, Foundations of Turkish Nationalism, p. 73.
prime target. That is why she refused the elaboration of an effective scheme of reforms for the whole of Asiatic Turkey and confined it strictly to the Armenian vilayets, embodying it into a 'single united Armenia'. Seizing the Straits was dropped by the Russian General Staff; instead, a seizure of Anatolia by means of a Kurdish revolt was thought to be attainable. The revolt would have undoubtedly resulted in the massacre of the Armenian population followed by Russian intervention, an excuse to 'safeguard' the Armenians. A petition by Gureya Bechir Khan, head of the Committee of Independent Kurdistan, to the British government in late 1918, stated that:

The Armenian question is due neither to the Armenians nor to ourselves but to Russia, who, wishing to add Kurdistan to her vast empire and open the road to Persia and India, was the first to foment the discord between the Armenians and Muslims.¹¹⁰

The death of Turkish Armenia, was thus postponed for a short period, but the final blow, the 'solution' of the 'question', was vigorously pursued by the Turkish government during the First World War.

¹¹⁰ FO608/95/365/1/1, R. Wintgate to A.J. Balfour, 16 Dec. 1918, encl. 'A Petition from the Committee of Independent Kurdistan, signed by Gureya Bechir Khan'.
Imperial Russian Interests and the Armenian Question During 1914-16

The persistent as well as consistent desire of the Russian governments to acquire Constantinople and the Straits was traditional, as was Franco-British resistance to it. The Russian Empire, whose ports were blocked by ice for much of the year, regarded the Straits as a commercial life-line. The Dardanelles and the Bosphorus were vital. In the 19th century the wars waged against the Ottoman Empire with the goal of seizing the Straits, had failed to meet Tsarist Russian expectations. The opposition, led by Britain and France, was intended primarily to keep the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and to bolster it up. As a result, Turkey served as an effective buffer against Russian expansion and influence. Although the Russian government had almost no share in the economy and finance in the Ottoman Empire, the possession of the Straits constituted the 'keys and gates to the Russian house', which gave access to the Mediterranean for Russian commerce. It also formed a natural pivot for the exercise of potential political influence in the Balkans.

Between 1900 and 1913, grain comprised about half of all Russian exports, and between 75 and 90 per cent of all grain went through the Straits. The brief blockade of the Straits in 1911-12, during the Italo-Turkish war had resulted in great Russian economic losses. The second closure during the Balkan wars of 1912-13, was even more serious. Therefore, the healthy existence of Russia's economy was at constant risk. Solving the problem became the definitive aim of Russian foreign policy. With the outbreak of the Great War, Russia found herself

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in a position where she could finally realise her cherished territorial ambitions. Her strategic interests in the Ottoman Empire hinged on two specific military targets: command of the Black Sea with a minimum goal of defending Russia's coasts and a maximum of seizure of the Straits, and the annexation of parts of Turkish Armenia which were of strategic importance, such as Trebizond, Erzerum, Bitlis and Van.

As a result of the Armenian reform question, Russo-Turkish relations had been strained to a serious extent. But in May 1914, Talaat Pasha leading the annual Ottoman courtesy visit to Livadia, the Tsar's summer palace in the Crimea, proposed an alliance with Russia. According to Talaat Pasha, it was in Turkey's interest to cultivate the 'best possible relations'. During the conversation Talaat also made it clear that Turkey could only count upon Russia's friendship, provided that she remained 'mistress in her own house', and did not allow any other power to share with her the control of the Straits. Sazonov's response was favourable and stressed that his government wished to see 'Turkey for the Turks', but would not tolerate any foreign power acquiring a privileged position. Touching on the Armenian question, the Russian Foreign Minister expressed the hope that the Ottoman government would treat the Armenian people in a 'just' and 'friendly' spirit. Talaat gave satisfactory assurances on all the points discussed, and concluded that the German military mission would not be allowed to exceed the functions assigned to them, which were of a 'purely technical character'. Despite the good impression that Talaat had made and the fact that he had been even decorated with the Order of Alexander Nevski, the offer of the alliance between the two countries was left open by Sazonov.²

² L/P & S/11/79, P2319, no.21987, Buchanan to Grey, 17 May 1914; Ibid., no.23207, Mallet to Grey, 20 May 1914; FO195/2459/1059, 'Russia and Turkey', decipher to Grey, St. Petersburg, 18 May 1914.
The unexpected change of attitude on the part of the Russian government towards the Ottoman Empire suggests that Russia had a definite objective in view. It had always been one of the principal objectives of Russian policy to secure modification of the restrictions imposed upon her warships passing through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. The large measure of control obtained by Germany over the Ottoman army and the substantial increase of Ottoman naval power, seem to have been the factors inducing the Russian government to follow a moderate and friendly line of policy.\(^3\) Since the Kurdish movement had failed to bring the expected rising and the armed intervention of Russia in Anatolia, the policy of a friendly attitude was believed to be desirable, at least for the moment.

Enver Pasha, the Germanophile Minister of War, who had been the chief instigator on the Turkish side in engineering the alliance with Germany, toyed with the idea of a Russian alliance. He repeated Talaat's proposition to Giers, the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, offering a ten year Turco-Russian defensive alliance. According to Enver, the Turks were to withdraw their troops from the Caucasus and would dismiss the German Instructors. However, in return, Enver expected a rectification of the Balkan frontier with the cession of the Greek islands of Lemnos and Chios with some Bulgarian territories in Thrace.\(^4\) As regards the Straits question, the most vital issue, Enver evasively promised that it would 'fall under its own weight'. Giers who had personally accepted the terms of alliance urged S.D. Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister, to grab the surprising offer, pointing out that this would have been the easiest

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\(^3\) L/P & S/11/79, P2430, no.25458, Mallet to Grey, 2 June 1914.

way for Russia to establish a dominance over Constantinople. Sazonov, basing his Near Eastern policy on the creation of a Balkan bloc like the one in 1912, directed against Austria-Hungary, temporised. Nevertheless, he realised that Ottoman hostility and a resulting closure of the Straits would severely weaken Russia's position and had the professed purpose of keeping the Ottoman Empire neutral. But the concessions required by Enver were resisted by Britain and the abolition of the Capitulations and the territorial compensations to Turkey were unacceptable to the allied leaders. With the breakdown of negotiations by the end of August, Ottoman Empire, already in a fateful alliance with Germany, remained in the camp of the Central Powers. As a result, Sazonov instructed Vorontsov Dashkov, the Viceroy of the Caucasus, to prepare for war with Turkey. Thus, preparations on an extensive scale on the side of the Caucasian frontier with the Ottoman Empire went ahead to meet such an emergency. By October 1914, the armed forces of the Caucasus, were reported to have been brought up to a strength of 450,000 men.

The Sarajevo assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, inflamed the already existing political strife between Austria and Serbia into an imminent war. The Ottoman Armenians feared that the Serbian problem, which threatened to engulf the whole of Europe, would draw the Ottoman Empire into the impending war. The neutrality of Turkey was a requisite for the


Armenians, otherwise the February reform measures seriously contemplated for the first time since the 1878 Berlin Congress would not have stood much chance of being implemented.

On the eve of Turkey's entry into the war the Young Turks employed every conceivable means to induce the Armenian party leaders to convince the Russian Armenians to side with Turkey against Russia. This policy was discussed in detail at the Conference of Erzerum which was held in August 1914 between the Dashnaktsutiun and the CUP delegates, accompanied by Georgian and Tatar representatives. The CUP promised an autonomous state comprising Russian Armenia and several sanjaks of the Van, Erzerum and Bitlis vilayets in return for an active Armenian assistance to Turkey. In the event of Russo-Turkish hostility, the Dashnaktsutiun was to incite rebellion among the Russian Armenians who, by harassing the Russian armies, would facilitate Turkish penetration of Transcaucasia. It was also proposed that legions of volunteer Armenians be formed to be sent the moment war was declared, 'to free their Russian brethren'.

Ahmed Reshad, the Turkish Foreign Minister, had advised the Armenian leaders that Russia would never concede the Armenians even the 'shadow' of an autonomous state and that Russian promises were 'untrue'.

According to Lord Robert Cecil (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1915-18 and Assistant Foreign Minister, 1918-19), because of the refusal of the

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9. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 12531, Monsignor Angelo Maria Dolci [the Vatican Apostolic Representative (ambassador) at Constantinople] to Cardinal Gasparri [the Secretary of State of the Vatican], 29 Nov. 1915.
proposed Ottoman scheme and the plea for a policy of neutrality, 'the Armenians were systematically murdered by the Turkish government in 1915. Two-thirds of the population were exterminated by the most cold-blooded and fiendish methods'.

Germany's declaration of war, was the first setback that the Armenians had to face. The Turkish government, manipulating the turmoil raging among the European great powers, at once abrogated the Armenian reforms. The Armenian Patriarch and the Armenian political leaders were aware that the Turkish government would not have remained satisfied solely by denouncing the reforms but would have 'avenged' them for having brought foreign intervention into the internal affairs of Turkey. Realising the dangers that awaited them, an extremely cautious policy was adopted by the Armenian leaders not to give any pretext to the government. With the instructions of the Patriarch, Dr Daghavarian and Hovhannes Kachaznuni, the latter leader of the Dashnak section of Van and the future premier of the Republic of Armenia, proceeded to Tiflis to confer with the Russian Armenian leaders and warn them of the dangers that Turkish Armenians might be exposed to in case they engaged in any form of anti-Turkish activity, such as recruitment of volunteers for the Caucasus. However, their efforts were futile because as Dr Daghavarian explained, 'Russian Armenian thinking was completely different'. Nevertheless, the Armenians in Turkey, by all conceivable means, strove to keep their promise to defend the interest of the state and perform all obligations as during the Libyan and Balkan crises of 1911-13. For instance, Armenians of every class hurried to perform their duty with loyalty to


the country. Armenian youth joined the ranks of the Turkish army. Merchants and bankers put at the disposal of the government their financial support. Schools, hospitals and other Armenian public establishments voluntarily opened their doors for the impending necessity of military use.\textsuperscript{12} While contrary to the Turkish Armenian performance, the Russian Armenians were in contact with the Viceroy of the Caucasus, petitioning for the liberation of Turkish Armenia. The formation of a volunteer corps was already in progress.

In August 1914, the Supreme Head of the Armenian Church, Catholicos Kevork V, directly appealed to Vorontsov Dashkov to guarantee the territorial integrity of Turkish Armenia, turning it into an autonomous state under Russian protectorate. The reply from St. Petersburg made no mention whatsoever about an autonomous Armenia, but committed assistance to the Armenian demands which related to the reform question initiated by the Russian government in 1913 at Constantinople.\textsuperscript{13} In the same month, Vorontsov Dashkov proceeded to Tiflis, the intellectual, cultural and financial centre of Russian Armenians, and conferred with Bishop Mesrob, the mayor Alexander Khatisian and Dr Zavriev, suggesting the creation of an Armenian volunteer corps.

On this issue the Catholicos Kevork V advised the National Bureau to arm the Armenians in the border regions of Erevan, Kars, Gantsak (modern Ganja) and Tiflis, where the Muslim element was of considerable number. He feared that in the event of war it was 'certain' that the latter would collaborate with the Ottoman government, creating internal disorder and massacre. The avowed policy of the

\textsuperscript{12} The Vatican, Secret Archives, Private Papers Monsignor A.M. Dolci, 'Persecusioni Armeni', The Annihilation of the Armenian Element in Turkey, June 1915.

Catholicos was to contribute in every way to the victory of the Russian armies. But in the event of war, the internal threat of Muslim aggression was not shared by Sazonov, the Foreign Minister. In contrast to the Catholicos's views, Sazonov was convinced that good use could be made, especially of the Kurds and even the Christian Assyrians. In his secret despatch to general Sukhomlinov, the Minister of War, Sazonov stated that:

> It is without any doubt that in the event of war with Turkey, the Kurds and Assyrians can render substantial assistance. To influence the Kurds, we have in our reach a few influential Kurds, such as Abdur Rezak, the Sheikh of Barzan, who currently live in the Caucasus.

This document is further evidence in explaining Russian political ties with the Kurds in the period 1912-13, when Russia was trying to organise a Kurdish revolt. But it also explains how wrong Sazonov was in pledging his good faith as to Kurdish support, which turned out not to materialise.

The massive rallying of Russian Armenians to the ranks of a volunteer corps was considered an act of treason on the part of Ottoman Armenians. Kachaznouri and Vratsian, the future premiers of the Republic of Armenia, argued in vain about the grave consequences and warned that the CUP would utilise the existing volunteer units to justify violent measures against Ottoman Armenians. But

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15. ГИВА CCCP, Fond 1300, L. 1, Sazonov to Sukhomlinov, 23 (5) Aug. 1914.

16. Hovannisian, Armenia on the Road to Independence 1918, p.44; Leo, Hayots Hartsi Vaverakrere, The Documents Concerning the Armenian Question, (Tiflis, 1915), p.120.
the organisation of a volunteer corps was of the utmost national necessity to safeguard Russian Armenia. A Turkish victory would have meant not only the annihilation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, but their own destruction.

The agreement of 8 February 1914, which had led to the appointment of two European Commissioners to safeguard Armenian rights in eastern Anatolia, was trampled on by the Ottoman government as soon as Germany had declared war, before Turkey's entry into it. The two Inspectors-General, Westenek the Dutch and Hoff the Norwegian, who were to supervise the long awaited reforms, did not get to carry out their instructions. Westenek, was given leave on half pay. Hoff, the other Inspector-General was recalled in September.\(^{17}\)

Between August and October, before the commencement of hostilities between Turkey and Russia, the situation in the Armenian vilayets, due to the Ottoman government's agitation among the Muslim population, had become 'repulsive' and 'threatening'. Apart from CUP political oppression of the Armenian population; it was reported that wholesale confiscation of money and property belonging to Armenians and Greeks in many vilayets was in progress.\(^{18}\)

On the morning of 19 August, the Armenian market at Diarbekir was set on fire, totally destroying 80 to 90 shops.\(^{19}\) The British Consul, in his despatch to Louis Mallet, the ambassador, at Constantinople, reported that it appeared 'certain'


that the fire was the work of the CUP. According to Monck-Mason, Memdouh Bey, the Commissioner of police, was 'by all accounts the most zealous in letting the market burn', that one witness heard him say 'Berak Yansen' (let it burn). Moreover, Armenians had also to deal with bands of Kurds and other Muslim brigands who had come to loot with the connivance of the regular army who had joined in the pillaging. The police and the gendarmes on the other hand had concentrated their efforts on protecting the plunderers. The British Consul further reported that not a 'single Muslim had lent a hand in extinguishing the fire', and had ascertained that the fire was 'from first to last the work of the local CUP', a blow directed against Armenians and Armenian prosperity. While the local Director of the Ottoman Bank had 'prophesised' to Monck-Mason that 'the entire Armenian "millet" (nation) will be ruined, after the newly enlisted Armenian recuits were sent away'. The situation was so desperate that, Tchelgadian, an Armenian notable of Diarbekir, appealed to the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople for immediate intervention. The telegram of Tchelgadian, which according to the British Consul was 'not exaggerated', ran as follows:

Our people have not seen such a systematic pillage since massacres even under the last Sultan. Government mercilessly confiscates everything in Armenian houses. Help urgently needed.

Disquieting was also the situation in the vilayet of Erzerum. Monahan, the British Consul, went on to say that the Kurdish tribal cavalry was molesting Armenian villages to a 'serious' extent. Beha-ad-din Shakir and Hilmi Bey the two Union and Progress delegates who had arrived from Constantinople, were

22. Ibid., Monck-Mason to Mallet, Telegram of Tchelgadian Effendi to the Armenian Patriarch, 13 Sept, 1914.
following a policy of 'Turkish Moslem chauvinism'. Suleiman Sud, the deputy of the Sanjak of Bayazid, himself a member of the CUP and of the Turkish Parliament, was openly propagating 'death to the Armenians'. While Giers, the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, informed Sazonov, the Foreign Minister, that arms had been distributed among the Muslim population of Erzerum for the 'impending massacre of the Armenians'.

So, it appears extremely likely that the CUP was preparing the ground for a massacre of Armenians before its entry into the war against Russia. Between August and October, while Ottoman Empire remained neutral and the European powers were already at war, the fate of the Armenian nation was being decided. According to an Ottoman subject acting as translator of Turkish documents at the British Consulate at Berne, the first impulse of the Ottoman government after its entry into the war was to 'massacre the Armenians'. While an article in the Near East by Dr Clarence Ussher, missionary and representative of the neutral United States, suggests that the 'extermination' of the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire was determined 'long before' Turkey decided to enter the war. That religious fanaticism had apparently nothing to do with the project, though its aid was 'much involved' and 'occasionally played a part' after the massacres began.

Russia and the Outbreak of the War

The involvement of Turkey in the war came after the German defeat and retreat at the Marne. While the Russian armies were engaged in their successful and destructive advance in east Prussia and were also overwhelming Galicia, the German situation had become so utterly changed that Berlin began to urge Turkey to intervene at once. Turkey's entry into the war was to help the German and Austro-Hungarian governments by tying down large Russian forces in the Caucasus and substantial British troops in Egypt. Further, with Turkey entering into the arena of conflagration, the Dardanelles were to be closed to Russia, detaching her from the only practical line of communication with her western allies. This act would also have deprived the Tsar's army of war-time munitions and destroyed Russia economically by stopping her grain exports, Russia's greatest source of wealth. When this came into effect, George Buchanan, the British ambassador at St. Petersburg, remarked that the closing of the Straits was a 'paralysing blow' for Russia. Certainly, in closing the Straits, Turkey cut the communications of Russia with the Allies and caused Russia's political and military dissolution.

By the time Turkish battleships had bombarded the Russian Black Sea coast on 29 October, Armenian volunteers were already in a position to counter the Turkish advance towards the Caucasus. General Andranik, the well known revolutionary who had led the Armenian contingent in the Bulgarian army during the Balkan wars, was despatched to Northern Persia with over 1000 men to join the Russian forces. Drastamat Kanayan (known as Dro), with Armen Garo, directed the second group, positioned for an offensive against Van. The third and

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fourth units, commanded by Hamazasp and Keri, were stationed along the western border of the Kars region from Sarikamish to Olti. The number of Armenians serving in the regular Russian armies numbered about 150,000, most of whom, however, had been transferred to the European front, instead of defending their homeland.

Throughout the greater part of the war, Armenian efforts were sustained by the sympathetic statements of the Entente powers. It seems that even the vague generalisations in the beginning were met with some satisfaction. Soon after the declaration of war between Russia and Turkey, the Tsar, Nicholas II, touring the Caucasian front, conferred with the Armenian political and religious leaders. In an audience with the Armenian representatives, the Tsar addressed the Catholicos Kevork V, exclaiming, 'Tell your flock, Holy Father, that a most brilliant future awaits the Armenians'. It was also hoped by Nicholas II, that the 'Armenians in the future would not follow Bulgaria's example'. The Tsar had given the audience a vague and illusionary statement, but his intended policy towards Armenian aspirations was explained shortly afterwards to a very small circle: the 'solution of the Armenian question will be decided according to the Peace negotiations after the war'. What the Armenian political leaders did not know, was that the Russian government was not concerned about granting the Armenians an autonomous state, but was prepared to use them as a tool of its expansionist policy and as a consequence of the war to annex the Turkish Armenian territories. This line of policy was partly revealed by the tone adopted by some deputy ministers at the State Duma meeting in March 1914, which was thoroughly unfavorable to the Armenians. N.E. Markov, a right-wing politician, dismissed the notion of any form of cooperation in the creation of autonomous Armenia arguing that it would naturally incline to include Russian Armenia as well. Such a sacrifice, added N.E. 

Markov, would result in the 'loss of the entire Russian Caucasus'. While A.I. Chkhenkeli, weighing the strategic and economic importance of Turkish Armenia, advocated annexation.32

The invasion of the Caucasus, for which purpose Enver, the Minister of War, took personal command of the Third Army, ended in early January 1915 with the latter's total defeat. Enver's military plan was to outflank the Russian forces, cut their lines of communication with the main supply base at Kars and reconquer the territories ceded to Russia in 1878. The occupation of Kars, Ardahan and Batum was to facilitate the planned revolt of the Caucasian Muslims against Russia and open the routes to Tiflis and the eventual conquest of the Turanian lands. The comparatively satisfactory beginning of the campaign kept Enver's ambitions alight. On 6 December 1914, in a conversation with Liman von Sanders, Enver presented a 'fantastic plan', the marching of the Ottoman armies through Afghanistan to India.33 Further to this effect, the German ambassador at Constantinople, Baron von Wangenheim, was 'concentrating all his efforts upon attempts to incite an uprising in Egypt and in the Caucasus'.34

Enver also believed that a minimum success in such a campaign would render Anatolia secure from invasion and protect northern Mesopotamia from attack, thus affording security to Ottoman forces operating against the Anglo-Indian invasion. Whereas, maximum success of the Caucasian campaign would promote the achievement of the idealistic objectives of the Pan-Turansians and Pan-

32. State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 5, File 61, Abstract from the State Duma Meeting, 10 (23) May 1914.
34. FO371/2143/59487, Mallet to Grey, 14 Oct. 1914.
Islamists. The control over the rich petroleum fields in the Batum-Baku area was a prize target not only for the Turks but for the Germans as well.

The advance of the Ottoman armies was halted by the disastrous and ill-fated Sarikamish operation. The Fourth Armenian volunteer Regiment under Keri, the latter decorated with the Cross of St. George, distinguished itself in this battle. The terrible difficulties of the terrain and of the Russian winter decimated the Turkish troops whom Enver was driving forward by forced marches. According to official reports only 12,000 men of the original 90,000 returned. Among those who perished were Ottoman Armenians too, who were called upon to take up arms and fight against their own compatriots. This fact was acknowledged by Enver, who on his return from the Caucasian front, expressed his great satisfaction to the Armenian Patriarch, Zaven Yeghiayan, about the 'courageous behaviour' of the Armenian soldiers. Enver also told the Patriarch that during the campaign with Russia, at one instance his life was saved by Hovannes, an Armenian Sergeant-Major serving in the Ottoman army, and for this reason had promoted him on the spot to the rank of Captain. In an address to the Armenian community Enver answered the Bishop of Konia:

Please, convey my satisfaction and thanks to the Armenian nation for its great devotion to the Ottoman Empire.

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37. Sanders, Five Years in Turkey, p. 40; also in, Mikush von Dagobert, Mustafa Kemal: Between Europe and Asia, (London, 1931), p. 140.

Similar acknowledgement was also made by the Turkish press towards the attitude of the Armenian population which was 'absolutely loyal ever since the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish hostilities'. While the German Military Headquarters at Constantinople blamed Enver for the failure of the Caucasus campaign, because he had 'failed to follow German instructions'.

Despite the Russian victory in the Caucasus, the military situation of the Russian army was severely handicapped, due to the great losses inflicted upon them. As the Turks were regrouping for another attempt to assault the Russian lines, Grand Duke Nicholas requested the British Admiralty, through Lord Kitchener, the Secretary State for War, to initiate a naval action against the Ottoman Empire to relieve the pressure in the Caucasus. However, the Grand Duke did not make any suggestion as to the methods of executing such an operation through the Dardanelles. In his memorandum to General Williams, he explained that Russia could not take part in such a campaign for two major reasons. Firstly, Russian dreadnoughts were not finished yet, they had no modern submarines and only an insufficient number of swift destroyers. The Russian fleet was therefore not more than equal to the Ottoman fleet, even when all the ships were combined. Secondly, the most effective assistance which Russia could have rendered to the allied fleet after forcing the Straits was the landing of Russian troops. This was, however, considered to be an impossible task, as it would have necessitated the withdrawal of at least two army corps from the principal theatre of war. General Callwell, backing the Russian scheme, had pressed that the opening of the


41. FO800/75, Edward Grey, Private Office Papers, Grey to Buchanan, 10 Jan. 1915; rept. in FO371/3049/39848/39280, Buchanan to FO, 20 Feb. 1917.
Dardanelles was 'absolutely essential' to the equipping of the Russian armies and thus should be carried out. Although the request of the Grand Duke was examined with 'deep attention' by the Admiralty, what motivated the British and French governments to pursue the Dardanelles expedition was that the successful forcing of the Dardanelles, and as a consequence the capture of Constantinople, would have had a profound influence on the German lines. It would further have paralysed Turkey and as a result have been a decisive factor in determining the attitude of neutral states in the Balkans.

The military assistance of Armenian volunteers from the diaspora for their deployment in the direction of Alexandretta during the allied assault on the Dardanelles, was discussed in detail by Vorontsov Dashkov, the Viceroy of the Caucasus and Sazonov. Both considered it of practicable use and something to be encouraged. Sazonov, through Count Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador in London, told the British Foreign Office that the formation of a volunteer army was 'highly desirable' in order to render Russian military assistance in Asia Minor. The Russian Foreign Minister further asked the British government whether she would join with France in sending arms and munitions to Alexandretta for use by the Armenians against the Turks. This would have helped to cut the lines of communication of the Ottoman army in Erzerum, and such a 'diversion' would have been of 'serious importance' for the Russian army. The Foreign Office transmitting the suggestions of the Russian Foreign Ministry to the War Office, felt constrained, in agreement with the Army Council, to inform Count Benckendorff that in the present circumstances the Russian proposal was 'impracticable'. Since the Russian government felt assured that the Armenian

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43. FO800/75, Grey to Buchanan, 25 Jan. 1915.

44. FO371/2484/22083, Benckendorff to FO, 24 Feb. 1915.
insurgents would be of real value to the Allies, the Foreign Office advised that it might be more feasible for Russia to supply the munitions through the Black Sea littoral.\textsuperscript{45}

Mikayel Varandian, the Dashnak party ideologue and the delegate of the Armenian community at Sofia, informed the Foreign Office that there were 20,000 Armenian volunteers ready to operate a landing near the coast of Alexandretta, and that support and approval was needed. But the War Office considered the arming of Armenians for the occupation of Alexandretta not to be advisable at the present moment. Since a 'useful purpose' would not have been served by pursuing such a scheme further.\textsuperscript{46} Armenian leaders had also tried to tempt the Russian government to occupy Alexandretta, if the British declined to do so. Sir Henry McMahon, believed that it would be a mistake on the part of Britain to let the Russians have the opportunity to occupy Alexandretta.\textsuperscript{47}

One tends to ponder whether a landing in Cilicia would have ended in failure, or whether the fate of the bulk of Armenians in Turkey and of the British in Gallipoli might have been different had the proposals by Sazonov and Dashkov for volunteer groups from the Armenian diaspora not been rejected in 1915.

The futile attempt of the British and French navy to seize the Straits in February and March had nevertheless its positive aspect, for the allied powers. First, it contributed to Russian successes in Asia Minor. Since March about 500,000 Turkish troops and necessary reinforcements had been immobilised and

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., no. 22083/15, FO to Army Council, 1 March 1915.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., no. 25167, Bax-Ironside to Grey, 3 March 1915; ibid., nos. 25073, 28172, War Office to FO, 4 and 9 March 1915.

\textsuperscript{47} Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57, File 47/QQ15, Sir H. McMahon to Lord Kitchener, Cairo, 4 Feb. 1915.
subjected to heavy losses. Had the Dardanelles operation not been in progress, Mark Sykes, the Middle East expert of the Foreign Office, assumed that Turkey would have had approximately 130,000 troops in Syria, 80,000 at Baghdad and 100,000 additional troops in the Caucasus. Such dispositions would have immobilised a larger garrison in Egypt, have prevented any advance in Mesopotamia and menaced the Caucasus and the Russian sphere in Persia.48

According to Morgenthau, the failure of the Allied fleet to force its way through the Dardanelles made the Young Turks see the 'vision' of the 'resurrection' of their decaying empire. Enver himself boasted about the remarkable achievement of defeating the British fleet 'something that neither Germany nor any other nation could have done'.49 This conviction possessed the leaders of the CUP to have a decisive effect upon Turkish national life and Turkish policy, especially regarding the Armenian question, which had been lying at the door of the Sublime Porte since 1878. Filled with enthusiasm over the defeat of the Allies, assured of immunity by their certainty of German victory, the CUP plunged into the abyss of ending the Armenian question once and for all by ending the Armenians through biological extermination.50

The Turkish Contention of an Armenian 'Revolt' at Van

The organisation of Armenian volunteer corps in the Caucasus provided an excuse for the CUP leaders to justify the deportation and annihilation of the


Armenian people. But the gravest accusation was considered to be the 'Armenian revolt at Van', a fabrication of a 'convenient pretext'\textsuperscript{51} to get rid of the Armenian inhabitants from Eastern Anatolia once and for all.

The White Book issued by the Turkish government in mid February 1916, at Constantinople, attempted to rationalise its treatment of the Armenians. It further explained that the deportations were a precautionary measure forced upon the Ottoman government by the 'revolt' at Van. As a matter of fact, the population at Zeitoun was deported on 9 April, while the fighting at Van did not begin until the 20th of that month.\textsuperscript{52} This shows a time-lag on the part of the Turkish government and suggests that repressive measures were taken much earlier and that the Armenians were forced consequently to resist. Mandelstam, the former First Dragoman of the Russian embassy at Constantinople, denying all charges of Armenian provocation, assesses that:

\begin{quote}
Contrary to the deceitful declaration of the Turkish government, no Armenian revolt or revolution has ever taken place. The Armenians have taken up arms, when they saw themselves threatened by massacre, following a natural instinct to sell their lives as dearly as possible.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Nevertheless, many Turkish historians still insist that the Armenian revolutionary 'plot' at Van constituted the key factor in CUP policy to remove the

\textsuperscript{51} A.O.P., Fond 102, File 34, Historical Information, Armenians and the Young Turks, 1914.

\textsuperscript{52} FO96/205, Private Office Papers, Toynbee, Rockwell to Toynbee, 21 May 1916; Ibid., Toynbee to Rockwell, 8 June 1916.

Armenians from the 'war zone' for the security of the state. It is argued that the 'premeditated insurrection at Van' as evidence of Armenian treachery was conclusive. But when Monsignor Dolci had pleaded with Ahmed Reshad, the Foreign Minister, to stop 'once and for good' the 'terrible' persecution of the Armenians, the reply given to him sheds some light on the question. The Minister had only a 'feeling' and not a solid proof that the Armenian nationalists were contemplating a revolutionary movement. Further, the Turkish Minister did not even mention the actual 'revolt' at Van, nor did he repudiate and repulse the statement of Monsignor Angelo Maria Dolci, the Vatican ambassador at Constantinople, that persecutions were actually being carried out. Evidence to the effect that some Armenians were involved in subversion or had deserted to the Russians does exist. But it must be emphasised that the vast majority of Ottoman Armenians were not engaged in any overtly disloyal activity. In fact, the Muslims of Turkish nationality living in the Caucasus were the ones who crossed the border to enlist in the Ottoman army. To this effect Stevens, the British Consul at Batum, reported that:

all Mussulmans of Turkish nationality fit to serve in the army were hurrying their departure from the Caucasus for Turkey in response to a call from the Turkish government for purposes of mobilisation.

The contention of many Turkish historians that the Armenian vilayets behind the Turkish lines in the Caucasus were teeming with sedition is wrong. What they fail to see is that the 'revolt' at Van was merely the determination of the

54. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 12531, Monsignor Angelo Maria Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 29 Nov. 1915.
55. FO371/2095/50731, Consul Steves to Grey, 31 Aug. 1914.
Armenians to save their own lives, that Armenians rose in self-defence only after the deportations and massacres had begun in Cilicia, prior to the general decree on deportation. It was also only after the imprisonment of Arshak Vramian, a member of the Ottoman Parliament, the treacherous murder of Ishkhan, popular leader of the Armenians, the massacring of inhabitants of their neighbouring villages, and the siege of the Armenian quarter by Djevdet's forces that Van rose in self-defence, since it was then obvious what fate awaited them. Saznov, the Russian Foreign Minister, was also of this opinion, and his despatch to Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador in London, and Izvolsky in Paris, on this crucial question is revealing:

There is no doubt whatsoever that the Armenian revolt at Van was precipitated as a consequence of the massacres and not the opposite, because it is senseless on the part of Armenians to rebel against the superior Turkish and Kurdish forces until the arrival of our army.58

Even the reports of German Consuls in Asia Minor and Wangenheim's alike show quite clearly that there was no proof whatsoever of Armenian treachery or insurrectionist plans. German officers stationed in Anatolia during the beginning of the war, agree in their accounts that 'until April 1915, the Armenian districts were essentially quiet'.59


59. U. Trumpener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire 1914-1918, (Princeton, 1968), pp. 202-3. See also, J. Bryce, The Revision of the Turkish Treaty: Armenia, 'The Eastern Christians had remained quite, and the excuse made by the Turks that the Armenians were preparing for a revolt was a falsehood. The purpose was
But the truth about the whole episode and the controversy concerning the crucial question of the 'revolt' at Van, and the supposed 'Armenian treachery', is commented on by Roderic Nogales who had been appointed to the rank of Inspector General of the Ottoman forces in Anatolia by Liman von Sanders, and who had witnessed the massacres and deportation in an official capacity. Nogales in his book, Four Years Beneath the Crescent, writes that, although he had 'reluctantly' taken part in the assault of Van:

The aggressors had not been the Armenians, but the civil authorities themselves. Supported by Kurds and the rabble of the vicinity, they were attacking and sacking the Armenian quarters.

When he ordered the stopping of the massacre, the Kaimakan (sub-governor), replied that:

he was doing nothing more than carrying out an unequivocal order emanating from the Governor General of the province ... to exterminate all Armenian males of twelve years of age and over.60

All Armenian villages throughout the province, which were under the jurisdiction of Djevdet, the governor of Van since February 1915, had been under attack by the Ottoman soldiers on the 19th. The assault on the city itself was carried out on the 20th. By 28 April, 6,000 Armenians were killed in the province. This information was obtained from a letter sent from Van by an Armenian messenger to Vorontsov Dashkov, the Viceroy of the Caucasus. The message—a purpose virtually avowed by Enver and Talaat— to get rid of the Christian population altogether'. p. 577.

60. R. Nogales, Four Years Beneath the Crescent, (London, 1926), p. 60.
continued:

Every day we await Russian help. We beg you to hasten. Tomorrow will be too late.61

It was only after five weeks of fighting that the Russian army commanded by General Nikolaev arrived. The death toll of Armenians by that time had risen to 55,000.62 According to the Vatican sources, the 'revolt' at Van constituted the 'necessary pretext' for the persecutions to come.63

Speaking of 'loyalty', Djemal Pasha, the Minister of Marine, states that the Armenians were regarded as 'the most loyal subjects of the Ottoman empire'.64 Significantly, during the Balkan wars of 1912-13, the Ottoman Armenians proved their loyalty by fighting alongside the Turks. Lowther, the British ambassador at Constantinople, commenting on this issue had remarked that:

The several thousands of Armenian troops at the front have fought better than any of the other non-Turkish elements, and numbers of them have been killed and wounded, while many have shown exceptional bravery.65

64. Djemal Pasha, Memoirs of a Turkish Statesman, p. 98.
65. FO424/235, G. Lowther to E. Grey, 23 Nov. 1912.
Similarly, the Turkish Minister of the Interior in Kiamil's Cabinet had asserted that:

While thousands of Muslims, Jews, Greeks had evaded military service, some 10,000 Armenian soldiers had shown great bravery and done their duty in the Turkish armies, their casualties being relatively very heavy. 66

On the other hand, however, it is astonishing to read in Talaat Pasha's memoirs a statement repudiating the Armenian war contribution during the Balkan wars. The cynical remark of Talaat maintained that:

For the defence of the fatherland they [the Armenians] did not take part in any war and for this cause they did not shed a 'drop of blood'. 67

This is clear evidence showing what a biased approach Talaat had while writing his memoirs. It seems that it was a desperate attempt on his part to justify world opinion about his inhuman measures towards the Armenians during the World War.

But the issue at stake is not whether the Armenians remained 'loyal' or not. It is indeed a fact that Armenians rose against the Ottoman authorities for self-defence, only after their existence had been threatened. Even if there were tendencies among the Ottoman Armenians to overthrow the century old Turkish

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66. Ibid., Lowther to Grey, 23 Nov. 1912; also in, FO371/1481/5020, Lowther to Grey, 23 Nov. 1912; see also, FO371/1773/20326, Lowther to Grey, 23 Apr. 1913; The Near East, no. 99, vol. IV, 28 March 1913, p. 670.

yoke, it was only too natural. The union of Turkish Armenia with that of Russian Armenia was certainly an aspiration which Armenian political circles in the Caucasus cherished. Libya and the Balkan states had revolted against the Ottoman state, therefore according to the Ottoman government they were 'not loyal'. The Kurdish tribes in Eastern Anatolia during 1911-14 were organising a rebellion against the Ottoman government. While in 1916, the Arabs revolted. Speaking of 'loyalty', it is questionable whether there was a subject nation actually loyal to Ottoman rule.

The Commencement of Armenian Extermination and International Reaction

On 24 May 1915, the Russian, British and French governments, made a public declaration condemning the massacres inflicted upon the Armenians, and held all the members of the Ottoman government as well as such of their agents as were personally responsible for the crimes committed. The declaration asserted that:

Kurds and the Turkish population of Armenia have been engaged in massacring Armenians with connivance and often the help of Ottoman authorities. Such massacres took place about the middle of April at Erzerum, Bitlis, Moush, Zeitun and in all Cilicia. Inhabitants of about 100 villages near Van were all assassinated. In the town itself the Armenian quarter is besieged. At the same time the Ottoman government at Constantinople is raging against the inoffensive Armenian population.68

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68. FO371/2488/58387, G. Buchanan to E. Grey, 24 May, 1915; see also, Mezhdunarodnye Ot nosheniya v Ebokhu Imperializma, Dokumenti iz Arkhivov Tsarskogo i Vremennogo Pravitelstva, 1878-1917 (International Relations in the Age of Imperialism, Documents from the Archives of the Tsarist and Provisional Governments, 1878-1917), Series III, vol. VII, (Moscow, 1935-), p. 400.
The Russian government was anxious to make the declaration public, as Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador in London, explained, 'it would satisfy Armenian opinion in Russia'.

On 4 June, the Porte replied with a sharply worded public declaration. It denied the charges and declared that it had merely exercised its sovereign rights and that the deportations from the war zone were carried out on the grounds of 'state security' and 'national defence', against a revolutionary movement. But Hans von Wangenheim, the German ambassador, claimed that the deportation in the eastern provinces were

obviously no longer based on military consideration alone.

In July, he was convinced that the Porte was 'actually' trying to 'exterminate' the Armenian race in the Ottoman Empire, and any intervention by the German government would have 'undoubtedly' incurred the resentment of the Porte. Even Dr Johannes Lepsius was of the same conviction:

There is no doubt that the formulated military measures were not aimed at the safety of the empire but for the planned extermination of the Armenian people.

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69. FO371/2488/59094. Foreign Office to Bertie, 18 May 1915.
71. Trumpener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, pp. 206, 212, quot. Wangenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, 17 June 1915; Ibid., p. 213, Wangenheim to Hollweg, 7 July 1915.
72. J. Lepsius, Deutschland und Armenien 1914-18, Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstucke, (Potsdam, 1919), pp. 24-5; also in Y. G. Sarkissian, Yerit Tourkeru Hayachinch Kaghakakanoutiune 1915-16, The Young Turk Policy of Armenian
And that the 'removal' of Armenians from the borders 'threatened strategically' had practically been carried out and 'before it had been possible to hinder it'.

Some opponents of CUP policy, however, were not indifferent to the prevailing state of affairs and had the courage to condemn the government for reducing the country to an 'appalling condition'. Ahmed Riza Pasha, the former president of the Ottoman Chamber, in his outspoken speech in the Senate actually depicted the horrors of the Armenian massacres, leaving a profound affect on the circles that heard him. Riza Pasha was, however, unable to continue his speech which was interrupted by the Minister of War, Enver Pasha, who called out 'Shut that dog's mouth'. In his turn Talaat Pasha, strongly criticised Ahmed Riza and defended the government's policy towards the Armenians. Even the Ottoman League of Peace and Liberation, led by its General Secretary Kemal Midhat, blamed the CUP government for its policy of 'Armenian extermination'. In its Manifesto of 28 December 1917, Kemal Midhat categorically stated that the CUP, in order to 'justify' its committed crimes, published a brochure of 'cynical lies' against the Armenians. That:

After slaughtering women and children, it was necessary to invent a series of accusations against the unfortunate Armenian people.

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74. FO371/2770/94760, Report by the British Consul at Mitylene, 23 April 1916. See also, Kavkavskoe Slovo, no. 269, 20 Dec. 1915, p. 2.

75. WO 106/1420/937, Manifesto of the Ottoman League of Peace and Liberation, 28 Dec. 1917; for the disapproval of Armenian massacres by the Turkish Liberal Party see also, FO371/3057/119809/104218, War Cabinet, decipher from H. Rumbold, 15 June 1917; ibid., no. 118321, H. Rumbold to R. Cecil, 6 June
While Rahmi Bey, the Vali of Aidin (a province of Smyrna), had refused to carry out his government's instruction to exterminate the Armenians.  

Certainly, the war gave a 'free hand' to the CUP in accomplishing the long 'premeditated plan' of leaving Armenia without Armenians. In fact Ahmed Reshad, the Foreign Minister, had told the Armenian leaders of the 'incalculable consequences' that their nation would be exposed to if an 'adversary act' was committed by them. In his own words:

> You shall not have any nation that may intervene to stop us. Britain, France and Russia are at war with us. Germany and Austria, our allies, will not be able to impose their will on us. You will be therefore left without protection and the measures that the government will take will be very severe.

The Porte's ruthless campaign against the Armenian subjects in 1915 and thereafter had exceeded in scale any that had preceded it. It was a deliberate effort intended primarily to decimate, and to scatter, the remnants of an 'unwanted' ethnic group. The intoxication following the abrogation of the Capitulations by the Ottoman government on 9 September 1914, which broke down the legal barrier of foreign protection behind which many Ottoman Christians had more or less found shelter, led to the slogan 'Turkey for the Turks'. While the

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1917.

76. FO371/4363/PID 116, Political Intelligence Department, FO, Moslem countries/002, 'Memorandum on the Present State of Mind in Turkey', 25 May 1916.


78. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, 'Persecuzioni di Armenia' no. 12531, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 9 Nov. 1915.
declaration of holy war by the Ottoman Sultan on 21 November in his capacity as Caliph of Islam, if it did not succeed in arousing the whole Muslim world, at least excited Turkish fanaticism, and enflamed Muslim feelings in eastern Turkey. Manipulating the existing de facto situation and freed from European surveillance, the Ottoman government pushed forward vigorously the annihilation of Armenians, showing no mercy to women, children and the elderly. The crimes were carried out very 'systematically' for there was evidence of identical procedure in over fifty places. According to the Russian Foreign Ministry:

The definite plan of extermination, rendered practical the removal of the Armenian wedge which stood as an island in the Muslim sea.

Evidence of the authenticity of the massacres and the way in which deportations were carried out, was supplied by Monsignor Dolci, the Vatican ambassador at Constantinople. He had gathered first-hand evidence from German missionaries travelling via Damascus-Aleppo-Constantinople. Similarly, the Greek embassy at Constantinople and the Consulates at Samsun, Mersina and Beirut had widely described the horrors inflicted upon the Armenian population in Asia Minor.

Monsignor Dolci, after examining the circumstances in which the Armenians were treated, concluded that the 'aim' of the Turkish government was to 'put an


end to the Armenian nation by extermination'. Even the Greek Foreign Ministry by June 1915, was convinced that the Turkish government had embarked upon the policy of 'exterminating the entire Armenian element', that the adopted methods were 'inhuman' and 'merciless'. Apostolopoulos, the Greek Consul at Samsun, had 'absolute proof' that in the vilayets of Sivas, Erzerum, and Trebizond, the 'destruction of the entire Armenian population was carried out completely'. Dolci had the same information that the deportations were 'complete' at Adana, Angora, Caesaria, Diarbekir, Erzerum, Malatia, Mardin, Moush, Sepastia and Trebizond. While the chairman of the American Committee on the Armenian Atrocities in Washington, announced that, he had 'unimpeachable evidence', that 'no Armenian is left in the vilayets of Erzerum, Trebizond, Sivas, Harput, Bitlis, and Diarbekir; that a population of about one million had suddenly been removed'. And according to a testimony attributed to an Italian Consul from Asia Minor:

The treatment of the Armenians, whether by the Turkish authorities or by the Kurds, has surpassed in cold-blooded cruelty, the worst

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84. Ibid., File A/5, 21/9573, Apostolopoulos to Foreign Ministry, 2 Aug. 1915.

85. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 12687, Dolci to Gasparri, 20 Dec. 1915; Ibid., no. 9409, Turkey 1915-1916, 'Persecution Against the Armenians', 13 July, 1915.

When Monsignor Dolci inquired of the German embassy at Constantinople about the conditions of Armenians living in Mardin, where there were a considerable number of Armenian Catholics, the embassy told him that according to a communication received by the German Consul residing near Mardin:

Armenians had been expelled by force into the countryside and there killed together with their Bishop.

In 1915, the Turkish embassy in Gulahak (Teheran) issued a statement accusing the Armenians of having 'helped the Russians in their plans' from the beginning of the war. They further argued that, in order to put a stop to 'Armenian agitation without bloodshed', the Ottoman government was compelled to 'remove' the frontier Armenians into the interior of the country. The response of the Turkish Ministry of the Interior to Monsignor Dolci's 'many insistences' for the reasons for the deportation of Armenians, was explained in a telegraphic circular:

The Imperial Government, by displacing the Armenians from their homes in the designated zone, pursues the only goal of preventing anti-governmental activity and forestalling the attempt of this nationality to pursue nationalistic aspirations to create an Armenian

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88. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 9181, 71/95, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 30 July 1915.

89. FO371/2448/127223, Marling to Grey, 13 Aug. 1915; ibid., no. 127225, Copy of a Notice Issued by the Turkish Embassy in Gulahak (Teheran), Regarding Armenians in Turkey.
But, as the majority of men had already been taken for war work, it was chiefly a matter of turning women, children and the aged out of houses and homes. If it was for the safety of the Ottoman state, due to 'Armenian agitation', could women, children and the elderly rebel? The decree of deportation of 23 July 1915, meant not 'removal' but the 'immediate uprooting' of the entire Armenian population in the 'most barbaric way'. Not a single district, whether the population happened to be near the scene of war or hundreds of kilometers away from it, had escaped the fate. Adamedes, the Greek Consul at Mersina, reported to his Foreign Ministry that the deportations were carried out with the 'most cruel methods', despite the deceitful 'decision' of the Ministry of Interior:

To take all measures for the protection and the feeding of the convoys during their displacement.

The situation in the Armenian vilayets were absolutely analogous to that which preceded the Armenian massacres under Abdul Hamid. However, the Young Turks confined themselves to a new system of deportation, dispersion and

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90. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 10604, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 19 Sept. 1915.


93. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 10604, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 19 Sept. 1915.
separation of families. According to the Sultan, the 'displacement' of the Armenian population was to be 'watched' by the government so that it would be carried out in a manner that will 'not be injurious to the displaced population'. That:

Officials and individuals who commit misdeeds on this occasion would be punished and that the interests of the displaced persons, as well as those of the party, should be protected in conformity with the dispositions of the law specially published to this end. 94

But this was not the case. Events began to unfold dramatically in Constantinople on 24 April 1915, where the CUP set to work to render the Armenian race 'headless' before proceeding to mutilate and destroy its 'body'. Five hundred to six hundred Armenian notables were arrested, deported and done to death. 95 The males over the age of ten were ordered to be exterminated. 96 In many instances men were lined up so that several could be shot with one bullet in order not to waste ammunition on them. 97 The young girls as they were driven along, were sold at slave markets. 98 The price of an Armenian girl from twelve to

94. Ibid., File Austria 472, no. 12687, The Sultan to the Pope, 19 Nov. 1915.


96. The Vatican, Secret Archives File 110, no. 11024, Memorandum Communicated to Dolci, 9 Nov. 1915; Arch. Yeghiayan, My Patriarchal Memoirs, see letter of Archbishop Yeghiayan to Prince Metternich, 10 Nov. 1915, pp.161-4.

97. FO96/208, Toynbee Papers, Extract from the Annual Report (for the year 1915) of the Medical Department at Urmia, to the Board of Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

98. The Vatican, Secret Archives, File 110, no. 11024, Memorandum About the State of Affairs of Christians in Turkey During the War, 9 Nov. 1915; FO371/2491/145007, Memorandum by Mark Sykes on Turkish and Kurdish Prisoners
fourteen years of age according to her 'physical qualities' ranged from two mejidiehs to one Turkish pound.\(^9^9\) Women, children and the elderly forcibly took the long death march through the interiors of Mesopotamia to Deir ez-Zor. In the journey, which usually lasted several months, 'few' reached the imposed destination,\(^1^0^0\) as this was the intended plan. To render it effective, the Turkish government had organised 'bands' for the 'exclusive purpose of massacring the deportees'. These bands were formed by Turkish and Kurdish gendarmes, and by criminals who had been especially set free for this specific purpose.\(^1^0^1\) The deportees were forced to march 'without stop', tied to each other four abreast and continually goaded by the bayonets of their drivers. The convoys were decimated by hunger and thirst. They were always kept away from wells so that they could find no water to quench their thirst. Many women strangled their infants with their own hands to save them from worse tortures and from 'certain death'.\(^1^0^2\)

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\(^1^0^0\) Historical Archives, Foreign Ministry Athens, File A/5, 21/329, Adamedes to F.M., 6 July 1915; Ibid., no. 518, Kikas to Foreign Ministry, 14 Aug. 1915; Ibid., Apostolopoulos to F.M., 2 Aug. 1915; Ibid., Tsamanos to Foreign Ministry, 20 Aug. 1915; The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 12687, Dolci to Gasparri, 20 Dec. 1915; Ibid., no. 9409, Turkey 1915-16, 'Persecution Against the Armenians', 13 July 1915; Secret Archives of the Vatican, Private Papers Monsignor Dolci, 'Persecutioni Armeni', June 1915.

\(^1^0^1\) The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 12687, Dolci to Gasparri, 20 Dec. 1915; Secret Archives of the Vatican, File 110, no. 11024, Memorandum About the State of Affairs of Christians in Turkey During the War, Communicated to Gasparri, the Secretary of State of the Vatican, 9 Nov. 1915; L/P & S/10/586, P.5574, Arabian Report, N.S. No. XXIII, Armenian Massacres, Report of an Eye-Witness, Lieutenant Hassan Maarouf, 27 Dec. 1916. See also, Kavkavskoe Slovo, no. 55, 9 March 1915, 'The Young Turks and their Victims', p. 4.

\(^1^0^2\) The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 10604, Mons. Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 19 Sept. 1915; Ibid., no. 12687, Dolci to Gasparri,
Riza Effendi, who was a member of the Liberal Union and an ex-Private Secretary of the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, after having confirmed the massacres at Diarbekir, Kharput and Urfa, stated that, 'the Armenians exiled in Deir ez-Zor were literally sent there to die', and that 'few would survive'. To this effect, Monsignor Dolci had very similar information:

Terrifying horrors have been committed by the Turkish government against the innocent Armenians in the interior of the empire. In some regions massacres have been committed, in others, people have been deported to unknown places in order to die during the journey.

Faiz el-Ghussein, a Bedouin and former Kaimakan of Kharput, had resided at Diarbekir during the Armenian massacres. Witnessing and hearing from the 'most reliable' sources from superior Turkish officers and officials he stated that:

The secret resolution of the CUP as to the Armenian deportees was that the convoys were to be accompanied with militia to assist the gendarmes in the slaughter of the Armenians. That the work of murder and destruction was to take place under the supervision of trustworthy agents of the CUP, who were known for their brutality.


103. FO371/2491/145007, Memorandum by Mark Sykes, on Turkish and Arab Prisoners of War to the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 29 Aug. 1915.

104. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 10604, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 19 Sept. 1915.
Reshad Bey who was appointed Vali of Diarbekir and invested with extensive powers has at his disposal a gang of notorious murderers.105

Reshad Bey had actually in July 1915, wired openly to Talaat that:

I have the greatest joy to inform you that not a single Armenian remains in my vilayet.106

Don David, a German priest, commenting on Reshad's personality, told Monsignor Dolci that, he was a 'fanatic chauvinist with a heart of stone, and with no feeling of humanity'.107

Moreover, in some regions, particularly where the 'evacuation' of Armenians had not been carried out completely, 'direct' pressures were instituted by the local and provincial authorities to obtain 'conversion' to the Islamic faith.108 The observations made by Adamedes, the Greek Consul at Mersina, about the terrible state of affairs of the Armenians, is illustrated in his despatch to the Greek Foreign Minister, and the ambassador at Constantinople:

The soul of a human being revolts, and it should in fact be of

105. L/P & S/11/120, P1309, 'The Massacres in Armenia', by Feiz el-Ghussein, (Translated from Arabic), 1917.


108. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 16683, Dolci to Gasparri, 18 April 1916; ibid., File Asia 57, no. 66793, Gasparri to von Hertling, 1 July 1918. See also, Arch. Yeghiayan, My Patriarchal Memoirs, p. 157.
granite, not to be moved by the sight of such unfortunate happenings: they are being persecuted with indescribable fury and frenzy; being raged against, suffering general destruction for the only reason that they are Armenians.  

The authenticated news of deportations and massacres of the Armenians had caused 'deep grief' to the Pope, Benedict XV.  The Vatican had asked Monsignor Dolci to make direct appeals to the German and Austrian embassies, and the Ottoman government to stop the 'barbarous persecution'. But despite the continued promises that Dolci had been receiving from the German embassy and the Sublime Porte, the Ottoman government 'did not stop persecuting the Armenians'. Dolci became 'convinced' that his 'energetic' appeals for intervention to the German and Austrian embassies was 'useless'. Even the Grand Vizier and the Minister of the Exterior had no influence whatsoever on the Turkish Cabinet and on Talaat, Enver, and Djemal who were full of 'chauvinism'. According to Dolci, 'absolute' power was given to the local authorities of the interior with 'severe' instructions to deal with the Armenians. And when their orders had been executed, they protested by saying that they 'knew nothing about it'.

However, the most sensational intervention on behalf of the Armenians was

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109 Historical Archives, Foreign Ministry Athens, File A/5, 21/9300, Adamedes to Foreign Minister and Ambassador at Constantinople, 6 Aug. 1915.

110 The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 10605, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 19 Sept. 1915.

111 Ibid., no. 10604, Dolci to Gasparri, 19 Sept. 1915.

112 Ibid., no. 12534, Dolci to Gasparri, 26 Nov. 1915; Ibid., no. 21687, Dolci to Gasparri, 12 Dec. 1915; Ibid., no. 9181, Dolci to Gasparri, 29 July 1915; Ibid., no. 12687, Dolci to Gasparri, 20 Dec. 1915.
made directly by the Pope to the Sultan. As it was customary on the part of the Pope to intervene through the Catholic Episcopy of the world, His Holiness was compelled not to remain personally indifferent to the 'nightmare of persecutions'.

On 5 October, Monsignor Dolci presented himself to the General Director of Political Affairs at the Sublime Porte to announce that he had a document with the pontifical autograph of the Pope to hand personally to the Sultan. When asked about the nature of the document, the General Director's face clouded on hearing that it was an intervention by the Holy Father in favour of the Armenians. The General Director advised Dolci that the intervention of the Pope would make an 'unfavourable impression on the government', and would further result in a new 'embarrassment' for the Sublime Porte. No sovereign, king or emperor had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of other nations. This was a rule recognised by international law. According to the General Director, the Armenians had 'deceived' the Pope; the measures against the Armenians were purely of a defensive character intended to squash the Armenian 'conspiracy' which threatened the Ottoman empire during a period in which its existence was in peril. In reply, Dolci argued that the news of the 'repressive' measures against the Armenians, even 'details of atrocities' had spread over the frontiers of the empire and that the Pope could not remain 'indifferent to these crimes'.

The Pope's letter of 10 September 1915, to the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire asserted that:

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113. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria, 472, no. 15313, Dolci to Gasparri, 3 March, 1916.

114. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 11335, Dolci to Gasparri, 11 Oct. 1915.
While feeling grief over the horrors of the formidable struggle with the great nations of Europe, with which Your Majesty's powerful Empire is found engaged, the echo of an entire nation's fearful groans tears our soul apart; a soul which, in the vast domains of the Ottomans, is subjected to untellable sufferings, and whose cries reach as far as to Us.

...it has been referred to Us that entire populations of villages and towns have been forced to abandon their houses, in order, amidst great difficulties and sufferings, to be transferred to distant concentration localities, or, in addition to the moral sufferings they have to endure the blackest misery and tortures of hunger.  

In addition, the Pope asked the Sultan that, if among the Armenians there were 'traitors' or persons capable of committing other crimes, they should be judged and punished according to the law. That the innocent should not be subjected to the same punishment as the guilty ones. The Ottoman League of Peace and Liberation were of similar opinion. They had too asserted that if there were some instigators among the Armenians, it was the duty of the Turkish government to 'look for them' and punish them according to the laws of the country. That it was an unqualifiable act on the part of the CUP to resort to deportations, massacres, plundering and slaughtering of more than a million

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115. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 11335, The Pope, Benedict XV to the Sultan, Mohamed Reshad V, 10 Sept. 1915.

116. Ibid., Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 11335, The Pope to the Sultan, 10 Sept. 1915.
In response to the Pope's letter, the Sultan explained that, the information about the news reaching the Holy See concerning the fate of the Armenians did not 'conform to the reality of facts'. That the Armenians, profiting by the existing state of war, were in collusion with the armies of the enemy, and encouraged by hostile governments, had created a revolutionary movement which aggravated the difficult situation of the empire. Further, the Armenian movement had hampered the military measures taken in order to secure the defence of the country. According to the Sultan, the Armenian 'revolutionary committees' throughout Anatolia had organised a 'general revolt' and in consequence of such things, it was 'impossible' for the authorities to make a distinction between the 'peaceful element' and the 'disturber' of public order. The government saw it necessary to resort to 'general measures' and to evacuate the Armenian regions immediately adjacent to the fields of military operation for the 'superior interest of the empire'.

The statement of the Sultan shows that he was either completely ignorant of what was going on in his empire or was trying to deceive the Pope with false accusations. Firstly, while the Ottoman government in its White Book accused the Armenians of rebelling in only one place, at Van, the Sultan argues a 'general revolt' throughout the empire, which is untrue. Since, at the beginning of the war when the Ottoman army was annihilated on the Persian border, there was not even


118. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 12687, The Sultan to the Pope, 19 Nov. 1915.
the militia in Van, and less than 400 gendarmes between Van and Moush.\textsuperscript{119} It would have been very easy for the Armenians to have occupied the greater part of the vilayets of Van and Moush, if they had wanted to revolt and massacre the Turks. Furthermore, Monsignor Dolci makes it explicitly clear that the Armenians 'did not take part in any revolution'.\textsuperscript{120} Secondly, the deportations which, according to the Sultan were measures applied only to the 'regions immediately adjacent to the fields of military operation' is also false, since not a single district, whether the population happened to be near the scene of war or was hundred of kilometers away from it, had escaped the verdict. Lastly, the Sultan's assurance to the Pope that:

\begin{quote}
As always we are prompted by a paternal care towards all Our subjects without any distinction either of race or religion,\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

shows to what extent the Sultan and the Ottoman government alike attempted to deceive world opinion with falsified statements to veil their complicity in horrors perpetrated against the Armenian nation.

Speaking of 'paternal care', why were then all the possessions of the deportees stolen\textsuperscript{122} and many Armenian churches converted to mosques and their properties confiscated?\textsuperscript{123} Based on authenticated sources, it was reported

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119} FO96/208, Toynbee Private Office Papers, The Events at Van, and the Story of Self Defence, p. 206, 1915.
\item \textsuperscript{120} The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 9181, Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 25 July 1915.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., no. 12687, The Sultan to the Pope, 19 Nov. 1915.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid., no. 17787, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 19 May, 1915.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Ibid., no. 12687, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 20 Dec. 1915.
\end{itemize}
that Armenian houses were sold by the government, and household belongings were either distributed to Turkish houses or sold to the public.\textsuperscript{124}

The Pope's intervention on behalf of the Armenians had no effect in changing the course of the CUP anti-Armenian policy, but as Monsignor Dolci came to understand, the Pontifical document had constituted for the Turkish government a 'very bitter indigestible pill'.\textsuperscript{125}

Talaat Pasha, in his memoirs admits the 'shameful' aspects of the kind of treatment the Armenians had been subjected to during the deportations. That within the hands of 'unscrupulous' and 'infamous' persons had taken the form of a 'drama'. But he 'knew' that 'ugly consequences' would have been obtained should the deportations have been carried out 'by these means'.\textsuperscript{126} And in a speech at the CUP Congress in September 1917, Talaat defended the Turkish treatment of the Armenians.\textsuperscript{127} While Djemal Pasha, the Minister of the Marine, commenting on the question of deportations, states that:

\textsuperscript{124} Historical Archives Foreign Ministry Athens, File A/5, 21/13958, Apostolopoulos to Foreign Ministry, 17 Aug. 1915; ibid., Tsamanos to Foreign Ministry, 20 Aug. 1915; The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 10604, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, Memorandum Communicated to Mons. Dolci, Sept. 1915.

\textsuperscript{125} The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria, 472, no. 21687, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 12 Dec. 1915.


Whatever may have been the causes that gave rise to these crimes, they ought to have been prevented by every possible means. ... by these measures they opened the way for the crimes perpetrated by the Kurds and Turks.128

Even the head of the German mission, Liman von Sanders, admits that in the execution of the expulsions, 'many of the terrible and damnable cases of ruthlessness may unquestionably be ascribed to the minor officials whose personal hatred and rapacity gave to the measures 'ordered from above' an enhancement of harshness'.129

It was in the autumn of 1915 that accounts of massacres and deportations of the Armenian population of Asiatic Turkey began to reach western Europe and the United States. Despite the efforts of the Turkish government to prevent them from passing out of the country, and to hide them from 'Europe and the World',130 the accounts of deportation and massacres increased in number and fullness of detail. By September 1915, the Russian government had substantial information that about one million Armenians had been massacred by the Turkish gendarmerie131 Even Dolci, the Vatican ambassador at Constantinople had information that a million Armenians had perished, and that it was 'impossible to

128. Djemal Pasha, Memoirs of a Turkish Statesman, p. 280


130. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 11335, Dolci to Gasparri, 11 Oct. 1915; FO96/206, Toynbee Private Office Papers, Toynbee to Grey, 1 July 1916.

131. ABIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3490, Smirnov to Sazonov, 2 (15) Sept. 1915; see also, ibid., File 3480, 'Historical Information', 1915.
describe the history of the massacres.\textsuperscript{132} While the British government had reliable information supplied by Arnold Toynbee that 'not less than 1,200,000 Ottoman Armenians had been massacred or deported', and that, 'the deportees were mostly either massacred or died of exhaustion, starvation and disease'.\textsuperscript{133} Also Caclamanos, the Greek ambassador at Petrograd, had similar information about the number and nature of the massacres.\textsuperscript{134}

Throughout 1915-16, Lord Bryce received first hand reports from the American missionaries in Turkey about the deportations and massacres of the Ottoman Armenians. Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, after having examined the collection of documents on the Armenian massacres, felt that it 'ought ' to be published and widely studied by all who had the broad interest of 'humanity at heart'. That:

\begin{quote}
It would be valuable, not only for the immediate information of public opinion as to the conduct of the Turkish Government towards defenceless people, but also as a mine of information for historians in the future ...
\end{quote}

With the initiative of the Foreign Office in 1916 these documents were published in a 'Blue Book', edited by Bryce and Toynbee.

\textsuperscript{132} The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 472, no. 12687, Dolci to Gasparri, 20 Dec. 1915.

\textsuperscript{133} FO395/137/35191, Notes on Statistics of Armenian Deportations, A.J. Toynbee, 8 Feb. 1917. For Armenian massacres see also, FO608/98/374/1/11.

\textsuperscript{134} Historical Archives, Foreign Ministry Athens, File A/5, 21/9217, Caclamanos to Foreign Ministry, 24 Aug. 1915.

\textsuperscript{135} FO395/40/150732, Grey to Bryce, 23 Aug. 1916.
James Barton, the President of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, after having spoken with a considerable number of missionaries of the Board who had returned from the interior of Turkey, notably from Harpout, Ourfa, Aintab, Tarsus, Adana, Talas, Boursa, Smyrna, Constantinople, Sivas and Konia, wrote to Bryce that, the missionaries' reports about the atrocities committed against the Armenians 'supported anything that was printed in the Blue Book', and:

some reports exceed anything that you there included.\(^{136}\)

Dr Atkinson, one of the American missionaries at Kharput, working at the American hospital, had slipped out of the city one night with Leslie A. Davis, the American Consul. Spending the following day on the road south from Kharput, they counted ten thousand dead bodies, most of them stripped of clothing showing that they had been killed with violence. In one place they found that great numbers of Armenians had been pushed over a precipice and that the bodies lay piled up at the bottom. In some places bodies were gathered and burnt, to get rid of the stench. Others had been drowned in the lake; while Mr Riggs, returning to the United States via Malatia and Sivas, reported that thousands of skulls of skeletons were lying along the road west of Malatia for a distance of some 15 or 20 miles.\(^{137}\)

During October and December 1915, German missionaries returning to Haifa and Jaffa, were the first to bring the news of wholesale massacres among the

\(^{136}\) FO800/383, Mark Sykes Private Office Papers, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, James Barton to Lord Bryce, 6 Sept. 1917.

Armenians. Witnessing what had been going on, they came to believe that the Young Turk government had determined to 'exterminate all Armenians'.\textsuperscript{138} The Reverend Dunkel, the Father Superior of the German Lazarietti Mission, while travelling from Damascus and Aleppo to Constantinople, had witnessed the 'enormous atrocities' committed by the Turks against the Armenians in the interior of Asia Minor. Describing to Hofer, the Father Superior of Erzerum, what he had seen, he referred to the 'incredible' facts concerning the 'brutal conditions of the Armenian deportees', that only a small number of women reached Aleppo; the men were 'massacred'. He further stated that:

\begin{quote}
The punishment inflicted on the Armenian nation served as a pretext for the Turkish masonic government to exterminate the entire Armenian element of the interior of Turkey.\textsuperscript{139}
\end{quote}

Ernst Paraquin, the Imperial German Colonel and Head of Halil Pasha's General Staff, speaking about the 'decidedly' Turkish nationalistic policy of annihilating the Armenians, had stated that the deportees were 'starved to death' or had 'succumbed to sickness' on the marshes or in the desert steppes.\textsuperscript{140}

The controversy surrounding German complicity in the Armenian tragedy is uncertain. But, the response of the German military mission towards the Armenian massacres and deportations is clearly stated in Liman von Sanders' letter to Monsignor Dolci. Sanders explains that:

\begin{footnotes}
\item[139] The Vatican, Secret Archives, Private Papers Monsignor A.M. Dolci, Memorandum Communicated by P.N. Hofer, Father Superior of Erzerum, 5 Nov. 1915; Ibid., File 110, no. 11316, 5 Nov. 1915.
\end{footnotes}
The German officers and soldiers employed in Turkey were never involved in the measures taken by the Ottoman government against the Armenians. They didn't even have the possibility of intervening against the Ottoman measures since the Turks always declared their treatment towards the Armenians as an internal political affair. Intervention on the part of German officers in favour of the Armenians was rudely refused by the Turks. 141

But some German agents serving in Anatolia, unable to bear the terrible misery of the Armenians, wished to protest, but the German embassy at Constantinople ordered them 'not to intervene in any case, since German interests were not affected'. 142 On the other hand, Dr Stuermer, the German correspondent of the 'Koelnische Zeitung' at Constantinople, was expelled from the country by the Turkish government for his openly critical attitude during the Armenian atrocities. 143

German interests were not tied up with the Armenian question but certainly German capital was bound up in Asia Minor. The Deutsche Bank had 300,000,000 marks invested in the Baghdad Railway, and the German government was determined to save all it could. Wretched communications in the Caucasus and Mesopotamia, coupled with the impossibility of sparing first class troops from Europe, made a successful campaign in Asia Minor impracticable. Therefore, the German government felt obliged to supply the Ottoman army with all the material


143. FO371/3050/182440, Rumbold to Balfour, 10 Sept. 1917.
she needed for the prosecution of the war. Armenian massacres were not of any interest. In fact, the German government regarded the Armenian massacres and the Arabian murders with equanimity, since in the depopulation of the districts concerned they saw future chances for their emigrants. Asia Minor, they hoped, would be a new outlet for the surplus population which would normally have gone to these overseas dominions. Halide Edib, the well known and much respected Turkish writer and political figure, referring to the question of deportations, states that 'it ended the economic supremacy of the Armenians, thereby clearing the market for the Turks and the Germans', which according to Morgenthau, was 'certainly an original conception'.

Russia and the Ottoman Empire

Official Russian foreign policy from the outbreak of war with Turkey on 2 November 1914, was dominated by the desire to acquire Constantinople and the Straits, the ownership of which constituted the 'only way to secure the safety of Russia'. A.V. Krivoshein, the Russian Minister of Agriculture, who was at the time the most influential member of the government, prior to the war, had remarked that he would be 'glad' if the Turks declared war against Russia, as the

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144. L/P & S/10/586, P4487, Arabian Report, No. XXIA, Asia, Germany and Turkey, 4 July 1916; also in FO371/2771/152060, Arabian Report, 4 July 1916; Zapiski i Documenti, Fond 3470, Political Archives, Russian Secret Information about Turkey, 1914.


146. Sazonov, Fateful Years, p. 246.
Turkish question would then be 'finally settled'. Even the State Duma was unanimous in its decision, and had urged Sazonov not to miss the favourable opportunity of settling the problem of the Near East which had for centuries hindered the normal development of the national life. Public opinion in Russia also demanded that the Turkish question be settled 'once and for all' and held that it was only by acquiring Constantinople and the Straits that Russia could be compensated for the enormous losses incurred during the war. But of more importance were the views entertained by the Russian government. Turkey's becoming subservient to German influence, was the main driving force behind Russian policy which aimed at the annexation of Constantinople and the Straits. Liman von Sanders's command of the Constantinople garrison, the gradual subjection of the Ottoman government to the guidance of the German Cabinet, and the Turkish fleet controlled by Germany, were factors in inducing the Russian government to take this stand. It became clear that a German victory would subjugate Turkey economically and politically. The Berlin-Baghdad project was more clear evidence of this. The question for Russia was therefore, not whether the Straits would become Russian or remain Turkish, but whether they would become Russian or remain German. Thus, under these circumstances it was very natural on the part of the Russian government to contest the mastery of the Black Sea and at the same time put an end to the danger to Russian export commerce.

147. FO371/2143/53082, G. Buchanan to E. Grey, 25 Sept. 1914.
149. FO371/2481/17027, G. Buchanan to E. Grey, 12 Feb. 1915.
150. FO371/3013/137018, Memorandum on Representative Russian Opinion on Constant. and the Dardanelles, Intelligence Bureau, Depart. of Information, 6 July 1917; L/P & S/11/101, P2405, Memorandum on German Press Opinion Regarding the Middle East, Apr./May 1916; P. Milyukoff, What Russia is Fighting for, Current History, vol. IV, no. 3, (June, 1916), p. 481; Sazonov, Fateful Years, pp. 239-40.
The Russian War Ministry came to the conclusion that the military conquest of Constantinople was not feasible. General Yanushkevich, the Chief of Staff, explained to Sazonov that a planned operation directed against the Straits was out of the question and that General Alexeyev could not carry out such a mission. The latter maintained that it was impossible to reduce the number of men on the Western front before obtaining a victory against the enemy. The future progress of the war depended on a decisive blow against Germany, which had posed a menace to Petrograd, Moscow and Southern Persia. It would not have been practicable to take 250,000 men for such an expedition from the main theatre of war. It was felt essential to concentrate all Russian efforts against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Only after a victory had been won against them could an operation be formulated. It was therefore left to Sazonov to gain the Straits by diplomatic means, in agreement with Russia's allies. The first formal promise given on this question was conveyed by Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary to Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador in London, that after victory 'the fate of the Straits and Constantinople would be settled only in conformity with Russian desires'. This was followed in November 13, by King George's aside to the Russian minister that 'as far as Constantinople is concerned, it is clear that it must be yours'.

On 21 November 1914, the Tsar, in an audience with Paléologue, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg, discussed Russia's claims in the Near East, and, referring to Turkish Armenia, spoke of annexation or possibly giving autonomy under a Russian protectorate. The second option of the Tsar to 'grant autonomy' under a Russian protectorate. The second option of the Tsar to 'grant autonomy'...

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152. A. Bodger, Russian and the End of the Ottoman Empire, p. 97.
was a diplomatic bluff. The Russian government was utterly opposed to any form of Armenian autonomy. The intended policy was to settle Cossacks in the vilayets of Erzerum and Trebizond and the entry to Armenians was to be prohibited.\textsuperscript{153}

The wartime secret agreements among the Entente powers for the partition of the Ottoman empire, began with the Constantinople agreement of 4 March which was sealed on 10 April 1915. The Russian aide memoire presented by the Foreign Minister, S.A. Sazonov, demanded the Russian incorporation of Constantinople, the sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles, as well as southern Thrace up to the Enos-Midia line. It also included the Tenedos and Imbros and part of the Asiatic coast between the Bosphorus, the Sakaria river and a part to be fixed on the shore of the bay of Ismid.\textsuperscript{154} The British Cabinet, discussing the reply to be given to the Russian aide-memoire of the 4th March with respect to the future of Constantinople and the Straits, found no objection to handing them to Russia. Lord Kitchener and Churchill, stated that 'neither on military nor on naval grounds did British interests require us to resist the Russian proposal'. Of significant importance for the British and French governments was the last paragraph of the 'aide memoire' where Russia assured her two allied governments that she would meet with sympathy the 'realisation of desiderata which they may form in other regions of the Ottoman empire and elsewhere'.\textsuperscript{155}

The approval of the allied powers to grant the Straits and Constantinople to Russia, fulfilled, at least on paper, the cherished centuries-old dream of Russia. Sazonov's report to the Tsar, was reponded to in the words, 'I owe to you the

\textsuperscript{153} Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 144, Armenia 1916.  
\textsuperscript{154} FO371/2449/25014, Nicholson to Grey, 2 March 1915; L/P & S/10/623, Buchanan to Grey, 13 March, 1915.  
\textsuperscript{155} Bodleian Library, Asquith Papers, Copies of Asquith's Cabinet Letters to the King, MS Asquith 8, f.17-8, Cabinet Meeting 9 March, 1915.
happiest day in my life'.\textsuperscript{156}

The biological extermination of the large part of the entire Armenian population in eastern Turkey, had created a desperate frame of mind among Armenian political circles impelling them to do everything possible to bring about the speedy collapse of Turkey. Such an opportunity seemed to be in sight, as Djemal Pasha, one of the triumvirate leading the political machinery in Turkey, dissatisfied with Talaat, the Minister of the Interior, and Enver, the Minister of War, had consented to the overthrow of the government on certain terms. Djemal Pasha was the sort of personality of whom such an act could be expected. He was open to the right sort of bribes which conveyed with them power, position and security for the future. When threatened with removal from office in mid-1915, he countered by saying that he would 'come up with his army from Syria and turn the others out of Constantinople'.\textsuperscript{157} Dr Zavriev, the main negotiator with Djemal, through Poklevskii, the Russian Minister at Bucharest, forwarded the proposed plan to the Russian Foreign Minister for his consent. The question was whether the overthrow of the Ottoman government by Djemal would correspond to the interest of Russia.\textsuperscript{158}

The Russian government, approving of the proposal, authorised Sazonov who, on 25 December, telegraphed his ambassadors in Paris, London and Rome, to acquaint the respective governments that Djemal Pasha would be prepared to lead

\textsuperscript{156} Sazonov, Fateful Years, p. 250.

\textsuperscript{157} FO371/3050/122132, W.H. Gibbon, Lieutenant-Colonel, General Staff: Notes on the Situation in Turkey from a Conversation with Elkus and Major Newbold, 17 June 1917; about Djemal's opposition to Talaat and Enver, see also, Archbishop Yeghiayan, Patriarkakan Housheres, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{158} E.A. Adamov, Razdel Aziatskoi Turtsii (The Partition of Asiatic Turkey), (Moscow, 1924), pp. 142-3, Sazonov to the Russian ambassadors in Paris and Rome, 12 (25) Dec. 1915,
an open rebellion against the Ottoman government and the Germans provided they accepted the following terms:

1. The allied powers guarantee the integrity and independence of Turkey in Asia, which will include the autonomous provinces of Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Armenia, with Cilicia and Kurdistan, under the sovereignty of the Sultan.

2. Djemal Pasha to be proclaimed hereditary Sultan, passing from father to eldest son.

3. Djemal will declare the downfall of the government at Constantinople and the dethronement of the Sultan, as the prisoners of the Germans, and will enter into a campaign against them.

4. The allied powers will support his march to Constantinople with arms, supplies and artillery.

5. At the end of the war they will offer Djemal financial assistance.

6. Djemal agrees to the loss of the Straits and of Constantinople.

7. Djemal undertakes forthwith to take measures to ensure the safety of Armenians and to provide them with food till the end of the war.

S.D. Sazonov held the view that, even in the event of Djemal's failure to overthrow the government, and dethrone the Sultan, any internal disturbance in the Ottoman Empire would tend to weaken her and thus serve the common allied purpose. Therefore, according to Sazonov, it was 'desirable' to enter into secret negotiations with Djemal through trusted Armenian agents.\[159\]

In reply the British Foreign Office assured the Russian Foreign Minister, that

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as far as British interests were concerned they had no objection to entering into 
communication with Djemal Pasha and that British claims would not stand in the 
way of negotiations with Djemal along the lines and conditions proposed. Sir 
Edward Grey in a personal conversation with Benckendorff, told him that, 
although the Foreign Office did not think that very much was likely to come out 
of it, he wished to 'encourage it for all it was worth'. Grey further advised that 
if Djemal's movement was to have any chance of success, 'he must get the Arabs 
to side with him', and 'ought to have an agreement with them'. This move would 
have satisfied British promises to the Arabs.  

For the success of the entire project, Sazonov told Buchanan that it would be 
best for the British and French governments to take over negotiations and direct 
them themselves in Egypt, or if they preferred it, with Zavriev at Bucharest. The 
latter, according to Sazonov, was intelligent and thoroughly trustworthy, but he 
could not himself go to Egypt. The Russian government was sure that the 
British would be only too happy to have the pressure on Egypt relieved by the 
defection of Djemal.

On the other hand, the French government strongly protested against the 
proposed action on the part of Djemal Pasha. It was argued that the plan was 
contrary to the terms of Triple Entente arrangements concerning Turkey and was 
therefore unacceptable to France. Due to the French government's constant 
opposition to the whole project, the deliberations on this question had come to a

160. FO371/2492/200744, Grey to Buchanan, 29 Dec. 1915; L/P & S/10/525, P13, 
Grey to Buchanan, 30 Dec. 1915; FO371/2767/34, Grey to Buchanan, 30 Dec. 1915.

161. FO371/27267/68, Buchanan to Grey, 31 Dec. 1915; Ibid., no. 878, Buchanan 
to Grey, 2 Jan. 1916.

162. L/P & S/10/525, P13, FO to Buchanan, 30 Dec. 1915.
standstill by March 1916. Briand, the French Foreign Minister, explained that it was 'inconvenient to enter into negotiation with Djemal because he did not consider it compatible with the Anglo-French project for negotiations on Asiatic Turkey'.

It was the secret Sykes-Picot partition of the Ottoman empire that took precedence over Djemal's claims. The French government could not sacrifice Cilicia to Djemal's Sultanate.

Towards the end of 1915, Britain and France feeling the need for a clarification of their position in regard to the Sherif of Mecca and the Arab question, decided to draw up a general agreement on Asiatic Turkey. The details of the Anglo-French negotiations were entrusted to Mark Sykes, the British Foreign Office Near East expert, and Georges Picot, the former French Consul-General of Beirut. The resulting Sykes-Picot accord was the most comprehensive secret agreement of the Entente. By February 1916, the two statesmen had agreed a provisional formula for the division of the Arab provinces.

Now in accord, in March 1916, Sykes and Picot proceeded to Russia to confer with Sazonov and secure approval. The final approved arrangement on Armenia ran along the following lines: France was to get most of the Armenian provinces including Zeitun, Hajin, Diarbekir, Sivas and Edessa. The French zone was to become the centre of Armenian national feeling; Russia was to annex the regions of Erzerum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, up to a point subsequently to be determined on the littoral of the Black sea to the west of Trebizond. The region of Kurdistan to the south of Van and of Bitlis between Moush, Sert, the courses

of the Tigris, Jezireh-ben Omar, the crest line of the mountains, which dominated Amadia and the region of Merga Var were to be ceded to Russia.\footnote{WO 106/1415, 'Turkey', 23 (1) Sept. 1916; FO371/2768/87999, Grey to Benckendorff, 22 May 1916; Ibid., no. 87247, Grey to Cambon, 16 May, 1916; Ibid., no. 87247, File 938, Memorandum Communicated by Mark Sykes, 8 May 1916, Sazonov to Paleologue, 13 (26) April, 1916.} It seemed curious that Britain proposed Russian occupation of a certain portion of Turkish Armenia, since in the nineteenth century she had strongly resented Russian presence in Armenia as a threat to the British position in the Persian Gulf. The answer to this strategic diversity was that, the importance of Turkish Armenia would have simply become superfluous for Britain once she had gained control of Lower Mesopotamia.

The exclusion of the vilayets of Sivas, Kharput, Diarbekir and the region of Adana from Russian annexation is explained by the Russian government's policy of having 'as few Armenians as possible in Russian territory'. It was considered that an Armenian state under French protection would relieve Russia of 'Armenian nationalistic responsibilities'.

Russia does NOT wish to have Armenia under her suzerainty.\footnote{FO371/2768/68431/938, Clayton to Sykes, 11 Apr. 1916; Ibid., no. 70889, Foreign Office to MacMahon, 14 Apr. 1916; Ibid., no. 77075, see minute initialled by L.O.}

The Sykes-Picot Agreement between Britain, France and Russia had created Greater and Lesser Armenia. It had also made it impossible to achieve the realisation of Armenian national aspirations which were well defined in the programme of the Armenian National Delegation and which were moreover entirely in agreement with the memorandum on British Armenia. Even the British
Map 4: The Partition of Turkey by the Secret Agreements of 1915-17
Source: PRO, MFQ 386
government came to believe that a 'free and independent Armenia' was a 'visionary dream not to be encouraged'. But it was 'hoped' that after the war Armenia would be 'free from Turkish subjection'.

The disastrous winter campaign of December 1914 and January 1915 on the Caucasian front did not restrain Enver from pursuing a renewed offensive against the Russian lines. With two hundred battalions gradually released from Gallipoli, the Ottoman Army Headquarters pushed forward intensive preparations for a second assault which was intended to be a decisive factor in securing Turkish supremacy in the Caucasus. But this time the offensive began on the orders of the Grand Duke Nicholas on January 14, along the entire Turkish front. By a series of brilliant operations in deep snow the Russian army broke the centre of the Ottoman Third Army and captured in February 1915, the great Armenian stronghold of Erzerum. The Ottoman Second Army suffered terribly during the hard winter, since the region in which it was stationed was depopulated by the expulsion of the Armenians. In response to Russian military success, Sazonov informed Buchanan, the British ambassador, that:

Erzerum and adjacent territory has been won by Russian blood and Trebizond is hoped to be taken soon. Russian public would expect it to be incorporated integrally in the Russian Empire.

Sazonov had made no mention of Armenian 'blood' and depending on public opinion, had excluded any prospect of Armenian autonomy. In contrast to Russian military overtures, the British Foreign Office acknowledged that in the first two years of the war the Armenians were the 'best fighters' in the Russian army of

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166. FO395/40/176271, minute initialled by G.R.C., 9 Sept. 1916.

167. FO371/2767/54251/938, Buchanan to Grey, 22 March 1916.
the Caucasus. That the capture of Erzerum was 'chiefly contributed to by the Armenian contingents'\textsuperscript{168} and not, as Sazonov had publicised, that Erzerum was won by 'Russian blood'. The Catholicos, Kevork V, had complained to Vorontsov Dashkov, the Viceroy of the Caucasus, that the Russian government and the media alike made 'no broadcast' about the substantial and successful contribution of the Armenian contingents in the Russian war effort for the liberation of Turkish Armenia.\textsuperscript{169}

The political importance of the Russian conquest of Erzerum was immense. It had finally established her on the Armenian plateau. Once in possession of the great routes that converged at Erzerum from Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Persia and the Caucasus, the conquest of the rest of the plateau of Mush, Bitlis and Erzinjan by the IVth Corps helped by Armenian contingents followed as a matter of course. The loss of Erzerum was kept secret by Ottoman headquarters. It did not even appear among the army news and also remained unknown for months to the Sultan and his entourage.\textsuperscript{170} But the loss of the fortress and of the extensive Ottoman territory appeared so important to Ottoman headquarters that extensive operations were decided upon to give a decisive turn to the campaign. It was decided to use the whole army to strike at the flank and rear of the Russians. The campaign ended in a crushing defeat for the Turks, while the panic which overshadowed the Ottoman Third Army had caused the desertion of tens of thousands of soldiers.

\textsuperscript{168} Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 145, 'Armenia', Bryce to Balfour, 27 Sept. 1918; also in Lambeth Palace, J.A. Douglas Papers, vol. 61, f18, Bryce to Balfour, 30 Sept. 1918.

\textsuperscript{169} State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 5, File 5, Kevork V to Vorontsov Dashkov, 9 (22) July 1915.

\textsuperscript{170} Sanders Liman von, Five Years in Turkey, pp. 124-5; P.M. Price, War and Revolution in Asiatic Turkey, (London, 1918), p. 85.
The offensive in January and February brought the Russians closer contact with their left wing which had reached lake Van. The capture of Trebizond, the most important Turkish Black sea port, was successfully carried out by General Liakhov, which fell on 18 April. This allowed the Russian fleet to supply and bolster up the land forces more effectively.\(^{171}\) The capture of Erzerum and Trebizond were certainly a great prize for Russia, the possession of which was considered by Nicholas II as a 'strategical necessity for the Caucasus', not to form part of Armenia.\(^{172}\) In all these considerations of strategy, Erzerum was the key point. The city, populated largely by Armenians and situated in the centre of the most pronouncedly Armenian region, dominated all the roads from Russia into Turkey. Therefore, with the two main cities in Russian military control, the entire theatre of operations fell into the hands of the Russians. The Ottoman army withdrew and restricted itself to defensive actions until the Bolshevik revolution gave it the unexpected opportunity to resume hostilities.

The Armenian communities in the diaspora had not remained indifferent in the face of the Russian military campaigns in Asia Minor. The first formal proposal made to the British Foreign Office for the creation of Armenian volunteer contingents from the diaspora, was conveyed by Boghos Nubar Pasha, the leader of the Armenian National Delegation. In early November 1914, soon after the Ottoman Empire's involvement in the war, Nubar Pasha explained that, since there was no longer any hope of agreement with the Young Turk government, the enrolment of Armenian volunteers could render valuable assistance to the Allied forces in a possible disembarkation at Alexandretta, Mersina or Adana. The


\(^{172}\) M. Paleologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs, p. 509; This view was expressed by Nicholas II to Paleologue in an audience on 13 March 1916.
Foreign Office, having examined the proposal with 'extreme caution', remained reserved. Although it was considered that a Russian success near Erzerum followed by an allied landing at Alexandretta, would provide the 'last link in the chain' to cut across the Ottoman Empire, and cripple it most seriously, but there were other considerations that needed to be taken into account. Considering the shortage of arms and munitions for such a project, and the struggle which continued to rage in Western Europe, the Foreign Office thought it 'better to wait, unless the Russian government desired such an action to be taken as a 'diversion'. In fact such a 'diversion' was requested by the Russian Foreign Ministry during the planned assault on the Dardanelles, but the British Army Council did not encourage it.

The next proposal, for the use of an active Armenian volunteer support to the cause of allied victory, was forwarded this time by the Armenian National Defence Committee of America. In its letter to Edward Grey, of 22 March 1915, the National Defence Committee proposed the sending of volunteers to Cilicia and the transportation of the Armenians there. It was also argued that such a move would have also greatly helped 'dispersing' and 'preventing' the onward march of the Turkish army against Egypt. But the Army Council, together with the War Office, turned down the proposal, explaining that such a project was 'impracticable'.

When the Armenian community in Egypt learnt about the massacres and deportations in Turkey, despite the consistent and persistent refusal of the British

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173. FO371/2146/70404, Cheethan to Grey, 12 Nov. 1914; see ibid., minute signed by L.O. 12 Nov. 1914.

174. FO371/2484/25073, War Office to Foreign Office, 4 March 1915; ibid., no. 28172, WO to FO, 9 March 1915.

175. FO371/2485/41444, The Armenian National Defence Committee to Edward Grey, 23 March 1915; see also ibid., minute 10 Apr. 1915; ibid., no. 0152/4717 (M.O.I.), WO to FO, 15 Apr. 1915.
military authorities to create a volunteer movement, it asked Lieutenant General Sir John Maxwell, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Egypt, for urgent help to save their compatriots in Asia Minor. They stated that a volunteer movement under the direction of the National Defence Committee was already in progress among the Armenian colonies in America, Bulgaria and Greece. They even emphasised that they could not any longer remain 'indifferent' and 'inactive' in the light of daily reports of massacres among the Armenian population. The authorisation of the British government for such arms as could be spared, and permission to concentrate in Cyprus, assistance in transport and a small allied force, were needed. It was further stressed that, by seizing the Cilician Gates and the Beilan Pass, would paralyse all Turkish movement in Asia Minor. 176

Although Sir John Maxwell was of the opinion that everything should be done to help the Armenian movement, the reply of the Army Council was invariably a curt refusal. They were against the use of Armenian irregulars for a landing and a rising in Cilicia. Geographical, strategic and 'other reasons' would render it impossible for the Allied troops. While Findley, the British representative in Norway, warned that an Armenian insurrection in Cilicia would lead to nothing but massacres. 177

Thus, throughout 1915, every proposal to form an Armenian volunteer corps under British direction was rejected. Both Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, and the Army Council did not consider the use of 'untrained' and unarmed irregulars a 'feasible' project. 178 It was only in 1917 after the Russian revolution that the British military authorities tried hard to recruit Armenian

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176. Ibid., no. 106769, H. McMahon to E. Grey, 27 July 1915.


178. Ibid., no. 30439, A. Nicholson to Grey, 9 March 1915; see also ibid., no. 51438, WO to FO, 28 Apr. 1915.
manpower in the Caucasus for their own exclusive advantage. The British
government had unduly underestimated the potentiality of the Armenian
contingents. After the Russian break-down of military power under the Bolshevik
regime, the Armenian contingents under the leadership of the Erevan National
Council took over the Caucasus front and delayed the Ottoman advance from
February to June 1918. This gave the British in Mesopotamia and Persia time to
meet the new menace to their right flank. While Lord Robert Cecil, the Under
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, acknowledged that the Armenians had
contributed to General Allenby's 'great victory' in Palestine. 179

As the Armenian National Congress and the National Bureau at Tiflis were
appealing to the Allied powers for a future autonomous Armenia and receiving
sympathetic assurances their future fate had already been decided without their
slightest knowledge. The flags of the Entente nations had already been pinned on
the map of Asiatic Turkey.

Soon after the outbreak of war the Dashnakist politician, Dr Zavriev, had on
more than one occasion conferred with the Russian Foreign Minister to discuss
the future of an autonomous Armenia, and had received certain assurances.
Instructed by Sazonov, on May 1915, Zavriev proceeded to Paris and London to
plead the Armenian case, and win Allied approval. Negotiating with the French
Foreign Minister, Zavriev presented a plan for an autonomous Armenia under the
joint protection of Russia, Britain and France. According to Zavriev, the
Armenian territories were to include not only the six existing vilayets, but,
extending from Transcaucasia to the Mediterranean, they were to embrace Cilicia

179. FO371/3404/162647/55708, PID to WO, 24 Sept. 1918; ibid., no. 164439, R.
Cecil to FO, 3 Oct. 1918.
and the port of Mersina with the exclusion of Alexandretta. After an anxious telegram from Izvolsky, Sazonov gave strict orders that no official Russian support be given to Zavriev's schemes which were to be represented entirely as an Armenian idea. Sazonov added that, 'our talks with the Armenians had a purely academic character, and we did not indicate to Zavriev any definite programme'.

Russian anti-Armenian Policy in Liberated Turkish Armenia

From the outset the Russian government was opposed to granting autonomy to the Armenians. But it was felt necessary to lure them with vague hopes since the Armenian volunteer corps were to contribute to the conquest of Turkish Armenia. Even Bryce had suggested that Russia should announce that she would be prepared to agree to an autonomous Armenia being eventually established under Russian protection. It was thought that such a declaration would make 'the Armenians rejoice and stimulate them to afford material assistance to the Allies in the conflict with Turkey'.

Already by mid 1916, after the Russian conquest of Turkish Armenia had been accomplished, the Russian government was acting in accordance with the final decision reached with Sykes and Picot and in line with its original conception; the 'possession of Turkish Armenia'. General N.N. Iudenich began to pursue


a 'very aggressive' policy towards the Armenians. An order issued by Iudenich asserted that in the occupied Turkish Armenian territories, Armenians should 'not be allowed to settle', which was intended to settle with Cossack colonists.\textsuperscript{184}

The orders of General Peshkov, the Governor-General of the conquered provinces of Turkish Armenia, were that Armenians were not allowed to settle in Erzerum and Trebizond.\textsuperscript{185} Orders were also issued by General Peshkov, that Armenians from Erzerum and Trebizond were entitled to live in Turkish and Kurdish houses in Van, but made it explicitly clear that the Russian government would 'allow no Armenian in any official position'. It was also stated that:

\begin{quote}
Armenia must be entirely controlled by Russian administration.\textsuperscript{186}
\end{quote}

Russian Armenians who had entered the ranks of the Russian army, contributing to the latter's victory, not only in the Caucasus front but also in Eastern Europe, hoped for their regeneration in a liberated Turkish Armenia. But the Russian authorities were not only unwilling to assist in the return of Armenians to their houses, but declared their property as state-owned and to be given to the Cossack colonies. Edward Neville the British Minister at Geneva believed that 'in this way the Russian government was completing the work of the Turks'.\textsuperscript{187}

The settling of Cossacks in the Armenian districts was an original conception. The Russian Minister of Agriculture, A.V. Krivoshein, considering the agricultural

\begin{footnotes}
\item[185] State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 28, L. 1, File 132, Report, Armenian Central Committee, pp. 29-57, Jan. 1916.
\item[186] Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 144, Armenia 1916, Perris to Bryce, 17 Nov. 1916.
\item[187] FO371/2778/103491, Neville to MacMahon, 16 May 1916.
\end{footnotes}
prospects of the Black sea coastal area, in a memorandum to S.D. Sazonov, the Foreign Minister in March 1915, wrote that:

The success of our military activities on the Turkish front gives reason to think that, more or less, in the near future, we will have the opportunity to rectify our Caucasian boundary and to round out our possession of Asia Minor and Armenia. ...the Armenian vilayets of Erzerum and Van as well as part of Bitlis .... are completely suitable for Russian colonists.\textsuperscript{188}

General Iudenich, the Commander of the Caucasian army, had expressed similar views to Sazonov, entertaining the possibility in the near future of settling massive numbers of Russian emigrants in the deserted houses.\textsuperscript{189}

It was unquestionably obvious that the Russian government’s project intended to establish on the Russo-Turkish frontier quite a large residential area for the Russian people. The zone, however, would have separated the Armenians of Russia from their co-nationalists of Turkey, forming a barrier of alien population, thus forestalling future Armenian nationalist aspirations for unification.

It was not until August 1916, that Armenian leaders became fully aware of Russian annexationist designs. Boghos Nubar Pasha, the President of the Armenian National Delegation in Paris, had come round to the conclusion that Russian policy was based purely on annexing the six Armenian vilayets and even a semi-autonomous region could not be hoped for. It had also come to Nubar’s knowledge

\textsuperscript{188} ABIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3486, A.V. Krivoshein to S.D. Sazonov, 28 (13) March, 1915; see also, Adamov, Razdel, Series III, pp. 360-2.

\textsuperscript{189} ABIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3486, General N.N. Iudenich to S.D. Sazonov, 5 (18) April 1915.
that the conquered vilayets were to be colonised with Russian and Cossack emigrants, excluding the Armenians. The British Foreign Office had information that in the portion of Armenian reconquest, Armenian landowners had been 'evicted' and Cossack settlers put in their place.

The project of colonising the regions conquered in Turkish Armenia was taken up by the Russian Ministry of Interior and had undergone, by late July 1916, intense preparation. Tatischeff, the deputy for the Chief of the Central Administration of colonisation, was instructed to make an extensive study of the local conditions and to establish the size of the territories. The principal cadres for colonisation consisted of bodies of workers, called unarmed bodies of soldiers. These bodies, each of which was composed of 1000 men, had already been engaged in the autumn of 1915. They had begun agricultural work under the direction of specialists in order to supply the Caucasian army with fresh provisions. In accordance with the rules adopted, neither the Armenians nor the Georgians were allowed to take part in the project. While in the commercial life, Armenians were also not permitted to set up their own business. However, authorisation was given to an Armenian to supply goods to a Muslim and start a business with the latter's name while Armenians could only be employees. In August 1916, General N.N. Iudenich, forbade all other foreign populations to live in the valleys of Alashkert, Bayazid and Diadin, except the Russian Cossack emigrants. Permission to return was given only to native inhabitants who could prove their rights to


191. FO371/3016/208687, FO to Spring-Rice, 7 Nov. 1917.

property, land, or to conclude purchase contracts.\textsuperscript{193}

The orders prevented the inhabitants of the country from returning to their homes, since, as regards Turkey, it was misleading to speak of title deeds, because the documents could have been lost, as had happened in most cases during the invasion.

Dr Joannes Lepsius, the German missionary and a true friend of the Armenians, in a letter to Bryce wrote that:

Unfortunately, Russia intends nothing of the sort with regard to the liberation of the Armenian people. The prospect that Russian peasants and Cossacks from the Caucasus are to inhabit the deserted Armenian highlands the Lobanov 'Armenia without Armenians', has caused the Armenians great anxiety.\textsuperscript{194}

The Russian government was therefore acting along the same lines as the Turkish policy of removing Armenians from Turkish Armenia.

The orders from St. Petersburg in July 1915, which prohibited the organisation of a new Armenian volunteer corps, were also disquieting. Catholicos Kevork V, condemned the adoption of the new measures which were intended (a) to undermine the activities of the volunteer corps, (b) to create hatred and agitation

\textsuperscript{193} Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 144, Russian Newspaper 'Retsch', Petrograd, 28 (10) Aug. 1916, encl. in Boghos Nubar to Bryce, 27 Sept. 1916; FO371/3405/204335, 'Historical and Ethnological Notes on the Armenians', Director of Military Intelligence, 12 Dec. 1918; FO371/3504/204335/55708, 'Armenians and Russia', General Staff, WO, 5 Apr. 1918.

\textsuperscript{194} Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 144, Armenia 1916, Lepsius to Bryce, 1 Dec. 1916.
among the Russian soldiers not only against the Armenian volunteer units but also towards the entire Armenian population, (c) to cease the formation of new volunteer corps.\textsuperscript{195} It became even more disquieting when the new viceroy of the Caucasus, Grand Duke Nicholas, who was also the Supreme Commander of the Caucasian army, in December 1915, ordered the Armenian National Bureau to liquidate the volunteer contingents which were to be reorganised into regular rifle battalions of the Russian army. The implication of this change stung the political sensitivity of the Armenians: the new companies, as integral units of the regular army, could be dispatched to any front. Also the elimination, of the special status of the volunteer groups stemmed from tsarist opposition to a special status for Turkish Armenia. The disbandment of all Armenian volunteer units had a political motive. It was feared that such existing contingents could have been deployed against the Muslim subjects, notably in the region of Van, an act 'harmful' to Russian internal policy. It was essential for the Russian government 'not to lose the confidence of the Muslims'.\textsuperscript{196}

The strict censorship imposed on the Armenian press by the Grand Duke and the proscribing of discussions on vital national questions, further disillusioned Armenians. Under the prevailing circumstances, the Bureau of the Armenian Revolutionary Party at Tiflis (i.e. Dashnaksutiun), found itself unable to continue its ties with Armenian Party organisations in the United States, Egypt and the Balkan Peninsula, to lead the propaganda campaign in support of the Armenian question.\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{195} State Historical Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 5, File 102, Catholicos Kevork V to V. Dashkov, 3 (16) July 1915.

\textsuperscript{196} \textsuperscript{196} ГБА, Fond 2168, L. 1, File 274, Prince Gedshemukov to General N.N. Iudenchik, 14 (27) March 1916.

\textsuperscript{197} ГАОП CCCP, Fond 102, L. 4, File 14, The Minister of the Interior to the Director of Police Department, 3 (16) March 1916.
The decree of the Russian government of 4 August 1915, authorised the return of Kurdish refugees to their houses under the protection of the Imperial government. The Kurds were guaranteed security of life and were promised that they would not be punished for their previous misdeeds. Aram Manukian, the Armenian governor of Van commenting on the decree, expressed astonishment, for 'the Kurds who had slain the Armenian population of that region, who had looted their belongings and set fire to their houses, were now to enjoy the protection of the government'. Although General Iudenich had no sympathy for the Armenians, he opposed any scheme to resettle Kurds in the conquered territories. Considering them as an 'untrustworthy element', Iudenich believed that it would have been 'best' to drive the Kurds out of Russian conquered territories and after the war settle those regions with Cossacks.

The Russian government's inclination and favouritism towards the Kurds was also questioned by Pavel Miliukov, the head of the liberal Cadets, who stated that:

The Kurds who had joined the ranks of the Turkish army and attacked the Russian lines, today enjoy the leniency of Russia. The Russian government secures the comfort of the Kurds and all past events have been forgotten, while Armenians were massacred due to their inclination towards Russia. The Russian government puts 'no distinction between Armenians and Kurds', and it goes without
saying that the Armenians are devoted to Russia while the Kurds [are] not. Those regions where the Kurds are invited to live, perhaps are still covered by thousands of corpses the murderers of whom are mostly found among those tribes whom the Russian government currently is taking under its protection.\textsuperscript{201}

To this effect, the British Foreign Office too had acknowledged that during the Russian occupation of Turkish Armenia, the Russian authorities were 'unduly complacent' towards the lawlessness of the Kurds and 'unduly unfavourable' to the claims of the returning Armenian refugees.\textsuperscript{202}

However, Russian policy-making did not rest on the views of either General Iudenich nor Miliukov. The government's decision was to take the Kurdish tribes under its benevolent wing and get rid of the surviving Armenians. 'Looking from a political angle', wrote Prince Gedshemukov (initials not provided in the sources), the Commander-in-Chief of the region of Dersim:

As a de facto situation (referring to the Armenian massacres), it is a positive sign, for the Turks have left us an Armenia without Armenians, which is far better for Russia.\textsuperscript{203}

\textsuperscript{201} ГАОП СССР, Фонд 579, Дело 1878, Павел Милиухов, Авг. 1916.

\textsuperscript{202} FO395/240/32218, Intelligence Bureau, Depart. of Information, 19 Feb. 1918; also in FO371/3400/36460, 19 Feb. 1918.

\textsuperscript{203} ГВИА СССР, Фонд 2168, Л. 1, Дело 274, Принц Гедашемуков к Генералу Иуденичу, 14 (27) Марта 1917.
Living conditions in 'liberated' Turkish Armenia were no better than that under Turkish rule before the war; in many cases they were even worse. Naturally, the Armenians were alarmed at the tsarist policy of 'open expropriation' against the Armenians in the occupied territories. In the region of Malazkert, the assembled Armenian refugees, who consisted mainly of elderly people, women and children, who had come to resettle their homes, were 'violently' driven out by General D.K. Abachiev, while the Muslim population was left intact. The Armenian population of eleven villages was reported to have been uprooted and their belongings confiscated by the Russian authorities.

Seriously concerned by this alarming situation, the Catholicos, Kevork V, in his confidential letter to the Viceroy Vorontsov Dashkov complained that:

General Abachiev has not only an unfriendly attitude towards the Armenian refugees but even pursues them. In the seven Turkish Armenian vilayets the raids and violence of Kurds and Circassians against the unprotected Armenian population continues. Not only does the Russian army not protect the Armenians but it also ignores their requests for protection. The passive attitude of the army has contributed to the continuation of the barbarity of the Kurds and Circassians.

In his reply Dashkov stated that the Russian government was 'not in a position to

204 L/P & S/11/132, P655, Intelligence Bureau, Depart. of Information, 'Propaganda in Turkey', 5 Dec. 1918.


206 State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 5, File 102, Catholicos Kevork V to V. Dashkov, 4 (17) July 1915.
safeguard the Armenian refugees from the Kurds.\textsuperscript{207} It seems that the tsarist government was acting along the same lines of CUP policy: that of getting rid of the surviving Armenians. Even General Andranik had felt bitterly distressed. He had warned a Russian general that, if the government continued to pamper the Kurds, he would relinquish his position and take no part in the war.\textsuperscript{208} The Intelligence Bureau of the British Foreign Office had recognised the fact that the Turkish and Russian governments alike fostered the enmity between the Armenians and Muslims for their own 'nefarious purposes'.\textsuperscript{209}

While contemplating the system of administration of the conquered Armenian vilayets of Turkey, a decision regarding the Armenian question had inevitably to be reached. The Imperial decree by Nicholas II of 5 June 1916, concerning the government of Turkish Armenia, is of great importance. The 'Rules for the Temporary Administration of Areas of Turkey occupied by the Right of War' were signed by the Chief of Staff, General Alexeev. Any hope that Armenians might still have had for autonomy, was dashed by these 'Rules'. According to them, the eastern provinces of the Ottoman empire were transformed into a military Governor-Generalship for the purpose of maintaining order and assisting the war effort. The post of Governor-General was entrusted to General A. Peshkov, who began preparations for the direct and unconditional annexation of the Armenian plateau to the Russian Empire. 'Armenia' or 'Armenians' were terms not found in the decree. The eighth paragraph of the 'Rules' disappointed Armenian aspirations. It instructed the officials of the Governor-Generalship to:

\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., V. Dashkov to Kevork V, 12 (25) July 1915.


\textsuperscript{209} FO395/240/32218, Intelligence Bureau, Depart. of Information, 19 Feb. 1918; also in FO371/3400/36460.
Establish and uphold law and order, to protect the life, honour, property, religious-civil liberties of the inhabitants, to consider all nationalities equal before the Russian government and to guarantee these inhabitants the possibility of free, tranquil labour, on condition that they submit in toto to the suzerainty of Russia.  

The correspondence between Sazonov, the Foreign Minister and Grand Duke Nicholas, the Viceroy of the Caucasus, further reveals their policy towards the future of Armenia. According to Sazonov, it was 'against Russia's foreign and internal policy to either grant autonomy to the Armenians or to leave them to the mercy of Muslims'. 'It should be noted', added Sazonov:

that after the massacres the Armenians have become a minority in those regions, and it would be unjust to subjugate the majority to the minority.

In his reply the Grand Duke was in absolute conformity with Sazonov's policy stating that:

It is of the utmost necessity to annex the conquered regions to the Russian empire. As far as the Armenian question is concerned, such a question does not exist. The Armenians have become Russian subjects, and, as citizens, have equal rights as the Muslims,

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210. ГВНА, Фond 2168, Л. 1, Д. 268, 'Rules for the Temporary Administration of Areas of Turkey Occupied by the Right of War', enclosure in a communication to General Peshkov, 5 (18) June 1916; State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 242, Л. 1, Д. 28, minute of conversation with General A. Peshkov, June 1916.

211. АВИП, Фond Политархив, Д. 3481, Сазонов to Nicholas Nikolaevich, 14 (27) June 1916.
The efforts of the Armenian National Bureau and the National Delegation for the creation of autonomous Armenia were therefore in vain. Government laws, decrees and orders regarding Turkish Armenia pinpointed a single line of policy of outright annexation. The Turkish Armenian vilayets were regarded as a natural geographic continuation of the Russian empire. Therefore, for the tsarist government, the Armenian question did not exist.

The Rules of Temporary Administration and the decree of April 1916; the latter issued by the Grand Duke, asserting that every individual was equal before the law no matter what his national status may be and the immediate ending of the state of anarchy and the unlawful seizure of land and property were valueless when it came to deal with the Armenians. One comes to this conclusion after examining the condition of Armenians in their homeland; the decree had as good as ignored the presence of Armenians and their equal rights. Strict measures had been enforced upon Armenian civilians who were not allowed to possess arms, and an extensive search was conducted to confiscate guns illegally concealed. The case however, was not the same for the Kurds and Circassians, who were allowed to possess arms and use them against the Armenians by constantly raiding the unprotected Armenian villages. It became apparent that the Russian authorities were hostile towards the Armenian people and favoured the Muslims, notably the Kurds. As a consequence, there was no security of life among Armenians; they were endangered by the constant raids of Kurdish brigands, while the Russian soldiers stood aloof, attempting not even the slightest intervention. Russian inclination towards the Kurds is explained by Prince D.I. Shakhovski's

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212. Ibid., File 3481, Nicholas Nicolaevich to Sazonov, 3 (16) July 1916.

213. State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 5, File 102, Catholicos Kevork V to V. Dashkov, 3 (16) July 1915.
who later became Minister of Welfare in the First Coalition Government of 5 May 1917), despatch to General N.N. Iudenich, in which it is revealed that, Kiamil Bey, an influential Kurd, under the direction of the Russian government, was sent to the region of Van to negotiate with the local Kurds to bring them over to the Russian side. The negotiations lasted a whole month and a 'good result was obtained'. Prince Shakhovski further states that:

It's been more than a year now that we have been trying to win over the Kurds, and in the region of Moush and Van the Kurds are not hostile towards us.\textsuperscript{214}

The April decree of Grand Duke Nicholas was not respected or was not intended to be implemented by the Russian soldiers when it came to dealing with the Armenians. Five months after the decree, Russian troops led by Colonel Aghalarev, began looting and emptying the Armenian houses in the region of Van. It was also reported that the stores for the relief organisation of the Armenian National Bureau had been completely looted, even the 100,000 roubles' worth of clothings donated by the American missionaries. Two of the main general stores were set on fire.\textsuperscript{215}

The Armenian National Bureau in Tiflis was for a long time alarmed by the existing state of affairs and treatment of the Armenians by the Russian authorities. The serious nature of the situation of Armenian refugees in Erzerum had taken on alarming dimensions. Returning Armenian refugees came into head-on collision with the Russian military forces, who prohibited their entrance into

\textsuperscript{214} ЦГВИА СССР, Fond 2168, L. 1, File 274, Prince D.I. Shakhovski to General N.N. Iudenich, 31 (13) Feb. 1917.

\textsuperscript{215} State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 5, File 122, Armenian Relief Organisation to Catholicos Kevork V, 22 (4) Sept. 1916.
the city. The Russian commanders had received orders from Major-General V.M. Tamanshev to prohibit the return of Armenian refugees to their homeland.\textsuperscript{216} Orders had also been issued to drive away the Armenians from Erzerum and not to allow them to resettle there again. It was reported that not only Muslims but the Russian militia had engaged in looting all the Armenian houses, even the wealth of the Cathedral. It came as a shock to the Armenians to learn that their houses had been expropriated and settled by Muslims.\textsuperscript{217} Further astonishment was caused by the Viceroy's appointment of a Muslim (unnamed in the sources), of Abdul Hamid's party as mayor of the city of Erzerum, and at that time was a sworn enemy of the Armenians.\textsuperscript{218} Ali Bey, a Kurd who had been the 'chief organiser' of massacres against the Armenians in the region of Bayazid, was pardoned by the Russian authorities of the Caucasus and 'set free'.\textsuperscript{219}

This attitude on the part of the Russian authorities was common throughout the Armenian vilayets. The guarding of towns and villages was entrusted to the local Muslims, while Armenian soldiers serving in the ranks of the Russian army were not allowed to take up the same duty.\textsuperscript{220}

It is an open question, too, whether the retreats of the Russian army during

\textsuperscript{216} ГВИА СССР, Entry no. 53, 1898-1918, Fond 551, L. 3, File 107, Major-General V.M. Tamanshev to the Commander of the IVth Corps, Tiflis, 7 June 1916.

\textsuperscript{217} State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, L. 5, File 56, Abstract from the speech of Hovsep Khounoutsi at the Armenian National Bureau, 23 (8) March 1916; Ibid., The Armenian National Bureau to Catholicos Kevork V, 1 (14) March 1916.

\textsuperscript{218} L/P & S/10/586, P4487, Arabian Report no. XXII, 'Asia', 15 July 1916.

\textsuperscript{219} State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Catholicos Fond 57, L. 5, File 102, Catholicos Kevork V to V. Dashkov, 3 (16) July 1915.

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., Abstract from a speech by Hovsep Khnoutsi in the Armenian National Bureau, 23 (8) March 1916.
the campaigns with Turkey had the motive of physically annihilating the surviving Armenians. Retreat meant leaving the Armenians exposed to the mercy of the Turkish troops. The advance guard of the Russian army which had liberated Van on 17 May 1915, was suddenly 'compelled' to retreat at the end of July. As a result the different fragments of the Ottoman army rallied and instead of pursuing the enemy they exterminated the Armenian population of Bashkali (east of Van), Sarai (north east of Van), and all the surrounding villages.221

Aram Manukian, who had been appointed governor of Van by General Okanovich on 16 (29) May 1915,222 gives a valuable account of the retreat of the Russian troops and the plight of the Armenians. Governor Manukian states that the news about the 'horrible plight' of the Armenians of the surrounding villages of the district of Van reached on 13 (26) July, despite General Nikolaev's overtures that the Russian troops would resist enemy offensives and retreat unless they were under immediate pressure.223 But the Russian retreat was not the result of immediate Turkish pressure but for an 'unknown reason'. Manukian adds that in Manazkert there was 'not a word' about a Russian retreat. Armenians were left to the end uninformed.224 And when the Russian army suddenly retreated the whole Armenian population of the region of Manazkert was exposed to the Ottoman troops.


222. State Historical Archives of Armenia, Fond 242, L. 1, File 19, General Okanovich to General Nikolaev, 16 (29) May 1915.


Manukian, deeply concerned about the plight of the Armenians, on 15 (28) July conferred with General Nikolaev to discuss the Russian retreat. Nikolaev 'insisted' that Van would be safeguarded. However, he made 'no mention' about the actual Russian retreat at Manazkert.225

It seems that Aram Manukian was not convinced by General Nikolaev’s assurance and felt suspicious as to whether the Russian troops would remain steadfast. In a despatch to General Iudenich on 17 (30) July, Manukian wrote:

We have heard that the Russian army, for unknown reasons, must retreat. In order to take a decision in time about our stand and the condition of the Armenians in the region, we ask you to inform us without delay of your orders concerning it.226

The same day Manukian handed a report to General Nikolaev, asking him to leave a sufficient amount of munitions, rifles and a few cannons so that in the event of a Russian retreat, Armenians would be able to resist a Turkish offensive. In reply, General Nikolaev 'firmly insisted' that there was 'no need' for such military preparation since they would under no circumstances leave Van.227 Curiously, on 17 (30) July, the Armenians of Alure, a village to the east of Lake Van, saw General Nikolaev drive by. What they did not know was that General Nikolaev was actually decamping.228 The following day, on 18 (31) July, despite General Nikolaev's assurances, the Russian army did retreat leaving a population of about 200,000 Armenians stricken with panic and in an disorderly flight to the Caucasus.

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Aram Manukian maintained that the Armenian population could have been largely saved if the Russian military authorities had duly warned them about a possible Russian retreat.\(^{229}\)

The situation was similar in the region of Urmia, where the Russian troops had been in occupation. On 2 January 1915, it was 'suddenly' discovered that not only the Russian Consulate, but also the entire army as well were evacuating Urmia. The military decision came like a 'thunder-bolt', for it had been positively stated all along to the Armenian population that the Russian army would under 'no circumstances withdraw'. This was followed by the close guarding of the roads, and no one was permitted to come in or go out of Urmia for over four months. The Kurds, grabbing the opportunity, poured in from every quarter and engulfed the Armenian villages, then plundered, pillaged and massacred the 'entire population'.\(^{230}\)

This phenomenon was repeated in 1917. James Barton, the President of the American Board of Commissioners, disturbed over the situation in Van, hoped that if the Russian army did retreat it would give 'ample warning' to the Armenians so they could escape with them so that the Turkish troops would find 'little to vent their vengence on'.\(^{231}\)

S.D. Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister, was not sincere when delivering his speech before the Duma on 9 (22) February 1915 about the future of the Armenians, that 'when the war ends the exclusive position of Russia will be direct

\(^{229}\) Ibid., Report by Aram Manukian, July 1915, col. 2.

\(^{230}\) FO96/208, Toynbee Papers, Statement Communicated by Paul Shimmon, Nov. 1915.

\(^{231}\) Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 145, Armenia 1917-1918, J. Barton to Bryce, 20 June 1917.
the Imperial government in a direction favourable to the Armenian population'. Perhaps he was more honest in his statement to Paleologue, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg, and Buchanan the British ambassador, when he stated he would 'prefer to keep Turkey suzerain of part of Armenia'.

Sazonov knew only too well that Turkish suzerainty over Armenia was the fundamental factor contrary to Armenian national aspirations. But the Russian government had 'political reasons' not to incorporate a large number of the Armenian population within its conquered territories, thus freeing it of future Armenian nationalistic aspirations. In fact, Nicholas II was from the outset opposed to including more Armenians in Russian territories. This fact was ascertained by Benckendorff, during his conversation with Edward Grey, who explicitly had stated that:

The Emperor does not wish to encourage Armenians to come within the Russian paw.

The 'liberation' of Armenians from the Turkish yoke was not a war-time political objective for the Russian government. It was the annexation of greater Armenia which exercised the political and military minds of the government. Massacres and deportations of Armenians were of little interest. It suited Russian interests since the 'depopulation' of the conquered Armenian vilayets left the Russian government an Armenia without Armenians and thus, the plan of colonising the regions with Russian emigrants and Cossack settlers would be boosted with considerable ease.

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233. FO371/2767/47950/938, Buchanan to Grey, 12 March 1916,

234. FO371/2485/32321, Grey to Buchanan, 8 March 1915.
The order of the Grand Duke, the Viceroy of the Caucasus, not to allow the resettlement of the remaining Armenian refugees in the principal cities of Erzerum, Trebizond and the region of Manazkert, north of Lake Van explains Russian attitudes towards the future of Armenia. Even more appalling was the decision to disarm the Armenians while the same law was not applied to the Kurds. Constant Kurdish raids on Armenian villages had brought the situation back to the period of Abdul Hamid, but this time it was under Russian rule. As the CUP prior to the war had been 'unable' to protect the Armenians from Kurdish raids, the Russian government was adopting the same policy as the Turks. Sazonov's reply to the Armenian Catholicos, Kevork V, that 'we are not in a position to protect the Armenians refugees from Kurdish attacks', reveals the true intentions of the Russian government to get rid of the surviving Armenians from conquered Russian territories.

As for Turkey's treatment of the Armenians, according to Monsignor Dolci and Henry Morgenthau, the American ambassador at Constantinople, the massacres and deportations were 'pre-planned'. The deportation decree had gone out from the Young Turk Party that the Armenian population in Turkey should be put back fifty years. This had been decided necessary to ensure the supremacy of the Turkish race in the Ottoman empire, which was one of the basic principles of the CUP. Therefore the policy of the CUP was in contradiction to the theory of Ziya Gokalp, the chief literary spokesman of the Young Turk movement, who

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235. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 11335, Monsignor Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 11 Oct. 1915; Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 144, Armenia 1916, Cardashian to Bryce, 3 March 1916.

had written that 'a nationality could not be kept in subjugation once it has acquired a national consciousness. Sooner or later it gains its independence'.

A review of the Armenian question during the war, suggests the conclusion that the decimation of the Ottoman Armenian population through physical violence, hunger and disease was not the unfortunate by-product of an otherwise legitimate security policy but the result of a deliberate effort by the CUP regime to rid the Anatolian heartland of a politically troublesome ethnic group. While there were undoubtedly some districts behind the Transcaucasian front where deportations and other precautionary measures were militarily justified, the sweeping geographic scope of the Porte's anti-Armenian policy and its indiscriminate application to women, children and the elderly alike suggests that this was a politically inspired attempt to achieve a kind of 'final solution' of the Armenian question in Anatolia. The statement made by von Hertling, the German Chancellor, to Cardinal Gasparri, the Secretary of State of the Vatican, about the 'deplorable' situation of Armenians in Anatolia, sheds considerable light on the authenticity of events which Turkish historians deny and contest to the present day. Hertling writes that:

The observations made in 1917 and the notes reported concerning the sad situation of Armenians living in Turkey in 1915, correspond exactly and completely to the news received by the Imperial German Government, obtained from official accounts of His Government's representatives and partly from other sources.

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238. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Asia 57, no. 81278, Hertling
The British supplement to the Entente's reply to President Wilson, of January 1917, had rightly stated that:

The Turkey of Union and Progress is at least as barbarous and is far more aggressive than the Turkey of Abdul Hamid. The Turkish government has been guilty of massacres in Armenia and Syria, 'more horrible than any recorded in the history' even of those unhappy countries.

The Turks claimed in justification that the Armenians had largely caused their defeat by actively assisting the Russians, but this did not hide the evidence that it was not a spontaneous outburst of primitive vengeance, but a planned campaign whose execution merely awaited an excuse and such a screen from world opinion as the war afforded. In a debate on Armenia in the House of Commons on 18 November 1918, Lord Robert Cecil referring to the 'incredible outrages' against the Armenians stated that:

... every one of the atrocities in Armenia had not been the result of casual ferocity of isolated Turkish brigands, or even of the misdeeds of local governments; they had been ordered from Constantinople in

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239. Very similar statements could be found also in; ABIIP, Fond Politarkhiv, File 3480, Historical Information, 1915; Historical Archives, Foreign Ministry Athens, File A/5, 21/8134, Aposdolopoulos to Foreign Ministry, 16 June 1915; The Vatican, Secret Archives, Private Papers Monsignor Dolci, 'Persecuzioni Armeni' June 1915.

The British Empire Delegation's masterly reply to the Turkish Delegates during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, retorted that the massacres of Christian Armenians were carried out on the 'orders of the Turkish government'.

It was the Pan-Turanian political creed that motivated the CUP leaders to erase a nation from the surface of the map to realise their objectives. Eliminating the Armenian population and leaving 'Armenia without Armenians', would also have averted European intervention in support of them. But more important, it would have removed the major racial barrier between the Ottoman Turks and the Turkic people of the Far East, the envisaged new realm of Pan-Turkish champions. Philip P. Graves of the British Intelligence Department of the War Office, writing personally to Lloyd George, referring to the Armenian massacres, blamed the 'pretentious' Pan-Turkism of the Turkish rulers and their 'narrowly violent' ideas.

Concerning the Russian government: its treatment towards the Turkish Armenians was aggressive. It had not relinquished Lobanov-Rostovsky's policy

241. FO371/3416/189330, FO to Vice-Admiral A. Calthorpe, 20 Nov. 1918.

242. House of Lords Record Office, Bonar Law Papers, Box 94/20, W.C.P. 1044, British Empire Delegation, Answer to the Turkish Delegates (Approved by the Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers), 23 June 1919.

243. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, Austria 472, no. 9409, Turkey 1915-1916, 'Persecution Against the Armenians', 13 July 1915; see also, Kavkavskoe Slovo, no, 207, 13 Sept. 1915, Article entitled 'Armenia without Armenians', p. 4.

244. House of Lords Record Office, Private Papers Lloyd George, D/20/2/18, Graves to Lloyd George, 15 Sept. 1915. See also The Near East, no. 273, vol. XI, 28 July 1914, 'It was a deliberate attempt, organised from Constantinople and executed with the help of German officers, to realise the "Pan-Turanian" idea'. p. 300, (reprinted from The Times).
of, 'Armenia without Armenians'. When the conquest of Turkish Armenia was secured, Lobanov's policy still informed the minds of Russian ruling circles. Thus, one can conclude that the Turkish and tsarist Russian governments alike had endeavoured to get rid of the Armenian population from the zone of Turkish Armenia, each with its own method.
The three main ideals successively animating the Turkish government of the Union and Progress Party since the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid -Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, and Pan-Turanism- failed consecutively when put into practice. Ottomanism, which was designed primarily to unite under the Constitution the various ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire irrespective of race or creed, found no ardent expression owing to the strong national spirit inherent in the non-Turkish elements. The only form of solidarity the Turkish state could depend on was the national Turkish one. Significantly, it was the Balkan wars which finally blighted the doctrine of Ottomanism and decidedly paved the way for a 'Pan-Turanian policy'.\(^1\) Yusuf Akcura, one of the champions of the pan-Turkish ideal, had criticised 'Ottomanism' as tending to diminish the privileges of the Turks and was contrary to Islam which recognised equal rights of all believers.\(^2\)

Pan-Islamism, which was aimed at uniting not only the Muslim peoples of the Ottoman empire, but all the Muslims of the world, under the banner of an Ottoman Caliph, had failed too. When it was put to the test in November 1914, by the Sultan Caliph's proclamation of a Jihad (holy war) against the Allied powers, the response in Egypt and India was to enlist in the ranks of his enemies. It was the master stroke of British propaganda which through the fomentation in 1916 of an Arab national revolt against Turkey discredited the call for a Jihad. It had also no success with Tatar, Persian and others in the Russian domains. The holy war

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fizzled out completely. Even before the Great War, the spirit of nationalism among the Muslims had proved stronger as a disrupting factor than the spirit of Islam as a unifying force. The Young Turks, realising the weakness of Pan-Islamism, felt it an imperative to find some alternative ideal to replace it. Islam, being essentially an Arabian religion, tended to destroy the spirit of nationality which the Young Turks had wished to introduce. Islam was therefore to be Turanianised. This was to result in the thriving Turanian movement, the spirit of which had already permeated the Union and Progress of the Young Turk party.

But even the ideal of Pan-Turanism, which by 1913 had become the dominant political creed of the Turkish government, failed to achieve its objective. This, despite the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1917, and amid the wake of the crumbling Russian army in 1918, which had stood as the greatest obstacle to the realisation of uniting the Turkic people of the east with Turkey. For although the Russian empire broke down it did not result in a permanent break-up of its Asiatic portions. Significantly, the British government exploited the tenets of Pan-Turanism in order to arouse prejudice against Turkey among pious Muslims and especially among the Arabic speaking subjects of the Ottoman empire, who were most exposed to the danger of Turkification. Under the aggressive Pan-Turanian policy of the Young Turk government, the Armenian population, too, both in eastern Turkey and in Russian south Caucasia, had been considered by the Young Turk government as a 'distorting element' in their policy of moulding the various Turkic tribes and races in the Russian domains into one nation under Turkish supreme rule. For, the massacres in 1915 and thereafter, of one and a half million Armenians was largely conditioned by the policy of the CUP in 'eliminating' the Armenian 'obstacle', thus fostering a means of restoring Turkey to power, and

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creating for her an empire greater than hitherto. Even the Russian and British governments were aware that the Armenians were the 'only possible barrier' between the Turks and their great Central Asian objective, and:

no efforts will be spared to remove the obstacle.

Undoubtedly, it was the Pan-Turanian policy of the Committee of Union and Progress which had seriously threatened the national existence of the Armenian race.

In the early days of the revolution of July 1908, Ottomanism had triumphed officially, but it took the CUP less than a year to recognise reluctantly that there were irreconcilable tendencies in the notion that composed the Ottoman empire. In view of this, the Pan-Turkish movement gained ground and began to grow rapidly. Pan-Turanianism became the underlying programme of the Young Turk party after the disastrous Ottoman defeats during the Balkan wars of 1912-13, which proved to be a strong stimulus to the nationalist movement. Djavid Pasha, the Turkish Finance Minister, immediately after Turkey's defeat during the First Balkan war, categorically stated that:

Turkey's boundaries do not end only in Macedonia and Albania. Our

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The Pan-Turanian open movement was secretly favoured and protected by the CUP. At the same time however, owing to the hostility of the clerical party in Turkey to which the Turanian programme was essentially inimical -a party too powerful at the time to defy- the Young Turks found it safer to conceal their design under the more acceptable cloak of Pan-Islamism. However, with the foundation of the 'Turk Ojaghe' (Turkish Hearth) and similar societies in 1912, this disguise was partially removed, but in deference to the clerical party at home, and to retain the sympathies of Muslims abroad, the Young Turks maintained a fine show of Islamism and never openly abandoned it. From a report on Pan-Islamism in 1915, it is revealed that the absolute predominance of the Turkish element was with the Young Turks an 'inviolable principle'; that by means of Pan-Islamic propaganda the CUP had put into practice one of their 'dearest' aspirations, which was that of Turkifying outright not only their own subjects but also the Muslim subjects of foreign powers, since, according to the opinion of the CUP, the propaganda of Pan-Islamism was not sufficiently decisive. The Young Turks used Pan-Turkism as a political tool cloaked in the guise of Pan-Islamism. Therefore,


simultaneously with Pan-Islamism the CUP stirred up the propaganda of the racist theories of Pan-Turkism leading it 'to the enlargement of peoples and races of Turco-Tatar origin'. It was well acknowledged by the CUP that Pan-Islamism 'best served' its purpose in India and in parts of Persia, while the Turanian ideology was considered more suitable for home consumption and for Central Asia.

To achieve the Pan-Turanian ideology, on 24 December 1908, the Turkish Assembly was founded at Constantinople with the object of studying the situation and the activities of all Turkish peoples. In 1911 the Turanian Society for the propagation of knowledge was created and in December of the same year the ideologists of Turkism or Turanism as it came to be called, inspired them to found the Turk Yurdu (Turkic Fatherland). Agaev writing in the Turk Yurdu periodical, considered that the seventy to eighty million Turanians, if united, could form a powerful empire, which he 'urged' them to do. While on 25 March 1912, with the approval of the Ottoman government, the Turkish Hearth was founded, and circles for the study of Turkish culture. Such clubs which fostered Turanian ideals

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10. FO395/139/177046, Pan-Turanian Movement, 'The CUP works this policy with Pan-Islamism, so as to have two strings to its bow. If Ottomanism fails to win hegemony over all Muslims -including the Arabs- they have still open to them the policy of Pan-Turanism of Turkey irredenta'. Oct. 1917; L/P & S/11/106, P3640, Department of Information of Intelligence Bureau, 7 Sept. 1917.


were subsidised and encouraged by the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior.\textsuperscript{14} By 1915 sixteen branches in different Turkish towns of the Ottoman empire were developing apace. The activities of the 'Turkish Hearth' which assumed the shape of cultural enlightenment, led to the dissemination of the idea of Pan-Turkish and later to the justification of the expansionist character in the foreign policy of the Young Turk government.\textsuperscript{15} It is interesting to note that on each cover of every issue of the Turkish Hearth journal appeared the motto 'work for the Turks'. The main reason for this was that the publishers and the editor of the journal saw it as their aim to prove that they belonged to a 'single nation' of Turkish speaking people, stretching from China to the Danube. It was strongly believed that the Central Asian Turkic people 'ought' to be united in a 'great Turkish state' under the leadership of Turkey.\textsuperscript{16} Simultaneously, the 'Turkish Hearth' and its press organs for the propaganda of Pan-Turkism appeared in the official government newspapers of the CUP, such as the 'Ikdam', 'Tanin', 'Sebil', 'Ul-Reshad' and others.

During and after the Russian revolution of 1905, Pan-Turkism also gained considerable influence among the Turkic peoples of the Russian empire. Events made it evidently clear that the Tatars were working stubbornly for unification and leadership not only of the Turkic peoples but of all the Muslims of Russia. This attitude was strongly felt among the Crimean Tatars, who were among the 'strongest exponents' of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism.\textsuperscript{17} The resolution of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} WO 106/1420, C/EAST/111, 23 Dec. 1917.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Yu.V. Marunov, Pantyurkism, Panislamism Mladaturok 1908-1918, Kratkiye Soobshcheniya Instituta Narodov Azii, vol. XLV, (Moscow, 1961, p. 41.
\item \textsuperscript{16} A.S. Tveritinova, Mladaturki i Pantyurkism, (The Young Turks and Pan-Turkism), Kratkie Soobshcheniya Instituta Vostokoznaniya, vol. 20, (Moscow, 1956), p. 68.
\item \textsuperscript{17} S. Dimenstein (ed.), Revolyutsiya i Natsionalnii Vopros, Dokumenti i Materiali po Istorii Natsionalnogo Voprosa v Rossii i SSSR v XX Veke, [Revolution and the Nationality Question, Documents and Materials About the
Third All-Muslim Congress to introduce the Ottoman Turkish language in Russian Muslim schools was an indication that Tatar nationalists wanted to subjugate all Russian Turks to the influence of Turkey. To deprive and forestall the growth of this 'deadly' movement, the Russian government in its Fourth Duma election reduced the number of Muslim deputies to seven. It was hoped that this measure would inflict a serious blow on the prestige and influence of the growing Muslim and Turkic political activities. Measures were also being taken to combat the Pan-Islamist tendencies blossoming among the Russian Muslims. The Special Conference composed of representatives of the Orthodox Church, Public Enlightenment and Ministry of Internal Affairs, discussing the need for a common struggle against Pan-Islamism, decided on:

(a) Strengthening the status of the Orthodox Church.
(b) Regulating educational work among the nationalities.
(c) Regulating state laws concerning the condition of Muslims and intensifying government control on demonstrations.18

But the reduction in the size, and consequently in the strength of the Muslim faction in the Duma, and the Russian government's severe limitation of political propaganda, congresses and demonstrations had its repercussions. Extremist nationalist Pan-Turkists, such as Yusuf Akchura emigrated to Turkey and resumed their activities in cooperation with the Young Turk leadership who had assumed power. The Young Turks even elected to their Central Committee three well known Russian Turkic nationalist leaders: Ismail Gasprinsky (Crimean), Ali Bey

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Hussein Zadeh (Azerbaijani), and Yusuf Akchura (Tatar). Such appointments meant the recognition by the Young Turks of the ideological and racial unity of all Turkic people.

After 1907, the Russian government abandoned its policy of suppressing the Turkic movement and introduced a policy of general appeasement towards its Muslim subjects. This change of policy is explained by the downfall of Abdul Hamid, who during his reign had shown no favouritism in the matter of uniting the Turkic people of Russia to the Ottoman empire, and who had been suspicious of all political emigres, fearing their revolutionary spirit. However, some uneasiness was expressed by Vorontsov Dashkov, the Viceroy of the Caucasus as to Abdul Hamid's ambitions in the Caucasus. Dashkov, in a letter to the Tsar, Nicholas II, reported that Turkey continued to mobilise troops on the Russo-Turkish front, despite the relatively improved relations between the two countries. The Viceroy, also argued that, Turkey being 'informed' about Russian military conditions in the Caucasus, 'could risk' attacking in the hope of restoring her provinces of Batum, Kars and Ardahan, lost in 1878. He added that:

She (Turkey) may also count on a general uprising in the name of Pan-Islamism in order to annex Transcaucasia to the Ottoman empire.\(^\text{20}\)

But significantly, with the change of regime in Turkey, the Young Turks showed favourable inclinations towards the idea of common Turkic unity directed against Russia, which they ardently propagated. In such an ambiguous situation the Russian government not only had to counter the internal threat, but in addition,

\(^{19}\) S.A. Zenkovsky, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia, p. 107.

\(^{20}\) Krasnii Arkhiv, vol 26, (1928), V. Dashkov to Nicholas II, 22 (9) March 1908, p. 110.
it had to cope with the newly created external threat emerging from the chauvinist Young Turk government. Therefore, the policy of appeasement of Russian Muslims became a vital internal issue, a measure adopted primarily to combat the tendencies of Russian Muslims to unite around the Turkish core. Thus, in the six years before the beginning of the First World War, Constantinople became a rallying point for Pan-Turkism and a centre for consolidating the forces of Turkic emigration from Russia, posing a serious threat to Russian internal stability. The Russian formula of appeasement, and the immunisation of Russian culture among the Muslims, succeeded in extinguishing the vociferous clamours. However, concern for Muslim instability still ran high in the tsarist Ministry of the Interior. The police department memorandum of August 1908, reporting on the condition of Daghestan showed signs of uneasiness. Although it was acknowledged that the region was relatively calm and restrained, it was feared that in case of war with Turkey, Daghestan would respond favourably to the Turkish call. A similar situation prevailed also in Azerbaijan, where the Tatar faction, well known for its Pan-Islamic, and at the time Pan-Tatarist, activities, despite its conciliatory stand towards the Russian government, was through various organisations in the process of systematically infiltrating national and religious entities.  

But, in the period of 1910-14, Russian Muslims in general showed signs of favourable inclination towards Russia. For instance, the head of the Tatar Caucus in the Duma, Sadri Maksudov, in his speeches in the Duma in 1912, claimed that Tatars, like all the other Muslims of the empire, supported the unity of the Russian empire and denied the existence of secessionist tendencies among them. This change of attitude in Tatar society did not necessarily mean a rejection of the Turkic national idea or the capitulation of the Tatar national

\[ \text{\footnotesize 21. Ibid., vol. 35, (1929), Police Department Memorandum, Prepared by the Director of Police, 15 (28) Aug. 1908.} \]

\[ \text{\footnotesize 22. Zenkovsky, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia, p. 118.} \]
movement. For, during the Balkan wars, Tatars and Russian Muslims in general showed their sympathy towards Turkey by subscribing to the Red Crescent and sending medical missions. Moreover, the Russian Muslim press protested against the annexation of Ottoman territory by the Balkan states. While after the Bolshevik coup d'état of November 1917, Maksudov, formerly supporting the Russian union, openly began working for a union with the Ottoman empire.

The conciliatory stand of Russian Muslims towards the Imperial government, was simply the result of a more practical approach to the solution of Muslim national problems, at least for the time being; since differences of sect, language, history, circumstances and aspirations between the Tatars, Kazaks, Uzbeks, Turkmens and Azerbaijani were far too great to permit the effective adoption of a uniform ideology or the predominance of a single organisation; nor were they able to achieve exclusive control or undisputed leadership.

It was in the teachings of Ziya Gokalp, the great theorist of Pan-Turkism or Pan-Turanism, who had exercised a profound influence on political circles, especially on CUP policy. In 1910 Ziya Gokalp was elected member to the Central Committee of Union and Progress, and in the later years became an influential party man and national leader. While the new leaders, particularly Talaat Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, regarded him as a 'close friend', and during the Great War he had enjoyed not only 'great influence' but the military leaders had let him

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23. FO395/240/19895, Intelligence Bureau, Depart. of Information, 10 Jan. 1918.


25. The political term is used on the one hand as synonymous with the Pan-Turkish movement or Turkism.

become almost an 'intellectual dictator'. His works in the field of philosophy, history, literature and language were steeped with the idea of Pan-Turkism, serving as a decisive influence in the formation of nationalistic sentiments among the Young Turks. In a series of poetical works, Ziya Gokalp succeeded in arousing the memories dormant in the blood of the Turks and sang the Turkish ideal as personified in the mysterious land of Turan. The word 'Turan' was used to denote the supreme ideal of Turkish nationalism, which was associated with Attila, even though, the Turkish origins of the latter have not by any means been proved. Ziya Gokalp had stated that:

The fatherland of the Turks is neither Turkey nor Turkestan. It is a great land, a land eternal. It is called Turan.

The writings of Gokalp were summed up in the formula 'Turkicise yourself', 'Islamise yourself' and 'Modernise yourself'. The systematic exposition of the theories of this influential writer are found in his book 'The Foundations of Turkism', in which he explains that the word 'Turan' is a name comprising the Turkic tribes exclusively. That Turan serves as a common term for all the enumerated Turkic peoples, and form an ethnical union. Writing in the 'Turkish Hearth' journal about the theory of Pan-Turkism; Ziya Gokalp comes to the

27. A. Emin, Turkey in the World War, (New Heaven, 1930), pp. 195-6; see also N. Berkes, Zia Gokalp: His Contribution to Turkish Nationalism, Middle East Journal, vol. 8, no. 4, (Autumn, 1954), 'Zia had an exceptional charismatic power over the youth of Turkey and even over the politicians of the party of Union and Progress', p. 376.


conclusion that Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism at the same level are needed and are beneficial to the realisation of the political plans of Turkey. Neatly summing up, he stated that:

We are pluralist in our ideology: Our national ideology is Turkism, our international ideology -Islamism; at the same time we are the followers of the idea of Ottomanism, the idea of cooperation of the Ottoman people.  

The orders for deportations and massacres of Armenians in 1915, by the Turkish government, were actually steps taken in fulfilling the programme of Turkicisation of Turkey, thus clearing the path for the union of all Turkic people. A Turkish gendarme in July 1915, had told a Danish Red Cross nurse that:

First we kill the Armenians, then the Greeks, then the Kurds,

and so far as the Pan-Turanian idea was a prime motive for the treatment of the Armenians by the CUP, the gendarme was stating the logical consequences of his superiors' policy. To this effect, the British Foreign Office had correctly acknowledged the fact that:

The Armenian question is the real answer to Pan-Turanism ... Armenia mars their pattern so long as the name survives.

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32. FO371/3060/220908, see minutes, 24 Nov. 1917.
And a report prepared by the British Cabinet asserted that the massacres and deportation of the Armenian population from the eastern vilayets was essential to the execution of Pan-Turanian aims. Once this had been achieved Anatolia would have become a Turkish preserve and stronghold. A spacious, compact and self-contained territory of some 375,000 sq. miles inhabited only by Muslims. That:

It is hardly possible, indeed, to escape the conviction that the massacre and deportation of Armenians by the Government of Pan-Turks was an integral part of their political and military policy of expansion eastward.\(^{33}\)

Djelal Nuri, one of the fervent spokesmen of Pan-Turanism, considered that all Turkish speaking people should 'blindly' submit to the will of the Ottoman Turks. This meant the placing of their power in the Turkish ruling class and becoming 'instruments' in order to realise their aggressive plans. For this purpose, the Pan-Turkists had formulated two 'fantastic' plans for the realisation of Turkish 'world supremacy'. The first was formulated in a 'minimum programme' which meant the creation of 'small or new Turan' stretching from the borders of Baikal to Constantinople, and from Mongolia to Kazan. While the 'maximum programme' included the creation of a 'Great Turan', stretching from the waters of Japan until the mountains of Scandinavia, and from the Pacific ocean to the Tibet plateau.\(^ {34} \)

The Pan-Turanian movement acquired a wider extension and a more political complexion from the disastrous Balkan War of 1912-13, and the subsequent grave condition of the empire. It was the heterogeneous condition of Turkey's population that made the CUP abandon the tradition of being a dominant race in Europe. Instead it resolved to develop its national possibilities in Anatolia and

\(^{33}\) CAB 1/30, Influence of Pan-Turkish Political Aims on Turkish Military Policy, 1914-1918, pp. 23-5.

\(^{34}\) A.S. Tveritinova, Mladaturki i Pantyurkism 1908-1918, p. 68.
conceived the ambition of compensating for lost alien subjects in Europe by attracting to themselves the scattered branches of the Turkish race outside the Ottoman empire. By 1913, the Pan-Turanian movement was in full development. Its objects had by this time become fully well defined. It consisted in creating a National Turkish Soul independent of Islam, developing the military spirit among the Turks, establishing good commercial and other relations with the Muslims of Northern Persia, Russia, Asia and southern Russia, and in the de-Arabisation and de-Persianisation of the language. In order to meet these objectives, the CUP employed methods of propaganda, such as creating Neo-Turanian schools aimed at influencing the younger generation, the improvement in the teaching of Turkish and Turanian history in the higher schools and the translation of numerous scientific and historical works into simplified Turkish and the publication of numerous propaganda works.

The propaganda of Pan-Turanism within the boundary of the Ottoman empire and simultaneously in the foreign field had to be woven closely with the propaganda of Pan-Islamism. This fact had not been repudiated by the Young Turks. They had announced that both policies were two political programmes used to strengthen the Ottoman empire abroad through emissaries. Moreover, it was also acknowledged that their policy was primarily directed against Russia, which was considered a potential enemy of Turkey, since in the vast domains of the Russian empire lived Turkish people who believed in Islam. Shulga, the Russian dragoman of the Political Agency at Bukhara, in early 1909, wired that in Bukhara the Turkish press was deploying the 'exclusive' and 'unrelenting' propaganda of union among the Muslims under the leadership of Turkey. While the Russian

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35. L/P & S/11/106, P3640, 7 Nov. 1917.

General Consul at Adrianopole on 13 December 1910, stated that:

At the present time ... in the region of Turkestan Pan-Islamic propaganda is being unfolded, organised by the Young Turk Committee.\(^37\)

There was certainly no question about these facts, for the CUP had 'urged' upon the strong Pan-Islamic elements among the Young Turks to acquire the sympathies of the Muslims of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, who either were, or could be, 'converted' into Turks.\(^38\) The secret decisions of the annual Congress of the Turkish Central Committee of Union and Progress at Salonica in September and October 1911, is of utmost significance. Resolution no. 12, called for the arming of the Muslim population. Resolution no. 25, asserted that measures should be taken to inform branches of the CUP in all countries inhabited by Muslims and 'especially' in Russia and Persia. It also maintained that the Muslims in Russia 'ought to be persuaded' to make 'revolutionary propaganda' among Russian soldiers. Furthermore, a decision was passed for propaganda work in favour of the CUP among the Persians in Turkey in order to try to bring about an understanding between Turkey and Persia, with the object of effecting in the near future a political and economical union between the two countries.\(^39\)

Captain Molyneux-Seel, the British Vice-Consul at Van, reported that three


\(^{38}\) FO395/16/197967, The Neo-Turanian Movement in Turkey, memorandum Drawn by the Arab Bureau, Cairo, May 1916; also in FO371/2778/107967, May 1916.

\(^{39}\) FO371/1263/51124, Secret Decisions of the Annual Congress of the Central Committee of Union and Progress, Information supplied to H.C. Woods (on mission to the Balkans) by the Bulgarian Consul-General in Salonica in December 1911, 21 Dec. 1911.
'inspectors'; Kara Bey, Hilmi Bey and Abdul Kader, with the instructions of the CUP had arrived at Van towards the of 1910. All three were emissaries of a secret organisation headed by Talaat Pasha the Minister of the Interior. From his conversation with Kara Bey, the British Vice-Consul learned that the three men were acting in the interests of Pan-Islamism, although details of their activities related just as much to Pan-Turkism as well. Kara Bey had spoken 'at length' of the Ottoman empire's need for a strong army and strong Pan-Islamic bonds. Firearms and ammunition, acquired in Germany were being forwarded to Trebizond and thence via Erzerum and Bayazid to Tabriz, where they were divided up and despatched by three separate routes, two of which led to Turkestan and the third to Afghanistan and the Indian frontier. At the same time emissaries were despatched to Chinese Turkestan in order to spread Pan-Turk and Pan-Islamic propaganda there. Various Kurdish tribes had been told to 'prepare for war' with Russia. Similar information was in the possession of Benckendorff, the Russia ambassador in London. He called the attention of the British Foreign Office to the fact that a high ranking Turkish official was in Afghanistan with the object of endeavouring to induce the Amir to conclude a treaty alliance with Turkey. The ambassador also added that the Young Turk agents were 'busy in Central Asia' making propaganda on behalf of a Pan-Islamic League. Even the Russian Consulate at Erzerum had substantial evidence that the CUP had launched strong propaganda in the Caucasus for a 'holy war' against the infidels. Three officers, members of the Young Turk Committee, were engaged in this task. It was also revealed by the same source that in April 1912, ten to twelve disguised Young Turk officers were despatched to the Caucasus for the preparation of an

40. FO371/1245/6169, Molyneux-Seel to Marling, Van, 9 Jan. 1911; ibid., no. 1245/6158, Molyneux-Seel to Marling, Van, 23 Jan. 1911.

41. FO371/1262/40898, E. Grey to O'Beirne, 24 Oct. 1911. See also, FO371/2114/46, min. 'The Russians are alive to the danger of the Young Turks organising a Pan-Islamic movement', 2 Jan. 1911.
uprising among Muslims in the event of war between Turkey and Russia. While another group, composed of Pan-Islamist activists of the CUP had been sent to the Russian district of Batum for the same purpose.\textsuperscript{42}

The call for the return of the Turks to the 'bright past' had also been voiced by the governing body of the CUP, notably by Djemal Pasha, the Minister of Marine and by the War Minister, Enver Pasha, the latter addressing a number of speeches in the Turkish parliament in July 1914. In fact, orientation towards Muslim and Turkic kindred groups was reaffirmed as official policy at the September-October 1913 annual Congress of the CUP.\textsuperscript{43} All three Turkish policy makers, Enver, Talaat and Djemal, under these circumstances had perceived the advantages of Pan-Turkism. Notably Enver Pasha had the most definite ideas in favour of Pan-Turkism and its decisive future role as an expansionist policy.\textsuperscript{44} Even before the war in Libya, Enver had inducted Muslim activists from among the Turkic groups in the Russian empire into the Young Turk circles. Since that time, he had envisaged a union of all Turkic peoples from Adrianopole to the Chinese oases. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, Enver had set up a 'special organisation' whose agents, all volunteer officers, carried out Pan-Turk and Pan-Islamic propaganda beyond the Ottoman frontiers chiefly among Turkic groups. While evaluating the developments of the Young Turks' revanche campaigns of 1912-14 and the preparation of the Turkish State in the impending war, Giers, the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, informed his government that the Turks hoped 'very much' to seize Batum.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{42} ГВИА СССР, Фонд 2000, Л. 1, Дело 991, Русский консульский генерал-губернатор, 20 (3) Май 1912.

\textsuperscript{43} ФО371/1846/48679, Марлинг к Грей, 20 Октябрь 1913.

\textsuperscript{44} А. Ферез, The Young Turks, (Oxford, 1969), pp. 154-5.

\textsuperscript{45} ГВИА СССР, Фонд 2000, Л. 1, Дело 3825, Гьер к Сазонову, 2 (15) Июля 1914.
The Young Turks did not conceal the fact that Germany supported their Pan-Turanian plans. Hilmi Bey in one of his speeches to the Turkish government affirmed Germany's support.

Germany as an ally of Turkey, works for the realisation of the ideas of Pan-Turkism and the creation of the Turkish state extending from the North sea to the Indian Ocean.\footnote{H. Tsovikian, Mladaturetskaya Revolutsiya i Natsionalnii Vopros, (The Young Turk Revolution and the Nationality Question), (Leningrad, 1937), p.11.}

This policy had a decisive effect upon Turkish policy. In early 1915, the Turkish government sent a delegation to Berlin composed of Pan-Turkish activists. The delegation proposed that the German government declare the Volga region and the shores of the Caspian Sea neutral. It also proposed the union of Bukhara and Khiva to Turkestan, declaring that Central Asia and the Steppes of Kazakhstan should be given to Turkey. However, they did not ignore the fact that these 'splendid' achievements could only be attained with the 'full support' of Germany.\footnote{W.E.D. Allen & P. Muratoff, Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921 (Cambridge, 1953), p. 236; W.S. Churchill, The World Crisis 1911-1918, vol. 1, p. 436.} Since the CUP knew only too well that their goal could not be achieved with the resources at their disposal alone. To this effect British Intelligence had proof that the German government had for some time past in Turkey been encouraging the formation of Turanian clubs and 'heavily subsidising' them with German money. These clubs were expressly inculculating the belief that every effort should be made by Muslims to bring about a Muslim empire stretching from the Mediterranean to China. This was also being taught in schools and universities, and special converts of propagandists were being sent to Russian Muslim areas to disseminate Pan-Turkic ideas. It was also believed that the...
movement was apparently spreading and that the Deutsche Bank was 'spending millions' in this work, to make the Turks and Russian Muslims believe that a homogeneous Muslim empire would eventually lead to Afghanistan and India through Central Asia under the protection of Germany. German involvement in such a scheme was certainly a desirable one, since Pan-Turanism was anti-Russian and Pan-Islamism anti-British in character, and it also furthered German economic and strategic ends in Asia.

In a secret meeting at the German Foreign Ministry, where General von der Goltz and high ranking military personalities were also present, Paul Rohrbach, the president of the German Geographical Society, stated that a Turco-Tatar state would create a 'granite fortress' against Russia. Paul Rohrbach also stated that Germany should 'not allow' reforms to be passed in the Armenian districts of eastern Turkey. Germany should take such steps to make the Armenians leave 'massively' from their homeland. This measure would have facilitated in:

Repopulating the region not by Kurds but with Turks, so that in a short period of time the whole of Asia Minor and Armenia to the Caspian Sea be populated by Turco-Tatar races composed of Ottoman Turks, Azerbaijanis and Trans-Caucasian Tatars.

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The adoption of this kind of policy was 'very warmly' welcomed by the German government. The German Foreign Ministry and the War Office believed that the accomplishment of such a 'fascinating' scheme would help to solve Germany's internal political and economic problems. German encouragement was undoubtedly supportive, since German gains especially in the economic field were considered to be of an immense significance. The natural resources in the areas embraced by the Turkish speaking peoples were as great and fully as varied as the United States and Canada combined. The Transcaucasian route from Batum to Baku also had attractions for the German General Staff. It led to Persia to the Caspian sea, to Transcaспia, to Central Asia, which afforded great opportunities for encouraging and aiding movements against Britain. These points were well surveyed and appreciated by the German government, in which they saw a profitable field. Therefore, the founding of a purely Turkish empire, with all its available resources was considered to be in the future a 'formidable weapon' in German hands.

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51. State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Zapiski i Dokumenti, Politarkhiv, Fond 3470, Speech by Paul Rohrbach, 'German Interests in Turkey', Russian Secret Information on Turkey, Jan. 1914. About Paul Rohrbach see, P. Kennedy, The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914, (London, 1982), 'Paul Rohrbach was a 'reformist' Liberal who with Max Weber and Naumann wanted state interventionist policies and 'modernisation' in order to equip Germany for her twentieth-century role as a great power'. pp. 337-8.


as a result. On the political level, pan-Turkists had placed their hope not only in the regenerative power of their national myth, but also in the military power of Turkey and Germany. Akchura declared that a renewed alliance between Turkey and Germany was of the 'greatest importance' for the successful development of the Pan-Turanian ideal. Baron von Wangenheim, the German ambassador at Constantinople, in a confidential letter to the Grand Vizier of 6 August 1914, referring to the secret alliance between the two countries signed four days earlier wrote that:

Germany takes upon itself to strive for a rectification of Turkey's eastern frontier, which would enable Turkey to have direct contact with the Muslim elements in Russia.

Even the Caucasian paper, Kavkavskoe Slovo, had allegedly asserted that General von der Goltz had told Talaat Pasha and his entourage that in the event of German victory, Turkey would receive Russian Central Asia, Egypt and the entire north Africa, thus creating for her a 'vast' Muslim entity. The German government was evidently exploiting Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism, both in order to weaken Russia and to secure some hold over Central Asia's immense economic wealth. Halide Edib, had rightly suspected that Germany had signed the secret

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55. S.A. Zenkovsky, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia, pp. 110-1.


alliance with the Ottoman empire not so much because it counted on Turkey's military capabilities but because of the probable effects of hampering the war effort of the Allied powers. The British Committee of Imperial Defence had recognised that the 'great value' of Turkey to Germany was to mobilise in the Central area of conflict considerable forces of Russian and British troops. At the same time Turkey was to arouse a certain amount of friction in the Muslim world and provide Germany with raw material which was unobtainable for Germany from elsewhere.  

It was after the outbreak of the First World War that Pan-Turanian military sentiments escalated to unprecedented heights. Enver Pasha, the leading figure of Pan-Turanism who had plunged the tottering Ottoman empire into war, rejoiced in the possibility of in realising with the help of German military power the Pan-Turanian dream. An Eastern Report of the British Foreign Office maintained that the 'object' of the CUP had hitherto been to 'ensure' for the Ottoman government:

I A powerful military position in the world.

II Full opportunity to crush and massacre small subject races.

III Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turanian expansion in Central Asia, India and Africa.

IV Facilities for promoting dissensions among the Powers.

59. CAB 24/1, Committee of Imperial Defence, Feb. 1915.

60. H. Edib, Conflict of East and West in Turkey, (Delhi, 1935), p. 84.

61. CAB 24/144, Eastern Report, no. XXVIII, 'Turkey, (CUP Intrigues)', 9 Aug. 1917; also in, L/P & S/10/587, P3253, 9 Aug. 1917. See also, L/P & S/11/106, P3640, Department of Information, Intelligence Bureau, 'Memo. on the Pan-Turanian
On the day of decision to go to war the Turkish government’s proclamation, which forms a convincing and concrete definition of the Pan-Turkish ideal, asserted that:

Our participation in the World War represents the vindication of our national ideal. The ideal of our nation ... leads us towards the destruction of our Muscovite enemy in order to obtain thereby a natural frontier to our Empire, which would include and unite all branches of our race. 62

While Enver’s speech on the question of war, on 5 October 1915, that:

Every simple soldier knows that he is fighting not merely for 30,000,000 Turks, but also for the lives of 300,000,000 Mohammedans, 63

is a clear indication of the specific war aim of the CUP, particularly of Enver, who demanded the annexation of all the inhabited territories by Turanian tribes, such as large parts of Persia, the Caucasus, the Crimea and areas of the lower Volga

Movement’, 7 Sept. 1917.


63. WO 106/1415, Turkish Government Statements, Obtained from ‘Deutscher Geschichtskalender’ 1915. See also, L/P & S/11/101, P3515, A Speech by Mustafa Nedin Bey, Turkish MP and President of the Turkish National Defence Society, delivered to Muslim prisoners of war in Germany, May 1916, ‘Remember always that you are sons of the Turkish people, ... a people occupying a territory that extends from the Balkans to Mongolia, ... a day will come where it is to be hoped that we shall be united, welded together into a single people’.
as well as Turkestan. In addition, Pan-Islamism postulated the conquest of Egypt and North Africa. However, in order to form this new Turanian state, it was essential for the Young Turk government to 'eliminate the foreign elements as much as possible'; as such was the case of Armenians. The Young Turk government had also acknowledged that the Pan-Turkish aspiration could not come to its full development and realisation until the 'Moscovite monster' was 'crushed'. Certainly Russia hindered the 'natural expansion' of Turkey.

A more detailed and elaborate account of the Pan-Turanian ambitions of the CUP was provided by Ernst Paraquin, a German Colonel, and head of Halil Pasha's General Staff. Colonel Ernst Paraquin in September 1918, was attached to the Turkish army under the command of Nuri Pasha, the latter fighting against the British-Armenian forces, commanded by Major-General Dunsterville at Baku. Colonel Paraquin having had personal relations with nearly all the Turkish commanders, spoke with authority on the Pan-Turanian scheme. Halil Pasha, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, had explained to him about the Turkish government's plan for a Pan-Turanian empire. With a 'blue pencil', Halil Pasha traced the boundaries of Turanian land which at that time had only existed in the songs of Young Turk poets, but which was to become a 'blood stained' reality under the 'deliberate' guidance of the CUP in which rested every de facto power in Turkey. According to Halil Pasha, in the first place, it was 'necessary to unite all Turkish speaking peoples'. Therefore, the conquest of Turkestan, the 'cradle' of the Turkish empire was the first thing necessary. Next, connections had to be formed as far as the Siberian Yakuts, whom Halil Pasha regarded on account of the kinship in language, as the extreme outposts of Turkdom in the East. The

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65. FO Handbook, Ali Tekin, The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal, p. 27, The text is a translation from the German, 'Türkismus und Pantürkismus', (Weimar, 1915).
Tatars in the Caucasus akin to the Turks by race were next to be included in this union. The national minorities in the Caucasus of whom those most important to consider were the Armenians and the Georgians, 'must submit', either 'voluntarily' or under 'compulsion. Halil Pasha did not conceal the fact that:

The Armenian Question had certainly, through the war, come nearer to solution, for the annihilation of the Armenian race had been furthered by all the Turkish departments concerned, with ruthless decision.\(^66\)

Halil Pasha, also considered that this great nationally exclusive Turkish empire, 'must' as a Muslim supreme power, have a great attraction for Afghanistan and Persia. In Afghanistan, the country was 'bound' to Turkey by the common Sunnite creed, the Turks reckoned on strong Turkish sympathies. While the incorporation into Turkey of Azerbaijan, the richest Persian province inhabited by Tatars, was a requirement of which the fulfilment was hoped for in the near future. The rest of Persia Halil Pasha estimated as of very little value, and defended the Pan-Turk position of the CUP, explaining that Enver Pasha played in a 'masterly' way the role of Pan-Islamism. Colonel Paraquin stated that these dreams of empire which Halil Pasha unfolded before him:

were not merely products of a lively oriental imagination; their realisation was systematically pursued.\(^67\)


\(^{67}\) Ibid. Politics in the East, 24 Jan. 1922.
Map 5: Boundaries Denoting the Pan-Turanian Ideal
Source: FO Handbook, The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal, (no. 1297)
The Turkish government was convinced that Germany would win the war, that Russia would be severely mauled and a revolution would follow. As a result Turkey would secure the Caucasus and ward off the Russian danger for several generations. The first military move towards the realisation of this most audacious aspiration was directed by Enver Pasha himself. The Turkish Fourth Army, the Commandership of which was entrusted to Djemal Pasha, was to carry out a Pan-Islamic campaign in the Arab provinces. While Enver reinforced troops in the Caucasus frontier and took over command of the Third Caucasian Army. On 6 December 1914, Enver, appearing at the offices of the German military mission in the War Ministry, informed Liman von Sanders that he had a 'fantastic plan'. He contemplated marching through Afghanistan to India. However, the initial offensive of the Pan-Turanian military operation of Enver Pasha ended in a lamentable defeat at the battle of Sarykamish on 3 January 1915. On his return to Constantinople, Enver made all efforts to conceal the catastrophe. His official attitude was that nothing important had happened on the Caucasus frontier and that the Pan-Turanian campaign had been only temporarily deferred. Enver's abandonment of his 'fantastic plan' had made him realise that the Russian grip over its subjects was strong and militarily unchallenged. But the victory of the Russians had a decisive impact on the condition of the eastern vilayets of Turkey, for it sealed the fate of the Armenians living in Asiatic Turkey. The Turkish government viewed Russian victory as entirely due to the Armenian soldiers. This gave a unique opportunity to the Pan-Turanist agitators,

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manipulated by the CUP in exterminating the Armenians.\[72\] It was after the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of 1917, that new opportunities were created for Pan-Turanian action in the Turco-Muslim domains of the Russian empire. Between 1915-17, Turkish military activities in the Caucasus had been successfully repulsed or restrained, allowing for the conquest of Turkish Armenia by the Russian armies and Armenian contingents.

The outbreak of the war did not disrupt the relatively conciliatory relationship between Russia and her Turkic peoples, despite the extensive propaganda of Turkish emissaries for the vindication of Pan-Turanian and Pan-Islamic ideals. The Russian Muslims overwhelmingly remained loyal to the state during the initial stages of the war. Naturally, the Russian and British governments had not remained inactive amid the fervent Pan-Islamic propaganda of Turkey. To counteract the call of the Sultan-Caliph of 2 November 1914, who urged all Muslims, whether under British or Russian yoke, to revolt and join hands with the Ottoman empire, Russia and Britain gave wide publicity to the Manifesto issued by Agha Khan, the spiritual Head of the Khoja Community of Muslims and at the same time president of the All-Indian Muslim League. Agha Khan had stipulated that no Islamic interest was threatened in the war and that the Islamic religion was not 'in peril':

Now that Turkey has so disastrously shown herself a tool in German hands, she has not only ruined herself but has lost her position as a trustee of Islam.

Agha Khan called on all Muslims to remain 'loyal', 'faithful' and 'obedient' to

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Britain and Russia.  

The united stand of Russian Muslims against German and Austrian imperialism proved to be strong. Their attitude towards Turkey however, was more sensitive, since the Ottoman empire had long been a source of inspiration for Russian Tatars. But despite the kindred feeling, the general mood among Russian Muslims was against Turkey's entry into the war. And when Russo-Turkish hostilities did begin, Muslims felt that they were under no obligation to help either their 'brother Turks' or the 'Sultan Caliph'. However, there were some reported cases of disturbances among Muslim subjects during 1914-16. For instance, Tatars in the Crimea led an intense agitation for the unification of all Crimean Muslims and for helping Turkey. In Kazan, there were instances of defeatist agitation, and the Tatar socialist revolutionaries urged Tatars 'to wake up' while it was not too late. However, these events did not seriously disturb the government. They did not affect the overall peaceable situation reigning in the Muslim provinces of Russia, with the exception of Central Asia. The CUP through, its Pan-Turkist agents, failed to stir up Russian Tatars against the government, but the negligence displayed by the Russian authorities during the war in its dealings with its Turkic peoples was directly responsible for a sharp conflict between some groups of Russia's Muslim population and the administration. The conflict turned out to be the bloodiest and most incongruous event in the history of Russo-Turkic relations.

The heavy losses which the Russian forces in 1914-16 had suffered, had compelled the Russian military command to call for military and labour reserves. To meet the much needed labour contingents, it suggested the mobilisation of the Muslim population of Transcaucasia, Kazakh lands and Central Asia, an act

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73 L/P & S/11/84, P4277, Manifesto of Agha Khan, 2 Nov. 1914; ibid., Agha Khan to Sir Arthur, 2 Nov. 1914; ibid., Buchanan to Grey, 10 Dec. 1914.
contrary to the law of 1886 which confirmed that Muslims were exempt from military service. Thus, the Imperial decree of 25 June 1916, by which all Muslim populations of the Russian empire previously exempt from military service were called up for non-combatant service behind the front, was the signal for a Muslim insurrection. The decree led to a racial war between Muslims and the local colonists and Cossacks supported by Russian regular troops. The first disturbances began in the Uzbek parts of Central Asia on 4 July, and spread to other cities which lasted until 21 July, by which time the rebellion had been put down. It followed in Kirghiz lands on 6 August, which was quelled in September. A revolt of a local nature flared up also in Kazakh lands. The decree also produced disturbances among the agricultural population of Turkestan, for when it was promulgated the cotton season was at its height, and mobilisation threatened the peasants with ruin. The drafting of the men gave the Russian officials occasions for bribe-taking and blackmail, and these various causes of discontent produced an outbreak in the region of Samarkand which was punished by the massacre of the inhabitants and the burning of the town of Jizak. Massacres also took place at Andijan and Tashkent. The isolated uprising in Central Asia from June to September, which stood no chance of success, was quickly and easily suppressed by the Russian troops. However, its repercussions were seen soon after the March Revolution of 1917.

As the war dragged on, the British Foreign Office, examining the Turanian aspirations of the Young Turk government, resolved that the 'right solution' of the war in the Near and Middle East, was the 'thorough' defeat of Turkey, who 'ought' to have emerged militarily crippled and with her prestige lost. It was thought that


75. FO371/3304/121276, Memorandum on Political Developments in Russian Central Asia Since the Revolution, P.I.D. Foreign Office, 27 June 1918.
with the fall of Turkey, the Pan-Turanian, Pan-Islamist, Nationalist and other 'violent' Muslim elements would subside with 'oriental fatalism' and would abandon their 'dangerous aspirations'. In connection with the 'possible disruption' of the Turkish empire, Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, believed that steps should be taken to see that information with regard to the history of the Ottoman Empire should begin to appear in the press and magazines, in Britain as well as abroad 'as soon as possible'. The Prime Minister wanted the public to realise what the Ottoman Empire had really meant. In his words:

The public ought to be made to realise the truth that it (Ottoman Empire) is one of the worst empires that has ever existed because it has retained its unity only at the price of having blotted out two or three ancient civilisations and of repressing its subject races with quite exceptional ferocity.

It was only too natural on the part of the British government to take such a stand towards Turkey and decline any proposal for a separate peace with the CUP. Such a political miscalculation could have afforded Turkey to emerge still as a strong state and with a greatly enhanced military prestige. It would have also meant that the Sultan would retain the Caliphate, and the eyes of all fervent Muslims would still turn towards him as the hope of Islam. While the Pan-Turanian and Pan-Islamic intrigues in India, Egypt and in Russian Asia would have redoubled to serious proportions. Fuat Selim, the Turkish Minister in Berne, commenting on the Pan-Turanian movement, stated that the apparently 'utopian dream' of a few months ago, namely the drawing together of the Muslim races in

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77. FO395/139/63739, P.H. Kerr to J. Buchan, 22 March 1917.
Central Asia under the aegis of Constantinople was at present 'certainty' for the break up of Russia meant the independence of the Islamic race in Central Asia. The Turkish Minister added that Turkey's first step would be to encourage the movement towards the independence of the Muslim races of the Caucasus and then to work further east in Turkestan and south towards Afghanistan. To this effect the British government had substantial evidence that after the Russian Revolution a meeting of Turkish and German officers was held at Constantinople to discuss the 'best means' of causing trouble on the Russo-Turkish front. That 'considerable effort' was also being made in the Caucasus by the German officers to set the Armenian, Georgian and Tatar elements at logger heads. It was also reported that some twenty Turanian missions had passed into Trans-Caspia and Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan to organise the Pan-Turanian movement among those races. Colonel Assaf Bey of the Turkish General Staff and General von Hetting had on 23 October 1917, left for Central Asia. To achieve the policy of having a continuous line of territory from Constantinople to India and China, the War Office argued that it was essential for the Young Turk government to:

Firstly massacre all the Armenians in the Caucasus whether Turkish or Russian subjects.

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Significantly the sentence 'Firstly massacre all the Armenians', is mentioned twice in the report.

In order to counter the strong current of Pan-Islamic propaganda, especially in Russian Muslim domains, the Foreign Office contemplated putting into practice Sir P. Cox's scheme. It involved asking the King of Arabia to send an influential deputation to the Caucasus to invoke the assistance of all Muslims there and in the Caucasus in the struggle of Arabs to liberate the holy places from the Turkish yoke. It also contemplated urging Muslims to continue the war and retain the maximum number of Turks on the Caucasus front. The second plan in propaganda work was to reveal in the press the project for a great pilgrim railway connecting the Caucasus and Mecca, to be built with Muslim capital from all over the world. This project took into consideration that the commercial evolution of the Tatar community had reached the stage of giving great importance to the question of future foreign commercial relations. From the propaganda point of view it would seem necessary to show that Britain was interested in this quest and was ready to open up communications, and in this context, Mark Sykes, the Foreign Office Middle East expert, asserted that Arab officers had told him that pro-Arab propaganda would be 'worth' pushing, through Arab officers' agents in the Caucasus. While colonel Buchan, expressed the view that Britain was prepared to 'work' the Arab movement to any extent and to attempt to flood the Russian Muslims with literature and pictures extolling the king of the Hejaz as the saviour of Islam.\footnote{FO371/3300/3631/2150, P. Cox to the Secretary of State, 3 Jan. 1918; Ibid., see also minutes signed, M.S. Buchan and S.G., 12 Jan. 1918; L/P & S/10/623, P4122, Eastern Report, no. XXXVII, 'The Caucasus', 27 Sept. 1917.}
The alarming reports that Russian troops were 'fraternising' with Turkish soldiers on the Caucasus frontier and the rapid disintegration of the Russian armies on that front, had exposed Armenians to the imminent threat of Turkish advance, thus renewing the prospects of massacres. To prevent the total collapse of the Russo-Turkish front, and to deter a Turkish advance, the members of the Armenian and Georgian National Councils accordingly came to the following decision:

(1) If the Russian troops retreat from the Russo-Turkish front, the Georgian and Armenian soldiers must resist the Ottoman Army, and do their utmost to prevent such a retreat.

(2) Special Georgian and Armenian regiments should be selected to defend their countries to the last drop of blood.

(3) An alliance of arms should be concluded between Georgians and Armenians for the mutual defence of their respective territories.

But despite these defensive measures, it seemed impossible to resist the greatly superior and well equipped Ottoman forces. While the Muslim population of Turco-Turanian stock, long the object of the attention of emissaries from Constantinople, as well as of the agents of Pan-Turanian and Pan-Islamic propaganda, refused to take any share in the defensive war against the Turks.

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84. FO371/4357/157900/5, Resume of the Leading Political Events in Trans-Caucasia From the Revolution of March 1917 to the Brest-Litovsk Negotiations, Sept. 1918; FO371/3008/221189, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Information, 19 Nov. 1917.
Moreover, the Tatars were only awaiting a favourable moment to render assistance to the advancing Turkish army and exterminate the Armenians. For, it became obvious that the Muslim element in the Caucasus, soon after the revolution began helping the Young Turk government in the realisation of their long dreamed of Pan-Turanian plan. This idea had been openly declared in official circles by the Provisional government's Muslim Commissary in the Caucasus.

Boghos Nubar Pasha, the President of the Armenian National Delegation in Paris, conferring with Arnold Toynbee, presented a programme for an independent Armenia, excluding the Armenian territories within Russia. Boghos Nubar argued that an independent Armenian State endowed with an international guarantee was an 'essential barrier' against the German project of the Berlin-Baghdad railway. He further argued that since the Russian renunciation of Constantinople had jeopardised the creation of such a barrier at the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, the vital section of the Baghdad Railway should be included in Armenia as a neutral zone. Boghos Nubar was certainly acting not only in the interest of Armenia but also that of Britain's. As he must have understood well that an independent Armenia could only be realisable in conjunction with the Entente powers' interests. Thus Nubar's argument of 'safeguarding' British national interest from future German aggression seemed to be a stepping-stone in securing an independent Armenian national home. But what Nubar failed to conceive of was that British military successes in Mesopotamia in December 1917, had made

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87. Bodleian Library, Toynbee Private Papers, Box 44, Pamphlet on the Armenian Question I, 6 Nov. 1917.
the Germans despair of the Berlin-Baghdad project of 'Mittel-Europa'. On the other hand, the apparent political and military collapse of Russia had led the German and Young Turk governments to look for compensation at Russia's expense for losses elsewhere. The Berlin-Baghdad railway had in a way ceased to be a Pan-German plan, instead the more remunerative, Berlin-Bokhara line through Asia Minor and Northern Persia had become the new German ambition. Even the Young Turk government, seeing no hope in saving Palestine or Mesopotamia, had shifted their attention from the Arab question and concentrated their energies on the Caucasus and Turkestan, the Pan-Turanian design. Djemal Pasha, the Minister of Marine, had strongly advocated abandoning the Caliphate and all spiritual pretention and aim at the creation of a purely Turkish empire stretching from Constantinople to Tibet. The Turkish Pan-Turanian threat to Britain had also been contemplated by the Armenian National Delegation. It urged the British government to create an autonomous Armenia comprised of the six vilayets and Cilicia. The National Delegation argued that an 'autonomous Armenia', would constitute an effective barrier to the junction of the Anatolian Turks with the Turco-Tatars of Transcaucasia, Central Asia and Turkestan, thus frustrating the realisation of the Pan-Turanian idea.

After the military briefing by the Chief of the Russian Imperial General Staff in October 1917, concerning the general situation in the Caucasus and Northern

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89. FO371/3393/67147, H. Rumbold to A.J. Balfour, 'Memorandum Concerning Conditions in Turkey', 19 Feb. 1918; Ibid., no. 57615, Rumbold to Balfour, 25 March 1918; also in, L/P & S/11/133, P1067/37147, Rumbold to Balfour, 19 Feb. 1918.

Persia, the British government became alarmed in view of the rapid disintegration of the Russian forces and the 'extensive' Pan-Turanian propaganda undertaken by Turkey. The anxiety was not so much felt with the Russian Provisional government. By renouncing the secret agreement of annexing Constantinople and the Straits, the Russian government believed that it would restrain its Turkic subjects and with a policy of appeasement would succeed in containing Pan-Turanian tendencies. In fact the Provisional government's denunciation of the old Russian ambition towards the Ottoman Empire and its granting of potential political equality to the Muslims in Russia; a policy which had never before enjoyed, turned off the tide of opposition temporarily. But the threat of Turkish advance in that direction seemed devastating to the British government and the Armenian nation as a whole. The Eastern Committee of the British Foreign Office, discussing the seriousness and the grave consequences of the Pan-Turanian policy of the CUP remarked that:

British interests in the fate of the Armenians now passed from mere sentimental and humanitarian feeling to a matter of grave material concern. ... The menace [referring to the 'Pan-Turanian scheme'] is exceedingly real, and our only real weapons against it are the Arabs and Armenians, who have sufficient racial vitality to repel the Turanian policy.  

It was also acknowledged that the Armenians were the only large part of the population on the Russian Asiatic front whose interests were vitally bound up with the success of the Allied cause. Thus, the British War Cabinet in its meeting on 23 October 1917, authorised the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to work with the United States government. It suggested to bring diplomatic pressure to

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bear on the Russian government to concentrate in the Caucasus all Armenian
units at present distributed through the Russian armies, with a view to rendering
the Russian forces in the Caucasus an entirely 'Armenian character'.

General Barter (initials not provided in the sources), head of the British Mission at
Russian General Headquarters, had estimated that out of a total of 150,000
Armenians in the Russian ranks only about 35,000 were on the Caucasus front.
It was hoped that a considerable additional number of Armenians would be raised
locally in the Caucasus. But, General Offley Shore gathered from the
Armenian High Commissioner that Alexander Kerensky himself was opposed to
the idea of the formation of anything like an Armenian corps. Disappointment
and frustration was also felt among the Armenians as a whole, who according to
General Barter, were anxious to form themselves into battalions and save their
lives, but were rebuffed by A. Kerensky's negative stand. The Russian government
had forced the Armenian troops in the Caucasus to do most of the fighting and
had in return dispossessed Armenian landowners in reoccupied Armenian vilayets
in favour of Cossack settlers. The real reason for Kerensky's decision to leave
intact the 150,000 Armenian troops scattered throughout the Russian divisions on
every front, rather than to shift them to the Caucasus was simple. Kerensky's
government had denounced any annexationist claims over Constantinople and the
Straits, as the Bolsheviks too were propagating, but, contrary to the latter's

92. Bryce Papers, Box 145, Robert Cecil to Bryce, 15 Nov. 1917;
FO371/3062/219742, Mark Sykes, 17 Nov. 1917.

93. India Office Library Record Office, Curzon Papers, Mss Eur F112/141, War
Cabinet, 255, min. 7. 23 Oct. 1917; FO371/3062/219742, Mark Sykes, 17 Nov. 1917;
FO371/3062/219773/216955, J. Bryce to R. Cecil, 5 Nov. 1917.

94. FO371/3016/209437/204952, General O. Shore to Department of Military
Intelligence, 28 Oct. 1917; FO371/3019/241350/229217, Lieut.-Colonel Spiers to War

95. FO371/3058/120602, see minute by Sir Mark Sykes, 27 Apr. 1917.
renunciation of tsarist annexations of Ottoman Armenia, Kerensky had no intention of returning it to Turkey. The Russian Provisional government’s official views over conquered Turkish Armenia was revealed by M.I. Tereshchenko, the Russian Finance Minister (later Minister for Foreign Affairs during the First Coalition of 5 May 1917), to George Buchanan, the British ambassador at Petrograd. M.I. Tereshchenko stated that, the Provisional Russian government had 'no intention' of securing Constantinople

as it would prove a white elephant and have to be held by a large garrison.

But 'other districts' in Turkey, like Armenia and Kurdistan, were of 'vital interest'. Therefore, it could be deduced that, Kerensky was adopting the very same line of policy as the ousted tsarist government regarding the future status of conquered Turkish Armenia. It was to be annexed outright, and therefore it would have been totally unwise to concentrate the whole of the Armenian troops in the Caucasus and in addition to it raise new volunteer corps. With the presence of over 180,000 Armenian troops in the Caucasus, how would Kerensky’s government resist Armenian outrage when they fully realised that the tsarist secret agreement on Turkish Armenia still prevailed.

Fear of 'total destruction' of the 'entire' Armenian race due to a Ottoman advance in the Caucasus was also expressed by Willoughby F. Smith, the American Consul at Tiflis. In his confidential despatch to David Francis, the American ambassador at Petrograd, stated that the Turkish advance with the Pan-Turanian incentive would also deprive Russia of her oil fields and give the enemy greater freedom on the Black Sea. The American Consul repeatedly stressed that:

The Armenians must fight to save the race from total destruction.\footnote{WO 106/147, F. Willoughby-Smith to David Francis, 'Political and Military Situation in the Caucasus', 7 Aug. 1917.}

Significantly, the words 'total destruction' are underlined.

The Bolshevik coup d'état in Petrograd on 7 November 1917, which placed Lenin and Trotsky in power, resulted in the suspension of hostilities between Russia and the Central Powers and also the collapse of the Russian front against Turkey. With the armistice of Brest-Litovsk of 15 December, and the negotiation for peace, the Bolshevik formula of 'no indemnities', 'no annexation' and the 'self determination' of peoples, became the rallying ideology. The impact of Bolshevik principles and influence on the Russian troops made them forsake their position and retreat behind the pre-war Russo-Turkish frontier. With this in view the retreat was essentially a homeward movement, and they had no intention of remaining on the historic battlefields of the Transcaucasian border with the certainty or even the possibility of their renewing the struggle. But disorganisation and the breakdown of military discipline had gone too far to be stopped, too far for interruption and too far for the end to be long delayed. Some 500,000 Russian troops of the Caucasian army between the Caucasus mountains and the Ottoman frontier were a disorganised armed rabble, struggling to entrain themselves for home. Ernst Paraquin, the German Colonel, had correctly acknowledged that the evacuation of Anatolia by the Russians furnished the 'desired opportunity' for Turkey to 'clear out' also the Russian Armenians.\footnote{Lambeth Palace, Douglas Papers, vol. 61, f.28, 'Politics in the East', by Ernst Paraquin [former Imperial German Colonel and Head of Halil Pasha's General Staff], 24 Jan. 1920.} But the Armenian elements of the Russian army, numbering less than 40,000 men,
stood fast on the abandoned Russian front in Anatolia. In the meantime the Armenian press continued to express the feeling that:

The moment had arrived when Armenia is going to be either a new Armenia or the graveyard of all Armenians.\(^9\)

Reliable information had also been received to the effect that there had been massacres of Greeks on an 'extensive' scale. The massacres of the Asiatic Greeks which had been 'so long threatened' and 'so long delayed' had begun. Evaluating the general condition of Christians in the region, it was stated that

This will only be the completion of Talaat's original policy of the complete destruction of all Christian elements in Turkey. The Armenians and Syrian Christians have already been dealt with.\(^10\)

The Greek Consul at Samsun, who left Turkey on 5 January 1917, stated that the Greeks were being treated in 'exactly' the same way as the Armenians.\(^11\)

By January 1918, the British Consulate at Tiflis, commenting on the general situation in southern Caucasia, described it as 'alarming'. Conflicts with much loss of life were taking place between Russian soldiers returning from the Turkish front and Muslim troops, tribesmen and Persian brigands. Even more serious was the Turkish military agents' 'agitation' in Baku, Elizavetpol and Petrovsk, trying

\(^9\) FO371/3300/32217/2242, Memorandum on the Political Situation in the Caucasus, War Department, Foreign Office, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Information, 18 Feb. 1918.


to incite a 'general massacre' of Armenians. The British Consulate at Tiflis was also in possession of reliable information that the Baku Tatars were in 'constant' communication with the Young Turks in Constantinople, and were getting ready for the time when they could render assistance to the advancing Ottoman and German troops. Also Turco-German propaganda had been at work among the Tatars and Georgians, trying to make them fall out with the Armenians, and now the conciliatory spirit which had existed among them at the beginning of the revolution was at the moment on the wane. While as the British government by all conceivable means was doing her utmost to safeguard British rule in India and Persia, by countering Turkish Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turanian proclamations, the Russian Bolshevik government was affording assistance to Turkish and German designs in British colonial domains, thus at the same time threatening Armenian existence. While Lenin's proclamation of 30 November, 1917, to Russian Muslim subjects that they were free to live in accordance with their laws and customs, safeguarded Russian interests, preserving internal order and stability; at the same time, the proclamation urged the Muslims of the East to 'rise' and 'free' themselves from the 'hated yoke' of 'aliens and capitalists', making especial reference to India. Furthermore, Lenin's annulment of the secret treaties of the Tsarist government to annex Constantinople and the evacuation of Russian troops from conquered Turkish Armenia was a master move aimed at pleasing Muslim elements within Russia and weakening the cooperation between the Muslim masses and the Turks. V.A. Rzhevsky, one of the thirteen members


103. FO371/3300/10284/242, Memorandum on the Political Situation in the Caucasus, War Department, Foreign Office, Intelligence Bureau, 16 Jan 1918.

of the Provisional Committee of the Duma, elected on the first day of the revolution, had stated:

We have 30 million Muslim subjects who would be distressed at the prospect of Constantinople passing out of Turkish hands.¹⁰⁵

This was in response to the decision of the All-Russian Provisional Bureau, which came into existence in Petrograd right after the Russian revolution, that:

The Muslims of Russia will not go along with the slogan of war which postulated the seizure of Constantinople and the Straits.¹⁰⁶

The Bolshevik bid for the support of an All-Russian Muslim movement was an obvious step from the point of view of Realpolitik. Lenin and Stalin were prepared in the face of danger to exploit nationalism with respect to the Muslims. Finding the Ukraine against Bolshevik rule, it was essential for them to win over the next strongest non-Russian group in Russia to their side. And from the geographical and strategic point of view it was essential to isolate their southern opponents, namely the Ukrainians, Don, Kuban and Terek Cossacks and Armenians. It was feared that if these joined forces, the Bolsheviks would have been cut off from all sources of supplies. But if the Muslims threw in their lot with them they could save the situation. The 6 December 1917, Bolshevik manifesto, to all the labouring class Muslims of Russia and the East, was nothing else but a bid to maintain stability and deter the Pan-Turanian movement.¹⁰⁷

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¹⁰⁵. FO371/30313/137018. ‘Representative Russian Opinion on Constantinople and the Dardanelles’, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Information, 6 July 1917.


¹⁰⁷. FO395/240/19895, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Information, 10 Jan. 1918.
Specifically, the wording of the proclamation, which asserted that Constantinople should remain in 'Muslim hands', is of the utmost significance. It did not say 'Turkish hands' which is what it ought to have stated, but instead in 'Muslim hands'. Apparently the Bolshevik government tried to use the question of ownership of Constantinople and the Straits in a much wider context, making reference to All-Russian Muslims, thus gaining their sympathy and support for the coming uphill struggle of Bolshevism. Furthermore, Lenin and Stalin also believed that by annulling the secret tsarist treaties on Ottoman Armenia, Turkish orientation of the Muslim population within the Russian empire would disappear and they would prove to be patriotic Caucasians. However, Lenin's eloquent proclamations did not deter Muslim separatist tendencies nor did it stop Turkey's advance in the direction of Baku to seize the rich oilfields.

Amid these crises, the Bolshevik government proved to be uninterested in the fate of the Armenians; even worse, they exposed them to the Turkish menace. On the other hand, however, the British government made extensive efforts to reorganise the Armenian contingents. The British Cabinet had well recognised the fact that if an Armenian army was organised and led, it would 'certainly' fight, as it was a question of 'life and death' to them to resist a Turkish invasion. Armenian resistance would have also contributed to securing British interests in the east. However, Britain's policy of giving 'priority' to the formation of Armenian national units had serious repercussions, especially for the Tatar population in Baku. It had alienated the Tatars, making them realise that Britain was showing a 'preference' to Armenian interests which was well exploited by Pan-


109. WO 106/1415, Meeting of the Trans-Caucasian Diet, 7 May 1918.

Turanist agents, who presented it as an anti-Islam move. While the decision of the Russian General Staff not to encourage the formation of Armenian national units was motivated by consideration that Muslim interests were 'too strong' to be ignored, which could lead to disaster. Bolsheviks sought to set various natives in the Caucasus at each other 'throats' and take advantage of the ensuing confusion. At the same time, according to George Buchanan, the British ambassador at Petrograd, the Bolshevik government was doing 'all it could' to stir Muslim feeling against Britain.112

During the diplomatic visit of Balfour, General Macdonough and Lord Milner (member of the War Cabinet) in Paris, Boghos Nubar did not miss the opportunity to confer with the British representatives. Boghos Nubar stressed to them the need to increase the number of Armenian soldiers in the Caucasus, and to raise volunteers in order to resist an Ottoman offensive on the liberated Armenian provinces. He also urged the British government to send 'the strongest possible' mission led by a General, who besides being a good soldier, should be also a diplomat.113 In the meantime, Boghos Nubar sent an urgent telegram to Catholicos Kevork V, the Supreme Head of the Armenian Church, stressing that, as they could no longer rely on Russian troops to defend the liberated Armenian provinces and in consequence were liable to fall back under the Ottoman yoke, the Armenian National Delegation considered it 'indispensable' that the number of Armenian soldiers in the Caucasus army should be increased. An appeal should be made to General Andranik and other Armenian leaders to raise a corps of

111. FO371/3300/18464/2150, P. Cox to Foreign Office and Secretary of State for India, 25 Jan. 1918; Ibid., no. 19679, Marling to Foreign Office, 30 Jan. 1918.


Armenian volunteers to resist an Ottoman offensive and eventually join hands with the British army in Mesopotamia. Although Boghos Nubar had 'insisted strongly' that the Armenians should only fight on the Armenian front, he was eventually overwhelmed by the British government's insistence that the Caucasus, Persia and the Mesopotamian fronts were all parts of 'one campaign' on which future Armenia depended. On 25 December, the Armenian National Committee at Tiflis informed Boghos Nubar that, due to the 'complete' abandonment of the Caucasus front by the Russians, the Council was taking urgent measures for the defence of the three provinces of Kars, Ardahan and Artvin, and the Caucasus. The formation of a national army corps under General Nazarbekian was in progress, while the Armenian refugees were forming a special battalion and a militia to safeguard the local population. It was also stressed that financial and military help were absolutely indispensable. The National Council also considered that the annulment of the secret diplomatic agreement to hand Armenian over to Russia would be a 'valuable' help and that it seemed necessary that the immediate autonomy of Turkish Armenia should be formally recognised by the Allied powers. Boghos Nubar's reply, diligently asserted that:

The National Delegation is of the opinion that in the actual circumstances a proclamation of autonomy by the allies would be impolite, on the grounds that it would compromise your understanding with the Georgians and provoke opposition on the

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114. FO371/3016/234179, Department of Military Intelligence to General Caumilage, 8 Dec. 1917.

115. FO371/3016/218746, Bertie to Foreign Office, 15 Nov. 1917.

In response to Nubar's urgent appeal for immediate financial backing, the British War Cabinet authorised the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to render 'suitable' financial help. This was born out of the consideration that the disorganised Russian troops were selling their arms and equipment freely, and if the Armenians were not in a position to buy them, it was feared that the arms would get into the hands of the Tatars and the Kurds, which they did. Desperate to keep the Caucasus intact from Turco-German invasion, the British War Cabinet even responded favourably to General V. Nabokoff's communication. Nabokoff had pointed out that while a faction of the Russian army still remained loyal to the Provisional government, and in order to enable the 'loyal movement' to progress, funds were necessary. The Russian commander-in-chief asked for a loan of 300,000,000 rubles, of which 70,000,000 were required forthwith. The War Cabinet decided that any 'reasonable' money for the Russian Caucasus army and the Persian Cossack division should be met by the treasury. But in general, the British government had well acknowledged the fact that the Armenian element 'should be' Britain's 'main support' in the Batum-Baku region, since Turkish military successes combined with a 'great deal' of propaganda among the Tatars with the object of raising the 'whole of the Russian Muslims'; which was reported to be active, would have had devastating effects.

118. FO371/3016/230983, General Shore to D.M.I., 14 Nov. 1917.
120. FO371/3019/242996, see minute, 27 Dec. 1917.
To counter the Pan-Turanian threat, in December 1917, a conference of the western Armenian Politbureau of the Dashnak party, sponsored the raising of a force of twenty thousand men. The popular and distinguished General Andranik, was chosen by the conference as commander. At the same time, with the initiative of General Przhevalskii, an additional Armenian contingent was organised, headed by General Nazarbekian, while the second division of the corps commanded colonel Silikian.\footnote{122} However, Armenian attempts to reinforce the Turco-Russian front, by patching up the vacuum created by the retreating Russian troops, was of negligible force, since the few thousand men were inadequate to hold the front which had been previously occupied by about two hundred thousand Russian troops. Moreover, Armenians were not alone in their military preparations, for Muslims comprehended the value and necessity of national units. The Russian Provisional government was forced to grant permission after it became impossible to restrain Muslim demands. To reinforce the newly created Muslim units, with the financial backing of rich Tatar landowners, Pan-Islamist and Pan-Turanist activists were buying vast quantities of arms and munitions from deserting Russian troops. In view of Muslim military preparations, anxiety was felt among Armenian political leaders, for such Muslim military measures had no objective other than that of directing it against the Christian element in the region. It was believed that the Muslims units at an 'appropriate moment' were to strike a blow on the Armeno-Georgian flanks, thus fostering a Turkish invasion in the Caucasus and assisting in realising the Pan-Turkish scheme.\footnote{123}

As soon as the Russian army had dissolved, the Pan-Islamic Azeris showed their attitude by exposing their 'violently pro-Turk' and 'violently anti-Armenian'

\footnote{122. Hovannisian, Armenia on the Road to Independence, pp. 113-4.}
\footnote{123. State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 222, L. 1, File 24 (II), 'The Caucasus and the Russian Revolution', March 1918.}
stand. This was in response to the Bolshevik coup d'etat; the ground of understanding between the principal elements in Transcaucasia resulted in the formation of a general Transcaucasian government following on the declaration of independence of the country as a whole. However, the possibility of a permanent, harmonious understanding between Georgians, Armenians and Tatars was to the liking of neither Turkey nor Germany. For Turkey the Transcaucasian republic, in a geographical sense had threatened separation from the Tatars and consequently hindered the Ottoman Empire's penetration of Turkestan. Such a republic could have eventually developed into a formidable entity which could not be treated as a subservient vassal. However, the growing restiveness on the part of the wealthier Tatar landed proprietors against the socialist proposals of the government facilitated the work of Turkish and other agents in fomenting distrust and provoking disturbances, particularly between the Tatars and Armenians. The Turks succeeded in winning over to their side the racial Tatar elements of Transcaucasia. And with the Ottoman Empire's successful march in reoccupying the lost territories of 1914-17, and with the fall of Kars, the Tatar National Council notified Gegetchkori, President of the Transcaucasian Republic, that the Tatars as a nation would withdraw from the Transcaucasian Republic. Daghestan and the Terek region on the northern side of the range had already announced their intention of becoming a separate Republic. The majority of the Tatar delegation left the Diet of the Transcaucasian Peoples which was first assembled at the end of August 1917, and established themselves as a Tatar government at Elizavetpol. From this centre, the German and Turkish agents incited the Tatar villagers and tribesmen to block the railway of Baku and disarm the crowded


trainload of deserting Russian soldiers. With this operation the Tatars were successful in securing arms and munitions on a large scale for their population.126

Tatar resentment towards the Armenians was further aroused by Stepan Shaumian's activities in Baku. In January 1918, the Bolshevik government at Petrograd had made an attempt to reestablish Russian control in the Caucasus through Stepan Shahumian, a central figure in Transcaucasian Bolshevik history, to assume the position of Chief Commissar for the Caucasus. Failing to obtain a hearing either in Georgia or Armenia, and failing to secure the abolition of the Transcaucasian Diet, had compelled Shahumian to flee from Tiflis. At Baku, with the aid of the Armenian Dashnaktsutiun society, whose policy at the time was to seek Russian support as necessary to any form of Armenian existence, he was able to set up a Bolshevik administration. It was this act which inflamed Armeno-Tatar resentment, thus fostering Turkish sympathy and the Ottoman Empire's presence in the region.127

On the eve of the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, as the 'golden vision' of Pan-Turanism had reached its new phase, the war aims of the Young Turk government were summed up in (i) Independence, both in internal affairs and in international relations, (ii) Territorial integrity, and (iii) Pan-Turanian realisation. Talaat Pasha, the grand Vizier, in an interview with the German press, 'Vossiche Zeitung', while on his way through Berlin to Brest-Litovsk, had declared that:

The Turkish conditions for peace include the restoration of pre-war

126. CAB 27/29, War Cabinet, Eastern Committee, 'The Turco-German Advance into the Caucasus', by General Staff War Office, 22 July 1918, p. 3.

According to Major-General L.C. Dunsterville, the Tatars had voiced their support for Turkey, demanding the restoration of lands to the Turks and the creation of a Caucasus Federation on Swiss lines. In connection with the Pan-Turanian movement, the resolution of the first Congress of Muslim nationalities held in May 1917 at Moscow, the seven hundred and fifty delegates decided to support a Federal Republic.

The Bolshevik government had not only fulfilled Ottoman territorial demands, i.e. the return of Turkish Armenia conquered during the war, but had also ceded to the Ottoman Empire the three Transcaucasian districts of Ardahan, Kars and Batum, under Russian occupation since 1878. Despite the 'most generous' attitude of the Bolsheviks, by which Armenians had lost much under the treaty, the greed of Pan-Turanian policy had proved that the Brest-Litovsk treaty was a carte blanche for Turkey to overcome the first obstacle in hand with considerable ease, then continue its march up to Turkestan. The Ottoman militarists had no intention whatsoever of limiting their activities according to the Brest-Litovsk treaty. To them Pan-Turanism had to be fulfilled at 'every cost'. Fuad Selim, the Turkish Minister in Berne, declared that the Turks had decided to occupy such portions of the Russian Caucasus as were inhabited by Muslims. That the Ottoman General Staff was making arrangements for this, and as to what fate awaited the Armenian


\[129\] FO371/3300/47497/2242, Major-General L.C. Dunsterville to Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 7 March 1918.

population in the region, Fuad Selim stated:

The Armenians in the region will be swept aside, as they would
prove an obstacle.131

Similar statements regarding the extermination of Armenians was made by Djevdet Bey, the proprietor and editor of the Ikdam newspaper and by Lieutenant Djamhi, son of a War Office contractor in Constantinople, and from the Ottoman Legation at Berne. According to Djevdet Bey, the CUP's 'dream' was to 'exterminate the Armenians altogether' except the 'few' in Constantinople. Meanwhile, with German reinforcements the Turks were to dominate the republic of Turkestan, thus creating a Turanian empire.132 A conference held at Berlin on 21 January 1918, attended by von Kuhlmann, the German Foreign Minister, Helferich, Talaat, Djavid Bey and Persian representatives, discussed the 'best way' of attacking Britain at the 'most vulnerable' points in the east. The conference also resolved that Ottoman troops would advance through Kars and strike a blow at Erevan, the very heartland of Armenia. At the same time the central powers were to invade Turkestan. Afghanistan was to be 'induced' to join the central powers, to be followed by an advance through Afghanistan on India where it was hoped to foment a 'general revolution'.133


133. FO395/242/88704/64783, P.I.D., 'Memorandum on German and Turkish Activities in the Middle East Since the Russian Revolution', Foreign Office, 8 May 1918; L/P & S/11/134, P1329, H. Rumbold to Foreign Office, 30 March 1918. See also, FO371/43633/PID 116, 8 May 1918.
Ottoman forces guided by Enver Pasha were now on the move to fulfil their 'historic mission'. A decree issued by Enver, promising officers 'promotion' and 'double pay' if they were prepared to volunteer for services in the Caucasus, clearly explains the sacrifice and extent of Ottoman military motives. While Enver's negative response to General Ludendorff's military operation is of significance too. General Ludendorff, the Deputy Chief of the German General Staff, repeatedly pointed out to Enver, that his task was in the first place to fight British forces on the Palestine front. But for the Ottoman military the revolution in Russia and the consequent political and military vacuum created in the Caucasus had come as the 'predestined moment' for the realisation of their ambitious scheme of Pan-Turanian expansion. Halil Pasha, the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs, regarded Arabia as an appropriate article of exchange in negotiations with Britain. He was 'sure' that Britain would make no objection to an establishment of Turkey in Turkestan if she had in exchange the great Arabian 'land-bridge' between Egypt and India. In fact, at the end of January 1918, the CUP had shown signs of willingness to compromise with the British government on the Arab question, but however were intractable on the Pan-Turanian idea and were 'not prepared' to make 'any concession' to Armenia and could not admit the establishment of an independent Armenia. The Ottoman communique, which was also published in the German and Austrian press,

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134. Liman von Sanders, Five Years in Turkey, pp. 254, 268.


137. L/P & S/10/587, Eastern Report, P651, no. LX, 'Turkey', 14 Feb. 1918; FO371/3388/20082, Rumbold to Foreign Office, 31 Jan. 1918; see also minute: 'The Turkish insistence in retaining Armenia is characteristically CUP and shows the strength of the Pan-Turanian idea which inspires them'.

strongly accused the Armenians of massacring the Muslim population in the occupied territory; that stories of atrocities were given in detail on the evidence of escaped Ottoman prisoners of war. Sir Harold Rumbold, the British Minister at Berne, and the Intelligence Bureau of the Foreign Office, believed that the object of the CUP's communiqué served a propaganda campaign to:

(1) Cancel the anti-Turkish effect on the public opinion of the world of the Turkish atrocities on the Armenians in 1915.

(2) Provide a basis for the formula which the CUP intend to put forward in regard to Turkish Armenia - that there is a Muslim majority there, who must exercise their right to self-determination and must be protected by Turkey against Armenian tyranny.

(3) Give an excuse for the denunciation of the armistice on this front.

That:

(4) Public announcements of imaginary outrages by Armenians on Muslims (which were always put forward as the supported cause of the massacres of Armenians by Muslims) served to kindle inter-racial hatred among the Muslims.

(5) Such accounts of imaginary massacres by Armenians drew the attention of the local Turkish authorities in the provinces to the presence in their midst of Armenians, who had been deported from their homes three years earlier. And the local authorities were seldom slow to take the hint.

(6) In view of Turkish dreams of expansion in the Caucasus, it was especially desirable to unite Georgians, Tatars and Turks in a common hatred of the Armenians, such common hatred being a great bond of unity.

(7) Announcements of such massacres by Armenians act as a
justification in advance of any assurance of Armenians that may afterwards take place.\textsuperscript{138}

Furthermore, the British Cabinet, responding to the Turkish government's alleged Muslim massacres by Armenians, stated that:

The spreading of artful rumours of atrocities perpetrated by Armenians on Muslims is usually the Turkish prelude to violent and extensive butchery.\textsuperscript{139}

Even the Vatican was convinced that the alleged massacres of Muslims by Armenians was grossly exaggerated by the Young Turk government. Archbishop Hartmann, writing to von Hertling, the Chancellor of Germany, emphasised that the Ottoman government would 'use' it as a 'pretext' for the 'total annihilation of the remaining Armenians'. The Archbishop urged the German government to take adequate measures to forestall the repetition of an 'Armenian holocaust'.\textsuperscript{140}

The CUP's anti-Armenian propaganda campaign had gone as far as dressing large number of massacred Armenians with turbans and brought Kurdish women to weep and lament over them saying that the Armenians had killed them. Photographers taking pictures of the bodies and the weeping women, the Young Turk government aimed at convincing Europe that it was the Armenians who had

\textsuperscript{138} FO395/240/32218, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Information, 19 Feb. 1918; FO371/3400/36460, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Information, 20 Feb. 1918; Ibid., no. 3393/128475, Rumbold to Balfour, 6 July 1918.

\textsuperscript{139} CAB 24/145, Eastern Report, no. LXXXII, 'Caucasus', 18 June 1918.

\textsuperscript{140} The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Asia 57, no. 63502/5450, Archbishop Hartmann to von Hertling, 2 Apr. 1918.
attacked and killed the Kurds.  

The truce of Erzinjan of 18 December 1917, between Transcaucasia and the Ottoman Empire; a desperate move on the part of the Transcaucasian Commissariat to forestall an Ottoman advance in the Caucasus, was broken early in February, 1918. The Young Turk government, exploiting the dilemma of Transcaucasia, put itself in an offensive position to detach Transcaucasia from Russia. The onslaught of the Ottoman forces, led by Kiazim Karabekir, succeeded in capturing Erzinjan. The search for peace turned out to be useless. Thus, in February, when the Germans advanced in the Baltic provinces and the Ukraine, Ottoman operations on a serious scale were begun with the purpose of occupying the regions awarded to the Ottoman Empire under the treaty. On 24 February, the Ottomans recaptured Trebizond. Amid these crises, as the Transcaucasian delegation hastened to depart for Trebizond on 2 March 1918, to come to terms with the Turks, the blow came from the Bolshevik government. It was the finalised Brest-Litovsk treaty, by which Bolshevik Russia agreed to evacuate its troops from Turkish Armenia and ceded the districts of Kars, Ardahan and Batum to the Ottoman Empire that sent shock waves throughout Armenia and Georgia. According to the Georgian press, the Brest-Litovsk negotiations had gone far beyond the mere question of frontier rectification between Persia and Turkey. That the intended policy of the CUP was to secure for Turkey 'direct communication' with the Baku Tatars and access to Turkestan. The only response the autonomous Transcaucasian government could give as to the validity

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141. L/P & S/11/120, P1309, 'The Massacres in Armenia' by Faiz el-Ghussein [former Kaimakam of Kharput and temporary resident of Diarbekir who had witnessed the Armenian massacres and who had gained 'most' reliable sources from superior Turkish officers and notables of Diarbekir, Van, Bitlis, Kharput, Aleppo and Erzerum], 1917.

142. FO371/4357/S/PID 24, Memo. on the Political Situation in the Caucasus and Siberia, 10 Apr. 1918.
of the proceedings at Brest as regards Transcaucasia was to repudiate it, since it had never recognised the Bolshevik regime. But as Transcaucasian delegates and Ottoman representatives were to confer at Trebizond on 14 March, Erzerum fell on the 12th, before the talks began. This was a further direct indication on the part of the Young Turk government that talks, negotiations and similar gestures were useless, since they had no intention of altering their unequivocal Pan-Turanian policy. During one of the sittings of the Conference, Rayi Bey, the president of the Ottoman delegation warmly welcomed the Transcaucasian representatives. He explained that the geographical status of Transcaucasia had been historically united with Turkey, but it was due to the tsarist Russian obstacle which had set apart Turkey and Transcaucasia. As to the progress made at Trebizond on April, it proved to be futile, for the Turkish offensive continued, with Sarykamish to fall on 4 April, and Van a day later. Although the Armenian contingents resisted 'vigorously' the advance of the Turkish troops, they were unsuccessful in preventing their forward march. This was due to General L.C. Dunsterville's absence and thus his inability to aid the war effort of the Armenians. But what the Armenians did not know, was that General L.C. Dunsterville's journey to Armenia had been blocked by the Bolshevik forces in Northern Persia and Baku. The appeal of the Foreign Office to the Bolshevik government at Moscow to facilitate the passage of British officers 'without delay' had fallen on deaf ears. It was also reported by General L.C. Dunsterville that 'some' Russian officers had 'joined' the Turks in the latter's war effort,

143. State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, File 9, Trebizond Conference, 1-14 March 1918, pp. 13-16.
144. Ibid., Fond 200, L. 1, File 9, Minutes of Trebizond Conference Sitting, pp. 157-88, Apr. 1918.
145. FO371/3285/54808/6, Foreign Office to Lockhart, 29 March 1918.
146. L/MIL/17/5/3704, Notes from War Diaries, Part DXXV, British Caucasus Military mission, Dunsterforce, S.S. Dunsterville to General Staff Army
while the Bolshevik government was 'working with the Tatars'.

Since the Transcaucasian republic's attempts at negotiations had proved fruitless, the Seim broke off negotiations on April 13, and on the 15th the Turks occupied Batum. By this time, the mutual forbearance and understanding between Armenian, Georgian and Tatars had vanished. The Transcaucasian Federation formed in April 1918, mainly to deal with the emergency created by the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and the relentless march of the Turkish armies into the Caucasus was no longer of any avail, since the tendencies and interests of the three main national groups constituting the Federation were totally divergent. The Tatars solicited the future friendship of Turkey, the Georgians were hesitant, while the Armenians remained strongly pro-Ally. The Armenian stand was only too natural, for they were the ones to lose most from a Ottoman advance. Over the whole Armenian front up to the borders of Persia, Armenian forces of about 80,000 volunteers for the most part under the command of General Nazarbekian and General Andranik, had resisted the Turkish attacks for several weeks. But between March and April, the Turkish forces succeeded in outflanking the Armenian lines, thus overrunning the temporary establishment of Armenian rule in Turkish Armenia.

Upon the announcement of the capture of Batum, the Tatars, encouraged by the Ottoman successes, broke out in insurrection at Baku, where the Bolsheviks were still in control. The revolt soon spread throughout the whole of Russian Armenia, notably at Erevan, the very heartland of Armenia, thus paralysing Armenian war efforts and facilitating further Ottoman invasion. The Armenians, finding themselves caught in a survival struggle on two fronts, made great but ineffectual

Headquarters India, 18 June 1918.

147. FO371/3300/47497/2242, General L.C. Dunsterville to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 7 March 1918.
efforts to resist both the Ottoman troops and the armed bands of the Tatars who were attacking the civilian population, cutting the lines of communication and spreading terror and death throughout the Armenian provinces. According to the British Foreign Office P.I.D., the fighting between the advancing Ottoman troops and the Armenians was accompanied by 'systematic massacres' like those of 1915 on the part of the Turks, particularly in the vilayet of Trebizond, and then in the districts on the Russian side of the 1914 frontier. Similarly a report from the Balkan Agency, commenting on the general situation in Trebizond stated that, the Turks had thrown into the sea 'sacks full of Armenian children'. That old men and women had been 'crucified' and subjected to 'nameless tortures', and all women and girls, even girls ten years old, had been delivered into the hands of the Turks.

On 20 April 1918, a special conference of Armenian political and military leaders conferred at Alexandropol to decide whether to accept the Brest-Litovsk settlement or to continue the war. The Turkish terms under the treaty, demanding the fortress city of Kars, a vital defence for Armenia, was received with great anxiety. Since the National Congress of October 1917, this was the most comprehensive Armenian gathering; it was a matter of national existence. The Armenian leaders perfectly aware of the calamity to come, overwhelmingly decided

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149. FO371/4363/P.I.D. 116, 'German-Turkish Relations over the Caucasus', Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, 4 Oct. 1918.

150. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Asia 57, no. 5971, The Apostolic Administrator to His Holiness, Benedict XV, 5 March 1918; CAB 24/44, Eastern Report, no. LX, 'Armenia', 21 March 1918; FO371/3400/48965, W. Townley to FO, 17 March 1918.

151. In Soviet times Leninakan, today Gumri.
to pledge an active defence against any future Ottoman offensive. Similarly, Willoughby Smith, the American Consul at Tiflis, described the Caucasian political situation as 'extremely critical'. There was no hope for peace with Turkey. As the Turks were advancing, the Armenians were surrounded by hostile Tatars. The American Consul further warned that if the Turks succeeded, there would be 'real danger' of 'Armenian extermination'. If properly led and financed, Armenians possessed 'great political and military force'.

Amid these distractions, the Azerbaijani members demanded the independence of Transcaucasia, otherwise warning that they would be compelled to sign a separate treaty with Turkey. The Transcaucasian Federal Seim, on 22 April declared the independence of the republic, in a vain attempt to place the country outside the operation of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. At the same time the Siem resolved to reopen negotiations with the Turks, claiming that Transcaucasia was now an independent state. As the Transcaucasian Siem was stricken with confusion, the Turkish military, confident in their objectives, continued their offensive and Bayazid was to be entered on 23 April, and Kars on the 27th. After the occupation of Kars, the Young Turk government proposed a Transcaucasian government, for, in as much as Transcaucasia no longer existed as a political unit, since the Tatars had detached themselves, and the

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153 FO371/3301/75682, Summary of Information from American Consul at Tiflis, 30 Apr. 1918.

154 State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, File 80, Memorandum by Hamo Ohandjanian, 29 Aug. 1918.

155 CAB 1/30, Influence of Pan-Turkish Political Aims on Turkish Military Policy, 1914-1918, pp. 56-7.
southern portion of Transcaucasia inhabited by Armenians was in Turkish hands, the Georgian government should declare her independence. Failing to meet the demand, the Young Turk government threatened the occupation of Tiflis and the entire Georgian territory. The demand was intended to secure the preservation of the formation of a strong Transcaucasian republic. However, Germany used the Turkish pressure on Georgia, the same way in which she used the Bolshevik pressure against the Ukraine, creating a situation in which she could appear the only protector of Georgia against the Turks.\textsuperscript{156} Transcaucasia, for its part embroiled in confusion, sought even more urgently than before a permanent peace with Turkey. In response, a Turkish delegation, sailed from Constantinople to Batum on 2 May, represented by Halil Bey, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Djemal Pasha, Behaeddin Shakir (a Caucasian expert), and the Turanian irredentist Agaev. The Turkic delegation was also accompanied by German naval, military and diplomatic representatives. With the demands put forward by the Turkish delegation at Batum,\textsuperscript{157} the Armenian regions were to be all but wiped out. The Ottoman army had also demanded the Surmalu district, a province which was part of Erevan. Territories up to and including the Kars-Julfa railway, including the city of Alexandropol were to be lost. The acceptance of these terms would have secured for Turkey easy means to the total annihilation of the Armenian nation.

The immediate need to utilise the Kars-Julfa railway served as the Ottoman excuse for advancing into the region of Erevan. Ostensibly the line was to be

\textsuperscript{156} FO371/3321/124834/40776, 'Georgia and the Future of Transcaucasia', 9 July 1918.

\textsuperscript{157} Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 1022, File 30, sittings of Batum Conference from 9 to 18 May 1918, pp. 1-14. See also, State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, File 23, The Memorandum of the Caucasian Delegates about the Batum negotiations and the Treaty itself, May 1918.
employed to transport Ottoman troops to North Persia, where the threat of concerted British activity had intensified. According to German sources, the actual motivation for the Turkish demand was not to check the still-distant Entente forces but to secure a route from Kars through Julfa to Baku. This corridor was essential for the realisation of Enver's Pan-Turanian scheme. Already deputations of Transcaucasian Muslims had appealed to Ottoman authorities to liberate Baku from the Bolshevik Armenian coalition. Halil and Vehib pressed the Armenian members of the Transcaucasian delegation to yield to Ottoman demands. Should they fail to concede, the CUP was to annihilate Armenia. The objective of the Ottoman General Staff was first to crush Erevan, the nucleus of Armenia, then via Ardebil, Astara and Baku annex to Turkey the Muslim region of the Caucasus. By 14 May no agreement had been reached. On the 14th, Nazarbekian received the first Turkish ultimatum to relinquish the railway running to the Persian frontier and to withdraw all forces under his command to a line twenty five kilometres east of Alexandropol and the railroad. Fighting broke out on the 15th, and on the 16th a second ultimatum followed. With the breaking down of negotiations on 18 May, Alexandropol fell. A report from the Eastern Committee of the British Foreign Office about the general situation in the Caucasus stated that:

The destruction and disintegration of the Armenians proceeds apace and paves the way for Turko-German domination, extending through

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159. A. Khatisian, Hayastani Hanrapetutian Dsagumnu Zargatsume, pp. 55-6; also in Hovannisian, Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918 p. 175.

160. CAB 27/26, War Cabinet, Eastern Committee, Marling to FO, 9 May 1918.

the Turanian belt right up to Afghanistan itself.\footnote{162}

At this stage there appeared to be no deliverance for the thousands of natives and refugees in the Erevan region. The cordon around the Armenian heartland was tightening as refugees crowded into the small area, the heartland of Erevan, still free from Turkish troops. It became a question of the extermination of the remaining nucleus of the Armenian race. Thus, it was at this very crucial moment that the Armenian destiny was to be decided. But due to the staunchness of Armenian troops at the decisive battles of Sardarabad, Bash Abaran and Karakilise, the nation was saved from complete annihilation. Had they failed, Armenians would have fallen prey to Turkish Pan-Turanism, and the word Armenian would have ceased to exist.

With the turbulent developments in Transcaucasia, the Democratic Federation of three Transcaucasian provinces broke up on the 27th. Assured of German protection, Georgia seceded and declared its independence, while Azerbaijan's pro-Turk population turned against Armenia whose sovereignty over the mountainous border areas of Karabagh and Zangezur it disputed. Armenia, remaining totally isolated, had no other choice but to follow the example of Georgia and Azerbaijan and declare its independence on 28 May 1918. Henceforward each state followed the policy it deemed most advantageous to its own interests.

It seems that Turco-German subversion, promoting strife between the different nationalities in the Caucasus, proved successful. With Azerbaijan shaping her policy for union with Turkey, it was left for Germany to bring Georgia into her sphere, thus leaving Armenia isolated in the arena of hostilities and at the mercy of Turkey. As a matter of fact, Georgian independence on 26 May, was welcomed and recognised by the German government. It was reported by Richard von

\footnote{162} CAB 24/145, Eastern Report, no. LXX, 'Russia', (secret), 30 May 1918.
Kuhlmann, the German Foreign Minister, that Georgia had sent her Foreign Minister to Berlin for 'cordial' negotiations. While respectively, General von Kress had, hastened his departure for Tiflis on a diplomatic mission. On June 24, von Kuhlmann, addressing the Reichstag stated that:

As far as we are concerned, we shall willingly do what depends on us to consolidate the good relations between Georgia and Germany.

The contrast, however, is significant, when he spoke of Armenia, Herr von Kuhlmann said that:

While new national groups of little importance were joining Georgia, Armenia was undertaking its transformation into an autonomous state.

With the exception of this statement, Armenia and the Armenians were entirely ignored. The tone of the Ottoman press was also of significance. It spoke sympathetically of the Georgians, but in unfriendly terms of the 'Armenian bands'. Herr von Kuhlmann's statements, and the tone of the Ottoman press, and other factors, clearly indicated that the Central powers had succeeded in bringing the Georgians and Tatars entirely under their aegis, and isolating the Armenians. However, the Young Turk government intended to manoeuvre itself into a position from which it could permanently dominate Transcaucasia through its Muslim inhabitants, while a substantial portion of the economic resources, the


oil industry of Baku would fall to the profit of the Turks. This project was frustrated by German intervention. The German government, recognising the fact that petroleum is the fuel of the future, aimed at gaining the monopoly of all the petroleum wells in the Caucasus. It was also acknowledged that under inefficient Russian management, the Caucasus had produced 20 per cent of the total petroleum output of the world. Hence, a thoroughly scientific development of the resources of the Caucasus would be a 'most valuable' weapon in German hands against the coming economic struggle with Britain and the United States. To realise this ambition as a first step the independent republic of Georgia was withdrawn entirely from Ottoman control and passed fully into the German sphere.\textsuperscript{165}

The Treaty of Batum, which stopped the fighting, was signed between the Republic of Armenia and Turkey on 4 June 1918.\textsuperscript{166} The Ottoman government for the first time recognised the right of the Armenians to a state outside its borders, thus acknowledging the existence of the Republic of Armenia. The treaty stipulated that Armenia would have an area\textsuperscript{167} of 10,000 square kilometres, that Ottoman troops and material would be transported unhindered over Armenian territory and the Ottoman army would reserve the right to use its own forces if the Armenians proved incapable of maintaining order and facilitating transportation. Turkish cannons were to be installed four miles from Etchmiadzin and four miles from Erevan. The terms were humiliating for Armenia and she

\textsuperscript{165} CAB 23/43, War Cabinet, 59, 25 June 1918; FO371/3393/102445, Rumbold to Balfour, 3 June 1918.

\textsuperscript{166} Republic of Armenia Modern History State Central Archives, Fond 114, L. 2, Files 13 and 63, Text of Treaty of Batum, 4 June 1918; see also, State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, Files 2 and 27, pp. 2-13 and pp. 1-22, Treaty of Batum, 4 June 1918.

\textsuperscript{167} The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Austria 576, no. 69471, Mons. Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 26 June 1918.
had no choice but to succumb, but not wholly. Turkey could not trample on her and virtually walk over her. During the desperate days of May 1918, as Erevan and Etchmiadzin, the very heartland of Russian Armenia, were threatened, the Armenians were able not only to stop the advance of the Turkish troops, but even to repulse them. The Ottoman military leaders, now competing with the Germans, the British and the Soviets for the control of Baku, had preferred to make peace with Armenia in order to reserve their forces for the dash forward to the oil city.168

It was acknowledged by the British Foreign Office that the establishment of the independent states of Georgia and Armenia was necessary in order to erect a solid barrier, which would break contact between the Ottoman Empire and Persia and the Azerbaijan territories. The main reason for separating the Tatars and the Turks was that if the Tatars of east Caucasus and Azerbaijan were directly linked with Turkey, the latter would be in a position to bring under her direct influence the whole of Northern Persia, Afghanistan and Turkestan.169 The British Foreign Office was correct in its judgement, for although the Young Turk government had recognised the Independence of Armenia, Talaat Pasha, the Grand Vizier, was indignantly against the independence of Armenia. Writing to Halil Bey on 24 May, four days before Armenia's proclamation of independence, Talaat expressed his grave concern:

I absolutely oppose the creation of any form of Armenian government. A small autonomous Armenia, in five years time will


turn into an Armenian state with a population of five million, and it
will dominate the whole of the Caucasus and will have the form of
a Bulgaria of the East. The Armenians of Persia and the U.S.A.
would assemble there and would receive every kind of aid from
Britain and France, and in the future with Christian Georgia and
very easily with the Persians will work against us. ... Eliminating this
blister from its roots is the best solution.\textsuperscript{170}

Moreover, the independence of Muslim states was viewed differently by the
Young Turk government. Having established their military foothold on pre-1914
boundaries, even having retaken the Caucasian territories lost in 1878, the final
thrust on the way of paving the road to the land of Turan seemed to be in sight.
To meet the objective swiftly, the Turkish government, in agreement with
Germany, had planned to 'persuade' the Muslims in the Caucasus and Central Asia
to declare their independence and then seek 'Turkish protection' so as to expel the
Russian element in the country. In this way it was hoped that the Caucasus would
become part of the Turkish empire.\textsuperscript{171} But it was not solely due to Turkish
propaganda that the Caucasus and Central Asia favoured independence. It was
due to the violent substitution of a Bolshevik regime in Central Asia that had
tipped the scales. As a result, a Muslim reaction, led by the Ulema of Bukhara
was directed against all European influence aiming at including the whole of
Turkestan in an independent Muslim Khanate in alliance with other Muslim
powers. It was reported that Muslim feeling, not only in Turkestan but throughout
the rest of the provinces, was 'extremely bitter' and that Turkish propaganda was

\textsuperscript{170} Turkish Foreign Ministry, File 124, Talaat Pasha to Halil Bey, 24 May

\textsuperscript{171} FO371/3315/65117, 'Mussulman State in the Caucasus', 12 Apr. 1918;
FO371/3393/57615, Rumbold to Balfour, 25 March 1918; L/P & S/11/133, Rumbold to
Balfour, 11 March 1918.
active among them, preaching the desirability of an entente between Bukhara and Turkey. Already Yusuf Akchura, the Kazan Tatar irredentist and one of the most prominent figures of Pan-Turanism, who had been at Constantinople, was reported to have arrived in Central Asia to promote the union.\textsuperscript{172} Enver Pasha, presiding over a committee at the Turkish War Office dealing with propaganda work in Persia and Central Asia, gave special attention to Turkestan, Afghanistan and India. Meanwhile, another committee had been set up for the purpose of modifying the Turkish language, so as to make it comprehensible to the Muslim population of Central Asia.\textsuperscript{173}

Certainly events during the months of March and June while Turkey had established a military presence in Azerbaijan and the establishment of a Bolshevik regime in Central Asia, had undoubtedly been encouraging factors in directing Central Asian Muslim orientation towards Turkey. Central Asian anti-Bolshevik attitudes were strong. Prior to 7 November, 1917, and as long as the Bolsheviks were in power, they had exploited the slogan of national self-determination, but once they had seized complete power, it was in their interest to give a different and narrower meaning. Bolshevik sincerity was doubted by the Central Asian people as they came to grasp the true meaning of 'self-determination' and similar eloquent statements. Although the Commissariat at Tashkent had maintained its authority by 'force', the country as a whole was in an appalling condition and in a state of anarchy and starvation. Under these circumstances it seemed almost inevitable that Central Asia should turn to Turkey. To this effect, in February 1918, Sadri Maksudov, the President of the representative Council in Ferghana, arrived at Constantinople, and in his speech, attacked the Bolshevik government

\textsuperscript{172} FO395/242/88704/64783, 'German and Turkish Activities in the Middle East Since the Russian Revolution', Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, 8 May 1918.

\textsuperscript{173} FO371/3393/67141, Rumbold to Balfour, 9 Apr. 1918.
and prophesied a 'glorious' future for Turkestan, with the help of 'our brothers' in Constantinople. He also stated that:

Whether in Anatolia or Turkestan, a Turk is always a Turk. Turkism is arising from the ruins of Tsardom. 174

At the beginning of May 1918, Khan-Khoisky, head of the independent Azerbaijani government, appealed to Nuri Pasha, the Commander in Chief of the Turkish forces operating in the Caucasus, in the course of a meeting in the mosque at Elizavetpol he declared as follows:

With throbbing hearts the mountain peoples of the Caucasus, and the Volga Tatars, the Transcaucasian Sarts, and the citizens Khiva and Bukhara, the Uzbeks and Kirghiz are waiting for the Turkish Army to bring liberation. Long live the unity of all Turks. 175

As the time was ripe for a separatist movement, the necessary driving force for this was contributed by Djounayt Khan, who had organised the 1916 revolution. Djounayt Khan, refusing to recognise the Bolshevik government, took possession of the government's depots of arms and ammunition and set about forming an army. In association with the leaders of the Pan-Turanian movement an independent Turkestan was pursued. It was also reported that Maksudov and the Sheikh-ul-Islam at Constantinople, had sent joint greetings to the Muslims of the Crimea, the Caucasus, Khiva, Bukhara, Persia, India and China. In May 1918, the Emir of Afghanistan and the Khans of Khiva accepted a proposal from Turkey

174. Ibid., no. 6554, Rumbold to Balfour, 4 Jan. 1918.
that they should join a Pan-Turanian Federation.\textsuperscript{176}

Under the shadow of such hopes and emotions, events in Baku, during the months of May and September proved disastrous for the Armenian community. The Tatars, welcoming the Turkish thrust towards the oil city after the battle of Sardarabad, in their turn took up arms to expel the Bolsheviks; according to Kazemzadeh, Baku stood as a 'Bolshevik island in a non Bolshevik sea'. As the struggle for Baku\textsuperscript{177} was in progress, surprisingly, the British War Cabinet did discuss the possibility of giving to the Turks the Turanian lands. In a meeting on 24 June, Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, pointed out that the Turks were 'more anxious' to acquire the 'rich country' than they were to regain Mesopotamia or Palestine. The Prime Minister suggested that some peace arrangements 'might' be arrived at with the Turkish government by which the Turanian territory 'might' be given to them.\textsuperscript{178} In support of this view, Lloyd George expressed the opinion that:

\begin{quote}
It would be better for us for Turkey to hold Baku, as it was not probable they would even be dangerous to our interests in the East, whilst, on the other hand, Russia, if in the future she became regenerated, might be so.\textsuperscript{179}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{176} FO371/3304/121276, 'Political Developments in Russian Central Asia Since the Russian Revolution', Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, 27 June 1918; FO371/3393/82873 & 6554, Rumbold to Balfour, 4 Jan & 22 Apr. 1918.

\textsuperscript{177} L. C. Dunsterville, The Adventures of Dunsterforce, (London, 1920), pp. 265-78; see also, CAB 1/30, Influence of Pan-Turkish Political Aims on Turkish Military Policy, 1914-1918, pp. 64-8.

\textsuperscript{178} India Office Library Record Office, Curzon Papers, Mss Eur File 112/143, Eastern Committee, War Cabinet, 435, min. 8, 'Russia: The Caucasus', 24 June 1918.

\textsuperscript{179} CAB 23/6, War Cabinet, 435, min. 8, 'Russia: The Caucasus', 24 June 1918.
However, Lord Curzon, Chairman of the Eastern Committee, expressed the opinion that, in order to satisfy the Pan-Turanian ambition of the Turkish government, it would be 'necessary' to give up the district of Azerbaijan, but that in view of the fact that the British government was protecting the rights of Persia, it seemed to be 'impossible' for Britain to barter a portion of Persian territory. Resuming the discussion on this question the following day, Lord Curzon reviewed the whole situation in the Middle East. Looking at the serious matter not naively as the Prime Minister had done, he presented Pan-Turanism as inexplicitly bound up with German ambition. Curzon indicated that German ambition, which had received an 'immense impetus' since the collapse of Russia and the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, lay along two main lines of advance. A northern line through the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian and Turkestan, to the borders of Chinese Turkestan; and a southern line through Palestine, Mesopotamia and through Persia and Afghanistan against India. That the whole of the area between these lines was a major theatre of 'actual' or 'probable' warfare. With reference to the invasion, Curzon drew the Cabinet's special attention, both to the enormous economic potentialities of the Caucasus and to the political rivalry in the region between Germany and Turkey, both of whom were at the moment in a race for Baku. The capture of Baku, would give the Germans access to the Caspian fleet, to the Volga, to Turkestan and to Northern Persia, added Curzon. Making reference to the sad condition of the Armenians, Lord Curzon stated that:

The Armenians, the most unhappy people in the world, have been broken by persecution, destroyed by massacre, almost battered out of existence, with only a few fragments remaining. The Imperial War

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181. CAB 23/41, War Cabinet 20, min. 5, 25 June 1918.
Cabinet must realise the fact that a victory of the Germans and Turks in the region means, in all probability, the final extinction of that unhappy people. We are bound by every tradition of our policy, and every pronouncement of our leaders, to do what we can on their behalf.\textsuperscript{182}

One solution would have been to unite the various elements in the Caucasus in a common opposition against the Turks. But Colonel Pike's efforts at Tiflis in this direction were hampered by the 'ceaseless' intrigues among the nationalities concerned. Every effort made to effect the purpose, through the National Council and the national leaders both in Transcaucasia and abroad was to no avail. The Tatars were openly pro-Turk, while many of the Georgians showed the same sympathies. The Armenians alone were on the whole sincere, but even General Andranik himself eventually declared that he was surrounded by 'traitors' and 'betrayers'.\textsuperscript{183}

With the fall of Baku to Turkish arms on 15 September 1918, many massacres of Armenians followed. Monsignor Dolci, the Vatican ambassador at Constantinople, had received reliable information that 30,000 Armenians were massacred when the Turkish troops entered Baku.\textsuperscript{184} A report despatched from the North Persian Force, briefed that:

\begin{quote}
On 15 September Turks entered Baku; they commenced looting.
Massacres in full swing on September 16. Massacres did not slacken
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{182} CAB 23/43, War Cabinet 59, 25 June 1918.

\textsuperscript{183} FO371/3284/72701, 'Memo. Regarding the Support Afforded to the Armenians', 29 Apr. 1918,

until 19 September. For a week corpses lay all over the town, chiefly old men, women and children. Turkish regulars certainly took part in massacre. Town was looted systematically with exception of Tatar houses by Turkish officers and soldiers who sent plunder away by train.\footnote{185}

While an account of the happenings at Baku described by Khrístofor Miklailovich Evangulov, in charge of posts and telegraphs, stated:

Robberies, murders and rapes were at their height on 15 September. In the whole town massacres of the Armenian population and robberies of all non-Muslim peoples were going on. They broke the doors and windows, entered the living quarters, dragged out men, women and children and killed them in the street.

... In some spots there were mountains of dead bodies, and many had terrible wounds from dum-dum bullets. The most appalling picture was at the entrance to the Treasury Lane from Surukhanskoi street. The whole street was covered with dead bodies of children not older than nine or ten years. ... Many had their throats cut; it was obvious that the wretched ones had been slaughtered like lambs.\footnote{186}
By October 1918, Pan-Turanian schemes of territorial aggrandizement had attained their widest execution. From Derbend to Astara the western coast of the Caspian Sea was in Turkish hands, as well as the southern half of Daghestan. In Transcaucasia the Turks were in occupation of the republic of Azerbaijan and were supported by the government and the great bulk of the inhabitants. The Turkish troops firmly held the Georgian province of Batum, the Armenian provinces of Kars and Ardahan, and by treaty right controlled Armenia’s railways and roads. In north-western Persia, they held the whole of Persian Azerbaijan. The two pretexts upon which Turkey made her advance and justified it, were the Pan-Islamic movement, appealing to all the members of the Muslim faith to join together, while on considerations of race, the pan-Turanian movement, invited the people of Turkestan and Central Asia once again to form a single nation.  

However, by the end of October 1918, as a result of the British offensive in the Middle East, Turkey lost the war. Already Bulgaria’s armistice had convinced the Turkish government that its best interest would be served by ceasing hostilities. The condition imposed on Turkey by the Armistice of Mudros on 31 October 1918, were less sweeping and less disabling, than might have been expected in the circumstances. The Armistice of Mudros provided for the evacuation of Transcaucasian territory by Ottoman troops. But as for the six Armenian vilayets of eastern Turkey in which the future of an independent Armenia was supposed to lie, no Ottoman withdrawal was required. The only provision made was that the Allies reserved the right to occupy any part of them in the event of disorder appearing.  

As a national party the Young Turks disappeared in 1918. But the Pan-Turanian aims they had endeavoured to forward survived. Evidently, under Enver Pasha’s instructions, the Turks continued to transport large numbers of men to both the

northern Caucasus and Azerbaijan republics and simply continued the war. Threatened by such Pan-Turanian military implications, the Armenians demanded an immediate allied occupation of the Armenian province. However, serious discussion on the question of Armenian independence as a 'barrier' against Pan-Turanism was once again top of the agenda at the British War Cabinet meeting on 2 December 1918. Lord Curzon, speaking in the meeting, stressed the desire to have an independent Armenia, whether its boundaries were 'narrow' or 'wide', but a self-governing community. To this proposal, Curzon attached three main reasons for desiring that objective. In the first place it was desired to provide a 'national home' for the scattered people of the Armenian race. Secondly, he believed that the setting up of an Armenian state would act as a 'palisade' against the Pan-Turanian ambitions of the Turks, which could overflow the Caucasus regions and carry 'real peril' to the countries of the Middle East and East. Thirdly, an independent Armenia would constitute an 'effective barrier' against future aggression by any foreign power, impelled, by ambition by other motives, to press forward in that direction. Lord Robert Cecil, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Assistant Foreign Minister, was also inclined to support the creation of a 'large Armenia'. However, he was opposed to Commander Hogarth's plan to remove the Armenians from the north to the south, and give the northern part back to the Turks. Such an implication, according to Lord Cecil, would have resulted in the renewal of Armenian massacres and would have enabled Turkey to have a direct connection between Anatolia and the Turkish population in the Caucasus, something which 'ought to' be avoided as far as Pan-Turanism was concerned. A barrier across from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean according to Lord Cecil would have sufficed.

188. FO371/3415/186845, see minute, 22 Nov. 1918.

189. CAB 27/24, War Cabinet, Eastern Committee, 40th meeting, 2 Dec. 1918.
But Britain proved unable either to organise the Armenian forces or to finance them. The assumption of the British government that a 'barrier' consisting of an autonomous or independent Armenia against Pan-Turanism also fell flat. And as the years passed, the once burning Armenian question found less expression in European conferences. European politicians being engaged in power struggles were more concerned with their national interests than squabbling over the future fate of the Armenians. After the Treaty of Lausanne (24 July 1923), as Kemalist Turkey ceded Mosul and its petroleum resources to Iraq under British mandate, Lord Curzon regrettably remarked:

Oil weighed more heavily in the negotiations than Armenian blood.\(^{190}\)

And Winston Churchill, the opposition leader, waxed indignant:

History will search in vain for the word "Armenia".\(^{191}\)

The words 'Armenia' or 'Armenians' were not mentioned in the Treaty of Lausanne. The geographical entity was also erased from the map.

As the triumvirate leaders of the CUP were ousted from power, Turkish opposition leaders became more and more outspoken in criticising the CUP regime and its policies. Halide Edib, a friend of Talaat Pasha, who had enjoyed literary freedom under CUP rule, criticised the policy of Pan-Turanism as 'unattainable' and 'unrealistic'. In her memoirs, Edib asserted that:

\(^{190}\) J. Derogy, Resistance and Revenge, pp. 192-3.

I believed and believe that nationalism is cultural and regional in Turkey and that it would not be possible to unite the Turks in Russia to us politically in the way we then thought was possible. They themselves follow distinct and national lines, and differ from us very much.\textsuperscript{192}

Even the proprietor and editor of the Ikdal newspaper was very contemptuous of the Pan-Turanian movement. He argued that the various Muslim countries lying between Constantinople and Siberia were 'far too' different in manners and customs, and 'far too' widely separated on the map to make any kind of serious cooperation between them possible.\textsuperscript{193}

Such views were not shared by the CUP leaders. Despite the armistice at Mudros, Enver had not relinquished his Pan-Turanian policy. He strove to keep the Northern Caucasus and Azerbaijan linked with the Ottoman empire. Fighting between Turkish officers and the British expeditionary force in 1919 continued. At the same time, captain Mehmet Kasim, the Turkish delegate to Afghanistan, disseminated leaflets throughout Central Asia appealing to all Turks and Muslims alike to join forces to:

\begin{itemize}
\item save Turkestan and assist in freeing the holy Islamic centres and the
\item Ottoman dominions.\textsuperscript{194}
\end{itemize}

Simultaneously, strong penetration of Pan-Turanian propaganda in the Caucasus and Azerbaijan continued to arouse the sentiments of the Turkic peoples by


\textsuperscript{194} J. Landau, Pan-Turkism in Turkey: A Study in Irredentism, p. 54.
skilfully exploiting local apprehension about the new regime in the Soviet Union. While in Constantinople, Ziya Gokalp, who held a most responsible position in the Head Office of the CUP, was subjected to deportation by the Allied court martial set up in Constantinople. It was reported that Ziya Gokalp was in 'close touch' with the representatives of Azerbaijan at Constantinople and was endeavouring to 'persuade' the Caucasus Kurds and Circassian Muslims to support the Tatars against the Armenians in their country. It was also reported that Ziya was inflaming Turkish opinion against the Greeks and more especially the Armenians in Constantinople.\[195\]

Enver, having escaped his condemnation to death in 1919, found refuge with Djemal Pasha, Halil Bey and Semi Bey at Moscow in 1920 as guests of the Soviet government where he enjoyed 'great popularity'. Enver, who had been known to be the most ardent pro-German figure in Turkey, in his speech at the Baku Congress of Eastern Peoples, protested that he:

hated and cursed German imperialism and the German imperialists.

... He was a friend of the Soviet republic, and of the soviet idea.\[197\]

It is highly unlikely that either the Congress or the Bolsheviks believed him. For Enver's dream of Pan-Turanism was still very alive. Having arrived in Central Asia in 1921, Enver took personal command of the Basmachi forces and received


the title of 'Emir of Turkestan'. The growing popularity of Enver in Central Asia strengthened his conviction that the time was still ripe and it was feasible to unite all Turkic elements in Bukhara as the basis of a Pan-Turanian empire. Enver's ultimatum to the Bolshevik government delivered through the President of the Council of Azerbaijan, in which he expected the acknowledgement by the Soviet government of the unshakable will of the people of Bukhara, Turkestan and Khiva to live free and independent, was a clear indication of his ultimate goal. To fulfil his ambition, Enver considered it of utmost necessity to organise anti-Bolshevik revolts, uphold Pan-Turanism and Pan-Islamism as an ideology competing with that of Communism. However, Enver's revolt at Bukhara ended with his death in August 1922. Djemal Pasha, the third influential member of the CUP had a similar fate when he was assassinated in Tiflis after having failed to arouse a nationalist Pan-Turkish movement in Turkestan.

It was mainly due to the 'staunchness' and 'steadiness' of Armenian resistance during the crucial month of May 1918, that the remnant of Armenians was saved from total annihilation, rather than succumbing to Pan-Turanian expansionism. While the capitulation of the Young Turk government in October 1918, provided the basis for a vision of survival, despite the prevailing devastating conditions within the Republic of Armenia, where epidemic was rife and famine imminent. Saved from further Turkish aggression, a spark of hope for an improved future to come was lit in the hearts of the Armenian people.

198 Zenkovsky, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia, p.266.
5 Armenia: In Search of Stability and Territorial Integrity

The news of the fall of tsardom produced a wave of enthusiasm throughout the Russian Empire. Armenians too, animated by high hopes, had joined in the cry of joy, expressing their allegiance towards the Provisional Government. Above all, Armenian leaders had hoped that with the advent of the new regime, the tsarist annexation of Turkish Armenia would be annulled. The publication of the Imperial government's secret treaties, especially those concerning the political fate of Turkish Armenia, caused Armenian resentment. Frustration and animosity had also been in existence among Armenians since 1916. They had experienced harsh ill-treatment and the opposition of the Russian military authorities towards the repatriation of Armenian refugees to certain indisputably historic Armenian districts in eastern Turkey. Thus, with the change of power in Russia, Armenian leaders strove to secure a politically stable future for Turkish Armenia, where territorial integrity would be preserved.

It was with such false hopes and emotions that Armenian military and political leaders began to work. But the rapid and unprecedented turn of events in the Caucasus failed to fulfil Armenian ambitions. The rise to power of the Bolshevik government in November 1917, sealed entirely Armenian expectations for the future. The uncompromising relationship between Soviet Russia and the Allied powers, and Bolshevik concessions to Germany and Turkey, cost the Armenians dear. Significantly, the humiliating Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and V.I. Lenin's call for the evacuation of Russian troops from Turkish Armenia, resulted in the reoccupation of the Armenian districts by Ottoman troops. Subsequently, with the Soviet-Kemalist alliance, and the simultaneous military pressure against Armenia, forced the Armenian government to accept the soviétisation of the country. Amid the struggle of the great power's political and national interests, and the intense cooperation between the Bolsheviks and Kemalists, there appeared no room left
for a Just solution of the Armenian question. Under such prevailing considerations, the search of Armenian leaders for stability and territorial integrity was doomed to fail.

**The Provisional Government and Armenian Disillusionment**

The pledge made by the Provisional Government, led by Prince Lvov, to continue the war to a 'victorious end'\(^1\) had heartened the Armenians. Turkey's complete defeat was considered necessary in order to bring the Armenian question to a just solution. To this effect, the statement of Pavel Miliukov, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 18 March 1917, is of significance.

\[\text{[Russia] will remain mindful of the international engagements entered into by the fallen regime ... and will fight by their [Allies] side against the common enemy until the end ...}\]\(^2\)

Miliukov's statement, which represented at least one aspect of the Provisional Government's foreign policy, needs some attention. Russia remained 'mindful' of the secret treaties concluded by the tsarist government during 1915-16, and pledged no complete support. But legally, it appeared that the secret agreement between Russia, Britain and France remained in force, as the Provisional Government was unwilling, without the consent of the Allies, unilaterally to publish the secret agreements and to renounce them. Furthermore, the Provisional Government had abstained from publishing any formal act concerning the solution of the Armenian question. In the decree establishing the special administration of occupied Turkish

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Armenia, the Provisional Government stated that the administration was temporarily in force, pending the 'final solution' of the question of Turkish Armenia by a 'peace treaty'.\(^3\) This decision, however, was completely contrary to the secret agreement reached between the three great powers, according to which an extensive part of Turkish Armenia was to be annexed by Russia. Under such considerations, the Armenian question once again emerged as an international issue. It was obvious that the Provisional Government had rejected the secret agreement without having declared it openly.

On the subject of Constantinople, the Provisional Government was divided. Prince Lvov, the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, remained an 'ardent advocate' of its incorporation into Russia. At the same time, A. Kerensky, the Minister of Justice, wished to see all arrangements involving the annexation of Constantinople annulled.\(^4\) On the other hand, Miliukov firmly opposed any scheme which involved the neutralisation of the Straits, arguing that it would not safeguard Russian interests.\(^5\)

George Buchanan, the British ambassador at Petrograd, conferring with M.I. Tereshchenko, the Russian Finance Minister, gathered some valuable information concerning Russian schemes over Turkey. Tereshchenko had stated that he had never been a 'partisan' of a 'permanent occupation' of Constantinople, as it would have proved a 'white elephant and have to be held by a large garrison'. However, he clearly indicated that he would like to see it made an open port, over which


\(^4\) L/P & S/10/587, P1758, Eastern Report, no. XIII, 26 Apr. 1917; FO371/3381/2396, Intelligence Bureau, Depart. of Information, 'Memo. of the Turkish Attitude Towards Peace', 26 Dec. 1917.

\(^5\) Ibid., P1516, Eastern Report, no. XI, 12 Apr. 1917.
Russia should be given 'some power of control'. M.I. Tereshchenko added that it was wrong in supposing that Prince Lvov like Miliukov favoured annexation but there were other districts in Turkey, like Armenia and Kurdistan, which were of 'vital interest' to Russia. The Finance Minister shared Kerensky's view that Britain's agreement over Asia Minor 'ought' to have been 'considerably modified' and spoke strongly against allowing Italy to acquire the vilayet of Smyrna. The 'aim of all arrangements about Asia Minor' according to the Russian government, 'ought to be to bar all possibility of future German penetration', concluded Tereshchenko.

On the other hand, Miliukov's interview with the representatives of the Russian press, and Prince Lvov's proclamation, in some ways contradicted Tereshchenko's views regarding the future fate of Constantinople and Turkish Armenia. Miliukov made it known that the decision on the question of the Straits had been taken 'beforehand' in Russia's agreement with the Allies and in accordance with Russian national interests. That:

The possession of the Straits means the protection of the 'doors of our house', and it is understandable that this protection should be in our hands.

While making reference to the future status of Turkish Armenia, Miliukov stated that:

One of the principal objects of the Allies and in particular of Russia is the freeing of Armenia from the Turkish yoke. We cannot allow

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Armenia to come once more under that yoke.\textsuperscript{7}

In his turn Prince Lvov’s proclamation on behalf of the Russian government, had something different to say about Russian aims. The Provisional Government considered that their ‘right’ and ‘duty’ was ‘not’ dominion over other nations, was ‘not’ taking from them of their national inheritance, and objected to the seizure by force of foreign territory. Lvov concluded that the aim of Russia was the confirmation of ‘lasting peace’ on the basis of ‘desires of peoples’.\textsuperscript{8}

The divided and conflicting views of the Russian Cabinet towards Turkey was evident enough. Certainly, when it came to proclamations and press interviews, it was in the interest of the Russian Cabinet to make eloquent, elaborate but vague statements. But decision and policy making behind closed doors had different perspective. The Provisional Government as well as the Bolsheviks, were not concerned with the ‘desires of peoples’, but rather to enhance their power through humanitarian and moral gestures. Certainly the freeing of Armenia from Turkish rule was a principal aim for both tsarist and Provisional governments, but not the granting of independence or even an autonomous Armenian state. At least as far as the solution of the Armenian question was concerned, the policies of the tsarist and Provisional governments were identical. Turkish Armenia was to be annexed to the Russian empire and not befall to the ‘desires’ of the Armenian people. Already, to this effect, Tereshchenko had explicitly made it clear that Turkish Armenia constituted a ‘vital interest’ to

\textsuperscript{7} FO371/3010/79830, ‘Miliukov’s Interview with the Russian Press Representatives’, Buchanan to FO, 18 Apr. 1917.

Russia and Kerensky was 'firm' about annexing it.\textsuperscript{9}

Prince Gedshemukov (initials not provided in the sources), the governor of the region of Dersim, in a secret letter to General N.N. Iudenich, expressed satisfaction that Turkey had left an 'Armenia without Armenians', something which was politically viewed as a 'positive sign' for the Russian Provisional Government. Gedshemukov further stated that:

When we saw that the Armenians do not yield to us we therefore restricted their freedom. We dispersed the Armenian volunteer troops and had some of them executed.

The Armenian attempts to bring the Kurds under their influence is intolerable for Russia, since this would contribute to the creation of an independent Armenia.

With the change of the Russian government our policy does not change towards the Armenians. The Armenian danger remains identical.\textsuperscript{10}

Therefore, any attempt on the part of Armenian leaders to work for an autonomous or independent Turkish Armenia was considered dangerous for Russia. The eastern districts of historic Armenia were to remain annexed to the Russian Empire.

\textsuperscript{9}Л ГА ОП СССР, Фонд 1318, Л. 1, Файл 40, репр. in Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 4033, L. 2, File 899, 'Note About Turkish Armenia', pp. 9-27, 30 Nov. 1917.

\textsuperscript{10}Л ГБМА, Фонд 2168, Л. 1, Файл 276, Prince Gedshemukov to General N.N. Iudenich, 14 (27) March 1917.
In fact, the refusal of Kerensky to transfer the whole of the Armenian battalions from the Eastern front for operation in the Caucasus was a clear indication of Russian dominant military control over Turkish Armenia. The Provisional Government, however, was compelled in time to transfer thousands of Armenian soldiers from the European theatre to the Caucasus. The disintegration of the Russian armies on every front, particularly in the Caucasus arena, following the defeatist propaganda of the Bolsheviks, was the real source of this decision. But the reassignment of these troops had hardly begun, when the operation was interrupted by the Bolshevik seizure of power.

Disillusioned with the Provisional Government's proclamation of 'no annexations or conquest', and the Ozakom's (Special Transcaucasian Committee) decree of 26 April (9 May) 1917, which gave Turkish Armenia a civil administration, Armenian leaders acted to realise their political aspirations. Boghos Nubar hastened to present the desired solution which would have realised the national aspiration of the Armenians. Writing to James Bryce, Boghos Nubar advocated the creation of an autonomous Armenia, composed exclusively of the Armenian territories of the Ottoman Empire. He made it clearly understood that the Armenian National Delegation pleaded for the liberation of territories from the Turkish portion of the regions and not for the separation from Russian and Persian territories. At the same time, the Armenian National Congress at Tiflis, in its turn petitioned the Provisional Government for a just solution of the Armenian question in Turkey. The National Congress was primarily concerned with Armenian repatriation, and defence of the front. Inhibited formerly by tsarist opposition to repatriation, the Congress urged the immediate formation of

11. Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Box 145, Robert Cecil to Bryce, 15 Nov. 1917; FO371/3062/219742, min. by Mark Sykes, 17 Nov. 1917.

a body to supervise and secure the physical existence of Turkish Armenians. It also called for the annulling of the June 1916 tsarist decree, which had placed the administration of Turkish Armenia under military rule.  

The official response of the Provisional Government was the issue of a decree dated 26 April (9 May) 1917, of an 'Arrangement about Turkish Armenia'. The decree asserted that:

I The land of Turkish Armenia, in so far as the civil administration taken over by the Russian forces is concerned, is removed from the jurisdiction of Caucasian administrative bodies and of the military authorities of the Caucasus front, and is subject directly to the Provisional Government.

II The powers mentioned in Article I, as well as the prerogatives granted to the governor-general for the administration of these Turkish Armenian regions by the temporary law of June 5 (18), are entrusted by the Provisional Government to its appointed General Commissar for Turkish Armenia.

III The General Commissar of Turkish Armenia will have an assistant to deal with civil affairs.

IV The General Commissar, in pursuance of a report from his assistant for civil affairs, will immediately submit to the Provisional Government his proposals for desirable additions to, or changes in, the 5 (18) June 1916, temporary law

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concerning the administration of Turkish Armenian regions.  

At first glance the decree portrays an impressive change from that of tsarist administrative schemes. However, the decree made no mention of future autonomy. On the other hand, when it came to the Finnish and Polish question, the Provisional Government in its declaration of 9 (22) May, recognised the autonomous rights of Finland and Poland's claim to independence. Although, under the terms of the decree, Armenians enjoyed a taste of officialdom, filling many civil positions, this was not a break with tsarist annexationist policy. The policy continued to be the same. Under the 1916 Act, the position of Governor General was entrusted to General Alexis Peshkov, while with the 1917 decree, the position of General Commissar was assumed by another General, P. Averianov. It was obvious that the Provisional Government was concerned to maintain its military grip over the conquered territories of Turkish Armenia. This notion was to a certain extent advantageous also to the Armenians, who had placed their reliance on Russia for the security of the region free from further Turkish offensives. But anxiety must have been felt as to what extent this condition would prevail when the war was advantageously concluded and the military front had been stabilised.

The ineffectiveness, however, of the Provisional Government's measures in administering the Armenian provinces, had dashed the high expectations of the Armenian people at large. Disquieting reports from Turkish Armenia were being constantly despatched. They spoke of the continued oppression and the disarming

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of the Armenian population by Russian officials. Armenian indignation towards Russia was further aroused upon experiencing the unhindered Kurdish raids on Armenian villages while the Russian military authorities remained unduly complacent towards the lawlessness of the Kurds. Repeated petitions were also bitter, demanding the return of Armenian property deeds confiscated in 1916, which still remained unresolved.16

The Provisional Government had not dropped the tsarist policy of pampering the Kurdish tribes. On the orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian army, the salaries of two Kurdish chieftans, Kiamil Bey and Bedir Khan, had been raised to seven hundred and fifty roubles for the purpose of:

Getting in touch with the Kurds living outside the Russian conquered territories so that they would side with Russia ...

Similarly, Prince Gedshemukov had been assigned the task of bringing the various Kurdish tribes, whether within or outside the Russian conquered territories, under the direct influence of Russia. Gedshemukov was afforded full authority to organise the work and spend 'as much money as was necessary' to achieve his task.17 The Russian government could not alienate the numerically large Kurdish tribes for the sake of Armenian interests. Kurdish unrest could have disrupted Russian annexationist policy in the strategically important region. An Armenian autonomy would have either made the Kurds pursue a similar policy for


an independent Kurdistan or made them side with Turkey against Russia.

On the other hand, the intensive Bolshevik propaganda to cease hostilities with the Ottoman Empire and Germany had seriously hampered the war efforts of the Provisional Government. The alarming desertion of Russian soldiers from the Caucasus front and the inability of the Provisional Government to enforce its will in restraining the mass exodus, proved to be disastrous for Armenian national security amid the preparations for an Ottoman advance. The demoralisation of the 200,000 Russian troops in the Caucasus was skilfully stirred up by Bolshevik agents' provocation, encouraging them to leave the Caucasus and 'go home' as it was 'unnecessary to fight for these Asiatics'. For the Bolsheviks, the massive desertions on all fronts meant a victory for Bolshevik ideals. It also meant that their political aims decisively gained ground among the masses. A despatch from Lieutenant-Colonel W.H. Gibbon stated that Russian and Turkish officers were 'fraternising' and 'dining together'. The British War Office too had ample evidence that Turkish and Russian troops had agreed to carry on only a 'sham war'. The Russians had also assured the Turks that they would 'evacuate Turkish territory altogether' on the first day of peace and that the Ottoman Empire should enter into 'entire possession' of the territory on the principle of 'no annexations'.

Amid these distractions, M.I. Tereshchenko, the Russian Foreign Minister, was

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18. FO371/3008/221189, Intelligence Bureau, Depart. of Information, 19 Nov. 1917.


apprehensive as to whether the Provisional Government would be able to hold the Caucasus front for very long. Conferring with Buchanan, Tereshchenko explained that the Russian military situation in the Caucasus was 'unsatisfactory'. Desertions and the difficulties in sending supplies to the army had caused a 'certain amount' of unrest among the Muslim population. The Foreign Minister also stated that he was anxious to send further reinforcements from Sevastopol to Trebizond, but troops destined for this expedition had 'protested' against being sent to carry out a policy of annexation. This proved that the ideological concepts of Lenin were being successfully sown among the Russian troops. At the First Congress of Soviets held in May 1917, Lenin, making reference to the Armenian question, stated that:

If the Russian army which is now stationed in Armenia were to make the country an independent Armenian republic and the money which the financiers of England and France are taking from us were given to the Armenians it would be much better.

We say: withdraw the armies and let the nation settle the question independently. Thus, if tomorrow the soviets were to take power into their hands, it would be 'a method of socialist revolution' and we would then say ... Russia, take the troops out of Armenia - otherwise it would be false.

Certainly Lenin's policy would have suited Turkish and German ambitions. A Turkish Armenia without Russian troops would have meant placing the Armenians and the region as a whole at the mercy of the Ottoman troops.

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21. FO371/3062/104866, G. Buchanan to the King and War Cabinet, 23 May 1917.
Overall, the Provisional Government's rule was incompetent. Engrossed in a political conflict with the Bolsheviks at a time when the latter were rapidly consolidating their power, it seemed almost impossible that any Russian front could have resisted an enemy offensive. Lenin's appeal urging the proletariat to rise against the bourgeoisie, even declaring that 'civil war was preferable to war at the front' meant anarchy and disaster, not only among the masses but in the military ranks.

The Advent of the Bolshevik Government and Armenian Misgivings

By November 1917, Bolshevik sponsored resolutions had found ardent expression among the Russian public in view of Kerensky's inability to tackle the economic, military and social crises. The July 1917 crises followed by the Kornilov affair in September, brought the Bolsheviks to power on 7 November 1917. Therefore, the implementation of 'peace without annexations', meant that the Armenians were bound to lose most under Bolshevik rule. In fact, on assuming power, the Council of People's Commissars resolved to extend to Turkish Armenia its principle conceding to nations the right of self-determination, including secession.

The Soviet proclamation of 5 December 1917, signed by the President of the Council of People's Commissar, V.I. Lenin and the Commissar for Nationalities, J.V. Stalin, to all Muslims, made reference to Turkish Armenia as well. The proclamation asserted that:

> We give notice that the treaty about the partition of Turkey and the taking away of Armenia from her has been torn up and destroyed.

As soon as every military action ceases the Armenians will be

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guaranteed the right of freely determining their own political fate.  

The proclamation was followed by a decree on Turkish Armenia which made a solution of the Armenian question impossible. The Soviet decree of 31 December 1917, informed the Armenian people that the Russian Peasant and Workers' Government supported the right of the Armenians in the part of Turkish Armenia occupied by Russia to free determination, including complete independence. The Council of People's Commissars considered that this right could be realised only on condition of a number of 'preliminary guarantees absolutely essential for a free referendum' by the Armenian people. It considered that such guarantees would be:

I The immediate withdrawal of forces from Turkish Armenia and the immediate organisation of an Armenian militia to ensure the personal and collective security of the inhabitants of Turkish Armenia.

II The unhampered return of refugees and Armenian emigrants dispersed in various countries to Turkish Armenia.

III The return to Turkish Armenia of Armenians forcibly deported during the war by the Turkish authorities into the interior of Turkey, on which the Council of People's Commissars will insist during peace negotiations with the Turkish authorities.

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IV The setting up in Turkish Armenia of a provisional people's government in the form of a soviet of deputies and of an Armenian committee elected on democratic principles. Stepan Shahumian, the Extraordinary Temporary Commissar for Caucasian affairs, is to be entrusted with the task of affording the population of Turkish Armenia every assistance to realise points II and III and also to undertake the creation of a local commission to determine the methods of withdrawing forces from Turkish Armenia.  

Significantly there was no mention of Russian Armenia in this decree. But above all, neither the Council of People's Commissars nor the Congress of Soviets had the means to implement points II, III, and IV. Lenin and Stalin were fully aware that their decree could bring the Armenians nothing but new losses. Under the prevailing circumstances, the withdrawal of Russian troops from Turkish Armenia would have meant the recapture of the region by Turkey. Lenin was well aware of this. Paragraph three of the charter which asserted that the return of Armenian refugees would be 'insisted' upon by the Soviet government during peace talks with the Turkish government, was meaningless. The self-determination of Armenia down to complete independence, and the creation of an 'Armenian people's government', formed a decorative veil to cloak Lenin's true intentions. It appears obvious that Lenin was seeking to find a diplomatic path to make it easier to negotiate with Turkey and not to liberate the Armenians. The withdrawal of Russian forces served as a basis to entice Turkey to his side. In

fact, the issuing of this decree was declared to be due to the 'undisguised' wish of Turkey and Germany to retain by 'force' their military authority in the Turkish Armenian provinces.\textsuperscript{26}

Armenian Communists, led by Stepan Shahumian, were bitterly dissatisfied with paragraph I of the decree which called for the evacuation of Russian troops from Turkish Armenia. In their joint appeal to Lenin and Stalin, they proposed an amendment to this effect. The proposal stated that:

\begin{quote}
Enough Russian forces will be left in Armenia, (in the districts of Erzerum, Van and Bitlis) until such time as the Armenian people find it physically possible, by a free and universal vote, to decide on the internal organisation of independent Armenia, and until such time as an Armenian people's militia is formed to maintain internal order and external security.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

However, the blunt refusal of Lenin and Stalin to accept the amendment was not surprising. The 'immediate withdrawal' was of utmost national interest: the realisation of Bolshevik revolutionary aims. For Lenin neither Armenia nor the Armenian question presented any interest. Soviet power and world revolution prevailed over all other considerations.

Armenian misgivings towards Bolshevik policy were further aroused during the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, which proved to be disastrous for a solution of the


Armenian question. Subsequently, with the final settlement of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918, between Russia, Germany and Turkey, it appears that Bolshevik policy aimed at removing the Armenian question from the international scene. This was eloquently borne out in paragraph four of the treaty:

Russia will do everything in her power to complete as soon as possible the evacuation of the Anatolian provinces and their orderly return to Turkey. The districts of Ardahan, Kars and Batum shall likewise without delay be evacuated by Russian troops. Russia shall not interfere in the reorganisation of the Constitutional and international condition of these districts, but shall leave it to the population of these districts to carry out the reorganisation in agreement with the neighbouring States, particularly Turkey.\(^\text{28}\)

Evidently, the treaty had put an end to any consideration of Armenian independence. It had also in a sense repudiated the Soviet decree of 31 December 1917, since it stipulated the return of the Armenian districts to Turkey, under which, self-determination to complete independence would have been rendered impossible. In addition, the restoration of the status quo of 1877, that is, the return to Turkey of the districts of Kars, Batum and Ardahan, was a further blow to the Armenian question. This showed to what extent Bolshevik policy was prepared to make sacrifices at the expense of Armenia to secure Turkey's friendship. The seizure of Batum, the only port in the country, was vitally important to the future of the Caucasus. A further severe blow directed at ending the Armenian question, constituted sub-paragraph five of the first paragraph to the supplementary treaty, which asserted that:

\(^{28}\) L/P & S/10/587, P1053, Eastern Report, no. LVIII, 'Russia: The Peace Terms', 7 March 1918. See also, FO371/4367/PID 116, FO Turkey/006, 4 Oct. 1918.
The Russian Republic undertakes to demobilise and dissolve the Armenian hordes, whether of Russian or Turkish nationality, now in the Russian and Ottoman occupied provinces, and entirely to disband them.29

The Bolshevik terminology of 'Armenian hordes' was obnoxious. These 'hordes' constituted the Armenian national armed forces, who, witnessing the annihilation of their people under Turkish rule, were there to defend their national existence and the freedom of liberated Turkish Armenia. Lenin and Stalin should have fully recognised the fact that the withdrawal of the Russian troops and in addition to that the liquidation of the Armenian contingents, meant exposing the Armenian nation as a whole to the Turkish government's decision concerning extermination.

The refusal of the government of the Caucasian Republic to recognise the clause in the Brest-Litovsk treaty which provided for the separation of the three Caucasian provinces of Batum, Kars and Ardahan against the will of their inhabitants30 was meaningless. The attempts of the Transcaucasian Seim to secure a separate peace with the Ottoman Empire fell on deaf ears. It provided a basis for the restoration of the frontier of Russia and Turkey as it had existed in 1914. It also stipulated the right of self-determination for the peoples of eastern Anatolia, and in particular, the autonomy of Turkish Armenia under Turkish suzerainty.31


At this stage it seemed pointless to contemplate a separate peace with Turkey, since the long planned Pan-Turanian ambition of the Turkish government had finally seemed realisable. The German Chancellor, von Hertling, responding to Archbishop Hartmann's appeal for the alleviation of the plight of the Armenian people, advised that:

The return of a peaceful situation is only possible if the Armenians submit to the Turkish government and surrender their political aspirations which are at present without any future.  

Consenting to the German Chancellor's advice to 'submit' to the Turkish government would have been suicidal for the Armenians. Already grave reports of renewed massacres of Armenians were being circulated once again in the international arena. The British Cabinet had substantial information as regards the plight of Armenians.

The Turks are now commencing operations of extermination. The peril of the Armenians is extreme... The destruction and disintegration of the Armenians proceeds apace and paves the way for Turco-German dominion, extending through the Turanian belt...

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32. The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Asia 57, no. 63502/5860, von Hertling to Arch. Hartmann, Berlin, 13 Apr. 1918.

33. FO371/3400/48965, Townley to FO, The Hague, 16 March 1918.

Solicitude and Response

The Armenian community in the diaspora had not remained silent in the midst of renewed persecutions. A group of Armenian Catholics residing in Rome pleaded with the Pope for the protection of their nation. They emphasised that at this 'terrible moment' the Armenians ran the danger of being exterminated in the districts given up by Soviet Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The letter concluded that:

In order to prevent such a horrible extermination we see no other refuge and remedy but to appeal to Your valid protection.\(^{35}\)

Boghos Nubar, too, writing to Cardinal Gasparri, the Secretary of State for the Vatican, asked for the Vatican's support. He pointed out that, under present tragic circumstances, only the Pope could take effective steps to exert pressure on the Turkish government and save the Armenian nation from total extermination.\(^{36}\)

The response of the Pope was instantaneous. In a pontifical document addressed to the Sultan, His Holiness, Benedict XV, expressed deep 'anguish' and 'resentment' upon hearing authenticated information about the resumption of 'untellable sufferings' endured by the Armenians, which were similar to those in the past. Referring to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Pope expressed fear about the plight of the Armenians since those regions were 'largely inhabited' by Armenians. His Holiness called upon the Sultan to protect the disarmed and innocent population and hoped that His Majesty would consent to the Vatican's exhortations. That,

\(^{35}\) Venice, Archive Des P.P. Mechitaristes, File 1918, Armenian Catholics to the Pope, Benedict XV, Rome, 7 March 1918.

\(^{36}\) The Vatican, Secretary of State Archives, File Asia 57, no. 60608, Boghos Nubar to Cardinal Gasparri, 11 March 1918.
... in a lofty sentiment of justice and clemency He [His Majesty the Sultan] would condescend to take convenient measures in favour of these unfortunate people, who suffered so severely in the war.\textsuperscript{37}

The tone of the Sublime Porte's reply to the Pope was similar to the disguised 'assurance' given in its letter of 10 November 1915, regarding the 'full protection' of the 'entire' Armenian people. The Sultan explained that the 'immutable principle' of Ottoman sovereign policy constituted:

The feeling of high solicitude and the traditional justice of our ancestors with regard to all their subjects, without distinction either of race or religion, as well as tolerance and respect for the beliefs of different communities which the Almighty has deigned to confide in us to guard them.

The Sultan, furthermore, assured the Pope that all faithful Ottoman subjects would continue to enjoy the Sublime Porte's 'paternal protection'. And that the Porte's 'keen desire' was to see Armenians living in 'peace and full prosperity', side by side with their Muslim fellow citizens.\textsuperscript{38}

The Sultan's wording, such as 'paternal care' and 'traditional justice' towards the Armenians, were nothing else but ironical statements. The whole of Europe knew well enough about traditional Ottoman misgovernment and oppression, especially towards the Christian subjects in the Ottoman Empire. The Allied Foreign Office papers were flooded with documents relative to the Turkish

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., Secretary of State Archives, File Asia 57, The Pope, Benedict XV to the Sultan, Mahomed Reshad V, 12 March 1918.

\textsuperscript{38} The Vatican, Secret Archives, File 112, nos. 67801/69801, The Sultan to the Pope, Constant. 15 May 1918.
government's intention to exterminate the Armenian elements in Anatolia. Already the British Foreign Office was daily receiving disquieting dispatches that soon after the Brest-Litovsk treaty, the Turkish government had launched a 'wholesale massacre' of Armenians. One report clearly indicated that:

... it became a question of the extermination of the remaining nucleus of their [Armenian] race.

While the minute that followed, stated that:

the resumption of Armenian massacres shows in quite simple terms
the futility of any Turanian compromise. 39

Therefore, it was in the interest of the Young Turk government to wipe out the Armenians in an attempt to accomplish its objective of a Pan-Turanian empire. It was also in the interest of the Sultan to portray the Sublime Porte's 'best intentions' towards its Armenian subjects, since an impending Peace Conference would have inevitably hammered the question of Turkey's treatment towards the Armenians. Moreover, such high level exhortations on behalf of the Armenians were coolly received by the Turkish government.

On 8 April 1918, Monsignor Angelo Maria Dolci, the Vatican ambassador at Constantinople, conferred with Nazim Bey, the Turkish Foreign Minister, to ask for an audience with the Sultan, in order to hand over the third pontifical letter. Dolci was told that the Sultan was 'not feeling well'. Therefore, Nazim Bey proposed to receive the autograph himself. Monsignor Dolci declined Nazim's proposal. At the course of the meeting, the Vatican ambassador came to

understand that the Ottoman Foreign Minister and the Cabinet alike, were against granting the audience in order not to give the foreign press the chance to speak about the Armenians. According to Dolci, the anxiety of the Young Turk government was that the newspapers would 'scream' about the massacres if only because of the Pope's intervention.\(^{40}\)

Moreover, the stand of the Ottoman opposition Parties towards the government's decision to massacre the Armenian population, had found open expression, particularly after the Russian coup of 1917. Prince Sabah-ed-Din, a member of the Ottoman Liberal party, while commending Prince Lvov's proclamation of 9 April concerning the Provisional Government's declaration of 'no annexation', made reference to the Armenian massacres.

I am well aware that in order to justify the proposed measures against Turkey, reference was made to the Armenian massacres. Nobody more strongly condemns such horrors or feels such great grief concerning them than we do, and it is exceedingly well known that more than one Turkish Liberal has perished in defence of the lives of their Armenian compatriots.\(^{41}\)

Reshad Bey, one of the chief leaders of the Liberal Party and a former Interior Minister in the Cabinet of Kiamil Bey, had too expressed his indignation at the Armenian massacres. Stationed at Geneva, Reshad Bey contemplated working for a separate peace with the Allied powers. Referring to the Armenian question, he

\(^{40}\) The Vatican, Secret Archives, File 111, no. 66570, Monsignor A.M. Dolci to Cardinal Gasparri, 9 Apr. 1918.

\(^{41}\) FO371/3058/118321, H. Rumbold to R. Cecil, Berne, 6 June 1917, encl. 'An Open Letter Addressed to Prince Lvov by Prince Sabahaddine of the Turkish Opposition Liberal Party'.
advocated resolving it through the Allies. Reshad stressed that the Turkish Liberal party was against proposing reforms, since reforms had 'so often' been promised 'without effect'. His party believed that at present the 'best' course was a 'radical solution' of the difficulty.\(^\text{42}\)

Similarly, another Turkish opposition party, the Ottoman League of Peace and Liberation, led by its chief, Secretary-General Kemal Midhat, voiced its strong condemnation of the Young Turk regime for carrying out a policy of Armenian extermination. In its Manifesto, Kemal Midhat's party expressed deep grief for the 'fury' of 'unparalleled' and 'indescribable destruction' of the Armenian people. Classing the Young Turks as a 'gang of adventurists', Midhat felt regret for being powerless witnesses of the despicable extermination of over a million innocent Armenians.

The Manifesto also stated that:

Armenians! You have been persecuted and massacred because you asked for justice, because you claimed the right to live in security ... Hence, we believe today we discharge a sacred debt by declaring to the civilised world that you Armenians have always been faithful and loyal subjects of the Ottoman Empire.\(^\text{43}\)

The salient acknowledgement by Turkish opposition leaders about the authenticity of the Armenian massacres is an additional item of unbiased historical

\(^{42}\) L/P & S/10/687, P2782, Eastern Report, no. XXII, 'Turkey: Reshid Pasha on Terms of Peace', 28 June 1917.

As early as 1916, the Turkish Liberal party of Sabah-ed-Din, disregarding the existence of the Young Turk government, had taken the initiative of discussing peace terms with the Allied powers. Its terms also included an

... autonomous ARMENIA (vilayets of ERZERUM, BITLIS, VAN, TREBIZOND (Part of?) under Russian suzerainty.\textsuperscript{44}

An autonomous Armenian state had also for a time been entertained by Talaat Pasha. Desperate Turkish military conditions and war weariness, at a time when Russian military superiority over Turkish Armenia seemed unchallenged, had made Talaat Pasha contemplate a separate peace. The soundings for a separate peace were proposed roughly on the following terms:

I Turkey would solemnly guarantee to cease all intrigues in India, and would give its moral help (through the Sultan Caliph) to calm Muslim unrest in that land.

II The Baghdad-Basra railway would be internationalised.

III Mesopotamia, Arabia, Armenia and perhaps Syria would be given autonomy on terms to be arranged, and each province would send delegates to a central 'federal' parliament in Constantinople.

The decision to offer these terms had been reached just before Talaat departed

\textsuperscript{44} FO371/2768/87999, McMahon to Grey, 25 Apr. 1916; also in, A. Nassibian, Britain and the Armenian Question, p. 121.
for Berlin in May 1917. However, after his return the idea of a separate peace was abandoned following Germany's pressure. It was reported that the German government had 'persuaded' Turkey that Russia would in time collapse, and that the launching of an Austro-German offensive would seal her fate. Russia would be compelled to make a separate peace, which seemed to be almost certain. The Russian peace would release a considerable number of troops for a major offensive on Mesopotamia and a British defeat there would mean much better terms for Turkey in the peace treaty.  

It seems that the Armenian National Delegation distrusted Turkish overtures and, above all detested Tsarist Russian policies; having placed no reliance on the Russian Provisional Government and that of Bolshevik proclamations regarding Turkish Armenia, they sought a more viable solution of the Armenian territorial question. Lord Bryce's scheme of an autonomous Armenia under the protection of the United States had 'excited' the Armenian National Delegation. Armenian representatives were despatched to Washington to foster the idea and gain support for it. At the same time, the Armenian National Delegation, through its president, Boghos Nubar, appealed to Woodrow Wilson, to take over the control and suzerainty of Turkish Armenia and administer its government until it was able to become self-governing. To this effect the National Delegation had set a time limit of twenty five years for the U.S. to assume control of Turkish Armenia. Mark Sykes, the British Foreign Office Middle East expert, considered the would-be acceptance of the United States' protectorate role over Turkish Armenia as


47. FO395/137/231515, James Barton to Lord Bryce, 5 Nov. 1917.
James Barton, the head of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Affairs, considered that if this arrangement was adopted, the area involved should include more than the six Armenian vilayets. According to Barton, the regions of Marsovan (Mersifun), Cesarea (Kayseri), Cappodocia and the whole of Cilicia should form part of the new Armenian state. In the meantime, Barton was securing from individuals who had left Turkey 'carefully prepared' statements about the atrocities. He believed that these statements would be sufficient to prove that Turkey was incompetent to govern non Muslim subjects. Barton had a 'strong feeling' that it would be 'complete evidence' to show that Turkey, as a Muslim government, was incapable of governing any people whatever in the twentieth century. Balfour too, had expressed that he desired nothing better than that of an autonomous state to be placed under the sole protection of the United States, if the latter would be willing to agree to take up such a responsibility.

However, Lloyd George, the British Premier, did not seem to favour the deliberations which involved a scheme for the U.S. to assume control over Turkish Armenia. The only 'radical solution' according to Lloyd George would have been to attach the eastern section of geographical Armenia to the Christian sections of the population of Caucasia. Armenians would form a 'predominant' element in the new state, which undoubtedly would be a 'valuable element' in the matter of civilisation, energy and business-like ability. He was convinced that whether Caucasia in the present Russian chaos became an autonomous state, containing

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48. FO371/3062/227539, minute by Mark Sykes, 29 Nov. 1917.
49. FO395/137/231515, J. Barton to Bryce, 5 Nov. 1917.
50. FO371/3062/231416/24251, Bryce to Cecil, 28 Nov. 1917.
different nationalities, or whether it became a federal member of a Russian United
States, made no difference to the solution suggested above. Such a solution,
concluded Lloyd George, would involve the drawing of the boundary so as to put
'Erzerum, Van, Bitlis etc.' into Caucasia, while leaving 'Samsun, Tokat, Sivas,
Marash etc.' to the Turkish state in Anatolia. In a sense the boundary would have
roughly coincided with that of the territories occupied by the Russian army of the
Caucasus.\textsuperscript{51}

Such overtures concerning the future status of Turkish Armenia turned out
to be meaningless after the Bolshevik revolution. The Young Turk government's
policy towards Armenia was certainly incompatible with those of the Allied
powers. Talaat, the Grand Vizier, had been instructed to press at Brest-Litovsk
for the return of Turkish Armenia to the Turks. To be left to the latter was the
task of consulting populations inhabiting the six Armenian provinces as to the
form of government they 'desired to have'. Talaat also insisted that it was only
'fair' to secure the return of Muslim and Armenian subjects to their homes and
carry out a plebiscite, which the Ottoman government 'promised' to take. In
response, Mark Sykes had rightly minuted that:

\begin{quote}
I don't see how you can conduct a fair plebiscite in Armenia unless
the Armenians have a vote given to the dead.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

It was also highly unlikely that Armenians would have consented to a Turkish
proposal for their return to their homeland under Turkish rule after having
experienced the biological extermination of a large part of the Armenian people.

\textsuperscript{51} FO371/3381/6904, Memorandum by Professor Oman, 'Turkey in Asia and its
Problems', suggested by Lloyd George's Speech, 8 Jan. 1918.

\textsuperscript{52} FO371/3388/16659, H. Rumbold to FO, 24 Jan. 1918; see also ibid., minute by
Mark Sykes, 26 Jan. 1918.
Even more, it was Talaat himself who had ordered the extermination of Russian Armenians as well.

**The Republic of Armenia in the Midst of Territorial Dispute**

The Brest-Litovsk treaty had jeopardised Armenian claims to Turkish-Armenia. Armenian territorial integrity had also been threatened in the region of northern Lori disputed by Georgia and the districts of Zangezur, Nakhichevan and Mountainous Karabagh, claimed by Azerbaijan. Thus, the Armenian Republic was threatened from all sides by hostile foes. To resolve the territorial issues, war turned out to be inevitable.

Georgian claims over Akhalkalak and the southern region of the Borchalu counties of the Tiflis province were baseless. Seventy five per cent of its inhabitants were Armenians. In June 1918, these regions were occupied by the Georgians in an attempt to forestall an Ottoman advance from Transcaucasia on Tiflis. But the Mudros armistice, and the subsequent withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Transcaucasia did not persuade the Georgians to relinquish their military position from Lori. It seemed unwise that Georgians and Armenians resolved to settle their problem through war at a time when their common enemy, Turkey, had not fully capitulated. Armeno-Georgian manpower and military equipment should have been preserved for future Turkish aggression. Nonetheless, in January 1919, hostilities did commence between the two republics. After a fortnight of sporadic fighting the Georgians were compelled to retreat. And with Allied intervention, the two hostile states were persuaded to accept General Forestier-Walker's arbitration, by which a neutral zone was established, and peace secured.\(^54\)

\(^{53}\) See above p. 252.

Map 6: Provinces Disputed by Neighbouring Republics
Source: PRO, FO 925/17121
Of all the territorial disputes in the Caucasus, the most bitter was the Armeno-Azeri hostilities over Mountainous Karabagh, a region in the Elisavetpol province. Although the Muslims in the province outnumbered Armenians two to one, but the Armenians of Mountainous Karabagh constituted an absolute majority of the population. Avetis Aharonian, President of the Delegation of the Armenian Republic to the Paris Peace Conference, maintained that Armenians were in a majority, with 72 per cent. Professor Simpson, who confirmed that Aharonian's figure differed only by '1% or 2%' from the Russian statistics of some years ago had no objection to this.55

Following the declaration of independence of Azerbaijan in May 1918, the historic Armenian region of Mountainous Karabagh and the Zangezur county of Elizavetpol, became the prime object of the Azerbaijani government's attempt to bring the disputed territories under its jurisdiction. Ottoman military assistance to the Azerbaijani government was used to this effect. But as the Turco-Tatar forces had first launched their struggle in order to subjugate Baku, General Andranik and his partisans succeeded in entering Zangezur in July and bringing the central region of the country under Armenian control. The next military move of General Andranik, was to bring Mountainous Karabagh under the immediate control of Armenia. However, on 2 December 1918, his march to Shushi, the capital of Mountainous Karabagh was halted by General W.M. Thomson, the senior Allied officer in Baku. Andranik was compelled to trust General Thomson's overtures that, since the war had ended, all territorial disputes were to be settled by the Paris Peace Conference - which never happened. Subsequently, on 4

55. FO608/78/342/1/1, J.T. Simpson to FO, 'Minute of Conversation with A. Aharonian', 17 June 1919; FO371/3659/97452/512, minute by J.T. Simpson, 17 June 1919.
Map 7: Mountainous Karabagh Disputed by Armenia and Azerbaijan
December, Andranik's forces returned to Zangezur and disbanded.\footnote{Curzon Papers, Mss Eur, File 112/270, Childs and McDonell, 'Outline of Events in Transcaucasia', p. 12, 31 May 1922; also in, FO371/7729/E8378, 31 May 1922.}

General Thomson's decision that both Mountainous Karabagh and Zangezur would provisionally be administered by Azerbaijan came as a stunning blow to the Armenians. Indignation and resentment had further been aroused following Thompson's approval of the Azerbaijani government's choice of Khosrov Bek Sultanov, an ardent agent of the Young Turks\footnote{FO371/3659/99233/512, A. Williams to Bryce, 2 July 1919.} and notoriously Armenophobe, as Governor-General of the two regions. The Armenians unanimously and resolutely refused to recognise Sultanov's authority, insisting on the right of self-determination. To this effect, Avetis Aharonian presented a petition by the Karabagh Armenians to the British Delegation. The petition asserted that even during the Turkish invasion of Transcaucasia which preceded the British occupation, Armenians had succeeded in keeping the Azerbaijanis out of Mountainous Karabagh. A dividing line should be drawn between the predominantly Tatar and Armenian portion of Karabagh. Expressing distrust of the character and political aims of Sultanov, the Karabagh Armenians insisted that their country should not be attached, even provisionally, to Azerbaijan. The proposed solution was that Mountainous Karabagh should be administered either by a British military governor or by their own local council. The reply of the British delegation asserted that:

> Whatever administrative arrangements may have been made are purely provisional and incidental to the execution of the armistice with Turkey, and that they will have no bearing on the political
settlements.\textsuperscript{58}

Boghos Nubar too, complained of General Thomson's action in handing over Mountainous Karabagh to a man who had been 'guilty of atrocities' towards the Armenians.\textsuperscript{59} In fact on 4 June 1919, on the orders of Governor-General Sultanov, massacres began by Azerbaijani troops, led by Turkish emissaries. It was reported that four Armenian villages had been destroyed with over six hundred women, children and old men killed. The Armenian National Delegation 'begged' the British Delegation to demand the cessation of the slaughter. The Armenian Delegation expressed fears that the Armenian province of Mountainous Karabagh was also threatened with the same fate as Turkish Armenia.\textsuperscript{60}

But even after widespread criticism and the evident physical danger of Armenians under Azerbaijani administration, the British government refused to remove Sultanov from his post. Britain remained firm in her decision that the final administrative verdict over both Zangezur and Mountainous Karabagh was to be resolved at the Peace Conference. But the Peace Conference never solved the territorial dispute of Karabagh. The fluctuating Russian situation prevented any definite or thorough Allied policy towards Caucasia and Caucasian independence.

\textsuperscript{58} FO371/3658/60612/512, Balfour to Curzon, British Delegation Paris, 13 Apr. 1919.

\textsuperscript{59} FO608/82/342/5/4, 19 May 1919.

\textsuperscript{60} FO371/3659/98468/512, Armenian National Delegation to Balfour, 16 June 1919; ibid., no. 99233, Appeal by Armenian National Council and Land Union of Karabagh, Tiflis, 16 June 1919.
What motivated British policy in favouring Azerbaijani demands? Once Britain was in occupation of Azerbaijan it was in her interests to bar the spread of Bolshevism in the region - the most important route into Asia - and simultaneously extract and appropriate as much of Baku's oil as possible. Thus, under such political, strategic and economic considerations it seemed impossible to satisfy Armenian national rights, a people who had staunchly remained loyal to Allied policy and had contributed to the latter's war effort.

On the other hand, the fate of Nakhichevan, the region south-east of Erevan, and the strategically important district of Kars, did not fall under Turco-Tatar influence. Avetis Aharonia in a despatch to Louis Mallet, warned that the Young Turks were organising a campaign directed not only against the Turkish Armenians but towards the Armenians of the Caucasus; that despite the supplementary clause to the Armistice of Mudros, which required the evacuation of Turkish Armenians from Kars, very many Young Turk officers had managed to remain in the provinces. This had enabled the defeated Young Turks to set up the South Western Caucasian Republic in an attempt to preserve their foothold in Transcaucasia. The Muslim National Council at Kars, which claimed full authority from Batum to Nakhichevan, had organised a Turco-Tatar band to fight Armenian troops along the border. Aharonian, on behalf of the Armenian government, requested immediate Allied assistance to expel Turkish officers from Transcaucasia and to disarm the Tatar bands organised by the Young Turk officers. Aharonian further stressed that the notion of the Turco-Tatars was that they could pursue the extermination of the Armenian race and thus forestall the

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creation of an Armenian state with impunity.\textsuperscript{62}

Apparently the Muslim National Council was determined to keep the Kars district under Turkish influence and to forestall the repatriation of over 100,000 Armenian refugees who had fled to the Tiflis and Erevan provinces during the Ottoman offensive of early 1918. A.J. Toynbee's minutes asserted that Aharonian's remarks were 'quite right' and in 'general accordance' with those of British military information. With the withdrawal of the British forces from the Caucasus the danger of a Turanian reaction will be 'considerably increased'.\textsuperscript{63}

It was only in the spring of 1919 that the British government became aware of intense Pan-Turanian agitation along the Armenian borders and took military measures. In mid-April 1919, the British expelled the quasi-government of the Muslim National Council of Kars and transferred the power over the southern part of the Kars district to the Republic of Armenia. The Pan-Turkish activities of the defeated Young Turks had similarly compelled the British to take similar administrative measures over Nakhichevan. In the middle of May, the British decided to detach Nakhichevan from their military governorship and add it to the Republic of Armenia.

The 'temporary' loss of Mountainous Karabagh and Zangezur from Armenian administration had certainly frustrated Armenian expectations. But the government of Erevan must have been well pleased that Kars and Nakhichevan had fallen within Armenian jurisdiction. At this stage, however, there still remained far-reaching problems to be settled. The most crucial issue was that the Paris Peace Conference had not yet awarded any part of Turkish Armenia to the

\textsuperscript{62} FO608/78/342/1/6, A. Aharonian to L. Mallet, 31 March 1919; ibid., Aharonian to the President of the Peace Conference, 1 Apr. 1919.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., minute by A.J. Toynbee, 3 and 4 Apr. 1919.
Armenian Republic. This had caused extreme problems to relief work and for the repatriation of Armenian refugees to their homeland in eastern Turkey. On the other hand, the Republic of Armenia lacked recognition of her independence by the Western powers.

**Problems Hindering Armenian Repatriation**

The question of repatriation, with all its complexities and controversial issues of planning and the methods of implementation, came to an unsuccessful end by the summer of 1919. Neither the Ussher Plan nor the Morgenthau-Hoover proposals were found practicable for execution.

General Andranik considered that the only solution of the question was for the Allies to occupy immediately the Turkish Armenian provinces so as to enable the refugees to return to their homes and start life again. Necessary food, clothing and medical aid should also be despatched, Andranik had added. But the Allied powers were not prepared to make substantial economic and military commitments to the rehabilitation of the Armenian refugees. No British troops were available for the deployment of the Armenian cause, General Thomson had minuted. But he advocated the union of Turkish and Russian Armenia with Trebizond as a suitable sea port and Erzerum as the capital of western Armenia. Thomson considered that the three republics required a mandate. He further believed that Armenia, with a 'big power' behind her, would in a decade absorb

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65. Toynbee Papers, Box 44, 'Armenia and the Settlement', Report of Public Meeting to express Sympathy with the Armenian Cause, Central Hall Westminster, 19 June 1919.

66. FO608/78/342/1/6, minute by W. Thomson, 13 May 1919.
Georgia and Azerbaijan economically.  

The news about the Armenian refugees was disquieting. Conditions of hardship, starvation and disease had produced an atmosphere of general misery, threatening their prospects of survival. Sir Louis Mallet wrote in the delegation minutes that Armenians were dying at a rate of 100 to 150 a day. Captain Tulin had seen Armenians digging up corpses for food. James Simpson of the Russian department minuted that Martin Egam who had just returned from the Armenian regions had given an account 'very similar' in character. Egam suggested the formation of concentration camps as the best means of preventing the extermination of the Armenian remnants through starvation.

While Robert G. Vansittart, the most persistent advocate of Armenian rights, was convinced that the only solution was to get the Armenians repatriated before the British departure from the Caucasus. Although Vansittart was aware of the obstacles to such an undertaking, he made it clear that there was no other alternative, otherwise:

There will be no Armenia because there will be no Armenians. If these people are not repatriated NOW it will be impossible to repatriate them before next year, and very few of the small remainder will survive another winter where they are.

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68. FO608/78/342/1/1, L. Mallet, Delegation Minute, 16 June 1919.
69. Ibid., minute signed by J. Simpson, 28 June 1919.
70. Ibid., Delegation Minute, signed by Robert G. Vansittart, 1 July 1919.
The major obstacle to the repatriation work was Turkey. Despite her defeat, Turkey remained stubbornly persistent in preventing the return of Armenians to their homeland. Apparently, under the guidance of the ousted CUP and with the compliance of the Ottoman government, a Kurdish movement was being formed with the aim of establishing a Kurdish majority in 'certain districts' of western Armenia, especially in the Van province. The move was intended to prevent the return of Armenian refugees from Caucasia and Persia. Against Armenian repatriation, an undercurrent of reactionary movement had also been active from other Muslim quarters. The All-Russian Mohammedan Council in Moscow, in conjunction with the Mussavat (Tatar Great Nationalist Party) of Baku, had urged the Turkish Minister in Moscow to place before G.V. Chicherin, the Russian Foreign Commissar, a scheme for repopulating the Turkish Armenian districts with Muslims from various parts of Southern Russia.

Amid these distractions, on 28 May 1919, the Armenian government proclaimed the first anniversary of the Republic, the unification of Western and Eastern Armenia: the 'Act of United Armenia'. The Act of Union must have temporarily heartened the Armenian refugees. To them it meant that the process of a homeward move would accelerate. But the Act was only academic, simply an Act of hope. The Republic had neither sufficient power nor the ability to enforce its decision. It still lacked recognition of its independence. According to Khatiyan, the Minister-President of the Republic of Armenia, the non-recognition

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71. See WO/1396, G.F. Milne to CIGS, 6 Feb. 1920.

72. FO371/3659/86058/512, Admiral Calthorpe to P.D. Paris, and Major Noel, 13 June 1919, copy alo in FO608/78/342/1/1, Calthorpe to FO, 13 June 1919.

73. FO608/102/378/3/1, A. Safrastian to FO, 25 March 1919.

of his country's independence by the Allied powers, constituted an 'enormous hindrance' to the regular working of the state in the sphere of finance, politics and the army. Khatisian asked Oliver Wardrop, the British Chief Commissioner in Transcaucasia, to intercede with the British government for the immediate recognition of the Republic of Armenia.\footnote{FO371/3660/15441/512, Al. Khatisian to O. Wardrop, 15 Oct. 1919.}

The more the Supreme Council in Paris examined Transcaucasian problems the less inclination they showed to commit themselves to a definite or permanent solution. Armenian repatriation was one of those problems which Allied powers seemed unwilling to resolve. A military showdown had turned out to be necessary to enforce repatriation. But no parties concerned were prepared to make any substantial military or economic commitments. The British occupation of Transcaucasia, had come at the request of the Allies, which was primarily aimed to ensure the complete evacuation of Transcaucasia by Turkish and German troops. Once both contracting parties were defeated, British interests were not sufficiently great to warrant more than a brief continuance of their responsibility. In fact, early in 1919, the British government had decided that on financial grounds the occupation could not be maintained much longer. And at the beginning of April, the Supreme Council had agreed that British troops should be withdrawn. Another major justification for British withdrawal appeared the promising prospect of General A.I. Denikin's anti-Bolshevik movement. In the spring of 1919, the White armies had registered a series of successes against the Bolsheviks. Signs in Denikin's victory of his wiping out the Bolsheviks from the Caucasus seemed hopeful. Thus, the continuance of occupation would have brought British commitments to Transcaucasia in conflict with those of General Denikin. E.H. Carr stated that, alone of the Transcaucasian governments, the Dashnak government of
Armenia had contrived to have amicable relations with Denikin. And it seemed that Armenia saw her salvation in Denikin's victory.

By the summer of 1919, the question of repatriation was completely overshadowed by widespread Muslim uprisings. The issues at stake had transformed the repatriation question into a matter of Armenian survival.

Soon after the commencement of the British withdrawal from Transcaucasia, the political and national rancour between the Armenians and the Turks on the one hand and the Tatars on the other, precipitated an armed conflict. The British withdrawal had meant the removal of the only stabilising and restraining factor in the region. Colonel William N. Haskell's (the Allied High Commissioner for Relief in Armenia) speech in the Armenian Parliament that:

... should the British leave, we will find a powerful army to replace them,

had not been fulfilled. And since no replacement and even a mandate seemed yet visible, it emboldened the Tatars, Turks and Kurds to sabotage and invalidate disputed territorial arrangements favoured by Armenia with the 'active assistance' of 'Turkish officers' and 'arms'.

On 18 July, under the command of Turkish Colonel Khalil Bey and a number

77. FO371/3659/132563, D.C. Cameron to G.H.Q. Constant., 1 Aug. 1919; ibid., min. by G. Kidston, 30 Sept. 1919.
79. FO608/78/342/1/6, A. Aharonian to L. Mallet, 31 March 1919.
of Ottoman officers, a Tatar rising in Nakhichevan began. The Armenian Mission at Tiflis communicated that all southern districts reported the massing of Turkish forces and 'sporadic killings', 'massacres of remnants of Armenians' was apparently to continue under the surveillance of the Allies. Members of the Armenian delegation had bitterly complained that the position of Armenia under the protection of victorious Allied power was becoming 'worse' than under 'Turkish misrule'. The situation of Armenia was more than desperate. Lack of sufficient arms and munitions against the well-armed Turco-Tatars, who were 'hungering for violence', threatened the very existence of the Republic of Armenia. N.D. Caterson of the Foreign Office, minuted that:

The situation is certainly alarming, for the Turks and Tatars are not now threatening any disputed district such as Karabagh, but the capital and heart of the Armenian Republic itself.

While the minute that followed, asserted that:

I can't help feeling that we shall wake up one day soon to hear that massacres have taken place and that the Armenian question has been solved by the sword.

It was under such prevailing critical conditions of national survival that Khatisian 'insisted' that the Peace Conference should 'immediately' despatch a British detachment to Armenia. It was high time that Allied powers assisted Armenia

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80. Ibid., Armenian Mission, Tiflis, 19 July 1919.
82. FO371/3659/121849, minute by N.D. Caterson, 28 Aug. 1919; ibid., min. initials illegible, 28 Aug. 1919.
militarily or by means of sending munitions, was Khatisian's desperate plea.\textsuperscript{83}

Troops were not available to rescue the remnants of Armenians from a Turco-Tatar incursion. In addition, the Army Council under the guidance of the General Staff consistently and persistently rejected requests for assisting the Republic of Armenia by arms and equipment even after the bulk of the British troops were withdrawn.\textsuperscript{84} The only possible mediation that the Supreme Council was prepared to make was to despatch Colonel Haskell, an American officer, as Allied High Commissioner for Armenia. Haskell's arbitrations were indeed very short-lived. Massacres and counter-massacres had engulfed the whole of the territorially disputed regions. At this stage concessions towards Nationalist Turkey and the Muslim world became necessary in reshaping British policy which had played a leading role throughout the war in the Near East. The emergence of the Turkish Nationalist movement, which was resolutely opposed to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire,\textsuperscript{85} and the strong objection of the Muslims in India to the expulsion of the Turks from Constantinople, had compelled the British government to make concessions to Turkey at the expense of Armenia. Politically isolated, Armenians were left to defend their country on their own. The collaboration of the Bolsheviks with the Turkish Nationalists was an additional severe blow to Armenia. Thus, the Armenian theatre remained in a constant state of war throughout 1920, until its sovietisation on 2 December 1920.

\textsuperscript{83} FO608/8/342/1/16, A. Aharonian to the President of the Peace Conference, 6 Aug. 1919.

\textsuperscript{84} A. Nassibian, Britain and the Armenian Question, pp. 165,168.

\textsuperscript{85} See State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, File 636, Kiazim Karabekir to Al. Khatisian, 30 Nov. 1920.
Bolshevik and Turkish Nationalist Collaboration Against Armenia

The fateful Greek landing in Smyrna in May 1919, directly encouraged by the British government and consented to by the United States and France, signalled the creation of the Turkish Nationalist movement. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, the Turkish Nationalists, defying the Ottoman government, launched a struggle to resist all forms of foreign interference which threatened Turkish sovereignty. An independent Armenian state within Ottoman boundaries was another factor which the Nationalists resolutely opposed. The Nationalist movement was further aroused following the British occupation of Constantinople on 16 March 1920, which attempted to subdue the nationalist agitation there. The immediate reaction of Mustafa Kemal was to disown the authority of the Turkish government in Constantinople, and call for elections to a Grand National Assembly which proclaimed him on 24 April 1920, president of the government.

On the other hand, however, the Bolshevik government of Russia, in October 1919 had switched its attention to the broader political possibilities presented in Transcaucasia and Kemalist Turkey. In the same month a declaration published by G.V. Chicherin asserted that Soviet Russia did not oppose the independence of the Caucasian republics. As a result, through Bolshevik efforts, an agreement had been arranged between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia regarding transport facilities and the territories in dispute between the three republics. Though the settlement was not of long duration, it served to establish a certain footing in the

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87. FO406/43/E1693/44, de Robec to Curzon, 16 March 1920.
three republics for Soviet Russia.  

But the most interesting and, at the same time, significant development of Bolshevik policy at this stage, was the approach to the Turkish Nationalists. Bolshevik Russia and Nationalist Turkey had various aims in common. The Allied powers constituted a common enemy for both states, since the Western powers had tried to strangle them through intervention and economic blockade. Another major factor which compelled the Bolsheviks and Nationalists to be drawn together was that both were politically, militarily and economically isolated. Thus, through cooperation, each was capable of giving invaluable assistance to the other. Hostility towards the Allies and the determination to stamp out the power of the Entente, served as a mutual interest to bring the two powers closer. The sympathy towards Soviet Russia shown by the Muslim world was also considered by the Bolsheviks to be attainable through Turkish friendship, since one of the most important Bolshevik aims was to turn the Muslim world against the British Empire. Commander Luke, the Acting British High Commissioner in the Caucasus, considered that the Bolsheviks would use 'any instrument' or device to inflict injury on the British Empire by enlisting allies in the anti-British machination. The British High Commissioner in Constantinople agreed with Luke, who asserted that the object of the Bolsheviks, in conjunction with the Pan-Islamists, was to weld all Muslims into one as a potential force against the Allies. The British War Office had 'no doubt' that the Bolshevik organisation in Constantinople was controlled from Moscow by the Commissariat for Mohammedan Affairs. That the arrest of an active Bolshevik agitator who possessed original documents emanating from Moscow and signed by Chicherin, showed that there was a direct connection


with the Bolshevik metropolis. Bolshevik agents had established 'close contact' with the CUP, the Pan-Islamists, the Pan-Turkists and other parties. Already soon after the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd, J.V. Stalin, the Commissar for Nationalities, formed a Muslim subsector for propaganda and agitation. Certainly, Soviet Russia, by assuming the role of champion of Islam would have needed Turkey's cooperation. Apparently Russia was working both with the ousted CUP leaders, such as Enver Pasha, and the Kemalists to bring about intensive revolutionary propaganda to undermine the very foundations of British imperialism among the Muslim subjects of the Empire. Karl Radek, a Bolshevik agent, had proposed to Enver to proceed to Moscow in order to pursue there the audacious project of a Soviet-Muslim alliance -a pact between Russian Bolshevism and Turkish Nationalism- against British imperialism.

For Kemalist Turkey the prospect of a rapprochement with Soviet Russia served as a morale-booster. Kemal could now hope for arms and munitions from the Bolsheviks so desperately needed to drive out the Greeks and Allies on her south and west. Military aid from Russia would have also enabled Kemal to ensure the swift expulsion of Armenians in the occupation of post-1878 districts. Thus, a friendly Russia to her north-eastern frontier was a tremendous advantage for Turkey. The various hostile foreign influences distorting the sovereignty of

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91. FO371/4020/80440, 'The Spread of Bolshevism in Constantinople', prepared by the WO, 2 May 1919.


Turkey could have been dealt with cautiously and in a masterly way. In fact, Mustafa Kemal exploited the rivalry and the differences in policy between the Allies over the Middle East and the wide differences that made the European powers diverge from Soviet Russia. Kemal was prepared to negotiate alternatively with the Bolsheviks and the Allies, or simultaneously with both, and he would use any advantage that he found on one side to force concessions on the other.  

With these advantages in view, by the end of October 1919, intense negotiations began to take place between the Soviet government and the agents of Mustafa Kemal. From this time onwards a series of treaties and agreements appeared to have been concluded between the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists. According to Ali Fuat Cebesoy, (the first Turkish Nationalist ambassador in Moscow from 21 November 1920 to 2 June 1922), a few months after the Congress of Sivas (4 September 1919), the Soviet government had secretly despatched to Constantinople Shalva Eliava, the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Bolshevik army. Eliava, who later became the first Soviet ambassador to Angora (modern Ankara), came into contact with the Turkish Nationalists and informed them that the Soviet government would without delay assist Turkey in her nationalist demands. Subsequently, the 'first decision' arrived at by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was to send an ambassador to Moscow. The chief object of this was to

94. R.N. Davison, Turkish Diplomacy from Mudros to Lausanne, in Craig and Gilbert (eds.), The Diplomats, (2nd edn.), pp. 173, 185.


establish relations between the Soviet government and the Turkish Nationalists.97

Collaborating together, Turkish and Bolshevik agents fostered and directed revolts against Russian reactionaries in Daghestan. General Denikin's White armies, which were at their zenith of success in October 1919, collapsed beyond recovery by the end of December of the same year. The Allied powers, who were previously unwilling to recognise the independence of the three Caucasian republics, were now, after the failure of the reactionary movement, compelled to reshape their policy. The Western powers, who had placed high hopes on Denikin strangling the Bolsheviks, had withheld recognition of Armenian independence on the grounds that Armenia would have been incorporated into Denikin's reconstructed Russia. As some sort of balance to the dangerous policy being pursued by Bolshevik Russia and Nationalist Turkey and the evident collapse of the White armies the Allied powers were prompted in January 1920, to grant de facto recognition98 to the governments of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The recognition of the three Caucasian republics' independence was of a political character. The independent states would have served as a barrier to contain and forestall the advance of Bolshevik power in the Caucasus and Persia. This would have also prevented a possible alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists. Furthermore, an anti-Bolshevik Caucasia would have constituted a


98. FO406/43/169528/ME58, Lord Derby to Lord Harrington, Paris, 10 Jan. 1920; see also ibid., no. 167947/ME58, 'It would seem necessary from a point of view of our interests to recognise de facto existence of ...', Wardrop to Curzon, Tiflis, 3 Jan. 1920.
buffer zone against the union between Bolsheviks and the Muslims. Owing to the friendly relations of Bolsheviks and Nationalists, the Allies were also compelled to announce in February 1920, that Constantinople, together with a small piece of territory in Europe, would remain in Turkish hands. Concessions to Turkey were intended to weaken Bolshevik and Nationalist cooperation.

Amid these political considerations, the three Caucasian republics were nothing else but subservient states skilfully manipulated in the interests of Allied diplomacy. E.H. Carr had rightly stated that in the absence of foreign support, and even of elementary agreement among themselves, the independent Transcuacasian republics had no capacity for survival. Armenia staunchly but blindly remained pro-ally, unaware of the disastrous significance of Allied diplomatic recognition. Even after the military pressure exerted on her by the Bolsheviks, Kemalists and Azeris, Armenia preferred to uphold Allied interests despite the fact that the Allies were not prepared to provide any military assistance. The Republic of Armenia became a mere pawn in the struggle to contain Bolshevism.

Already by late September 1919, contact between Bolshevik agents and Turkish Nationalists had begun to find expression in preparing the future platform of close cooperation. The Council of Representatives of Soviet Russia at Constantinople, in a letter to Mustafa Kemal, welcomed the struggle of the Turkish Nationalists. The president of the Soviet Council made an offer of 'organised contact' between them in order that the Bolsheviks would be able to give 'all possible support'. The Bolshevik support would have consisted in supplying the Nationalists with money and arms, and, if necessary, in local recruitments of

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socialist military groups. The offer of help was conditional on the acknowledgement by the Nationalists of the final aim of the Bolsheviks - the victory of the universal revolution in the name of the working class. On 13 September 1919, a similar appeal had also been made by Chicherin to the Workers and Peasants of Turkey. The appeal stipulated the stretching forth of a 'brotherly hand', in order, with the 'combined forces', to drive off the 'European robbers'.

Mustafa Kemal was not interested in a class struggle but in a national war. He detested Bolshevik ideals, believing that they could bring nothing else but 'harm to the Turkish people'. Nevertheless, Kemal was prepared to simulate sympathy towards it solely to secure arms and munitions for the ultimate goal of the Nationalists. The British Secretary of State for War had rightly argued that the Turkish Nationalists would 'throw off' the Soviet connection after attaining their ends, which they did.

By January 1920, the Bolsheviks had gained considerable ground. They had under their command a very powerful army consisting of the 'best troops', which had been withdrawn from the Kolchak front in order to crush Denikin down in south Russia. The anxiety of the British Cabinet was that the Bolsheviks would

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104. CAB 24/120, c.p. 2608, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War, 19 Feb. 1921.
soon be in touch with the Turkish Nationalists. Although the Soviet government was fully preoccupied with the war against Poland, the recovery of Baku was considered a major task to be accomplished without delay. To this effect, the British War Office asserted that the Bolsheviks were experiencing the 'greatest difficulty' in solving their transportation problem through lack of fuel. Therefore, a 'serious attempt' was being made by the Soviet government to get through to Baku with the object of obtaining access to the oil supplies. Thus, as a first step, a Bolshevik advance in Azerbaijan, Daghestan and Transcaspia, and the seizure of the oil resources at Baku for use during the winter of 1920, and in the campaign against Poland, was a priority. Once in Azerbaijan, the joining of Bolshevik and Turkish Nationalist forces in a common struggle against the Allies and the sovietisation of Georgia and Armenia was to follow. But, in its wider political aspects, the Russian capture of Baku was the first deliberate step by the Bolshevik government to regain Transcaucasia and to re-establish Russia in her old advantageous and dominant position in South-West Asia.

At a meeting of the Turkish Nationalist Council held at Angora in February 1920, Mustafa Kemal gave particulars of a letter received from G.V. Chicherin. The communication stated that an agreement with Azerbaijan was on the point of conclusion. The Soviet government recommended that the Turkish Nationalist forces should 'immediately' commence operation on the frontiers of Mosul, Persia

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and the Armenian Republic.  

The nature of Chicherin's communication was not surprising. Mustafa Kermal was in agreement with Lenin to allow Bolsheviks a free hand in north Caucasus and Azerbaijan, in return for the free passage of arms for the Nationalist armies. At the same time, Kemal had agreed to harass the British forces in Mesopotamia. In March 1920, a more explicit agreement had been reached between the Soviet government and the Turkish Nationalists. Azerbaijan had to be sovietised to facilitate the conjunction of Bolshevik and Nationalist forces. The cooperation between the two had strengthened pro-Bolshevik sentiment in Azerbaijan. And in March, at the invitation of the Moscow government, both Azerbaijan and Georgia entered into peace negotiations with Soviet Russia. The result of the agreement was that Azerbaijan consented to the Bolshevik request to withdraw her forces from the Samur river in southern Daghestan, and permitted a considerable Soviet army to cross the river on the pretext of subduing certain rebellious hill tribes. Bolshevik troops were thus established along the northern frontier of Azerbaijan ready to advance towards Baku. By midnight on 27 April a peaceful coup d'état brought Baku under local Communist control. The following day, the 11th Red Army was in occupation of Azerbaijan.

According to Colonel C.B. Stokes, the British High Commissioner in the Caucasus, the responsibility for the takeover of Azerbaijan by the Bolsheviks lay with Mustafa Kemal and Nuri Pasha, the latter a former Ittihadist now working

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108. FO317/4933/E2157/1, O. Wardrop to FO, Tiflis, 11 March 1920.


for the Nationalist movement. Stokes stresses that Kemal wished to establish contact with the Bolsheviks as he hoped to get large supplies of arms and munitions. He therefore, had made every effort to persuade the Azerbaijani government to accept Bolshevik rule. General Head Quarters at Constantinople, was of a similar opinion. Bolshevik entry into Azerbaijan was facilitated by an understanding between the Nationalist Turks and bands of the Ittihad party assisted by the agitation of oil workers.

Mustafa Kemal had made no secret of the fact that he had assisted the Bolsheviks in sovietising Azerbaijan. Kemal's speech in the Turkish National Congress at Angora, stated that:

Thanks to our intervention, influence and material aid, these armies [referring to the Red Army] have marched into North Caucasia and entered Azerbaijan.

While in another Congressional speech, which was reproduced on 5 September 1920, in the 'Yeni Gün', the official organ of the Turkish Nationalists, Kemal stated that:

The Bolsheviks fully appreciated the usefulness of the Turkish forces in carrying out their own schemes, they therefore appealed to us for help and, with that object in view, they sent the Russian 10th and 11th divisions to the Caucasus front. Three divisions


succeeded in crossing the Northern Caucasus and entering Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani authorities welcomed with enthusiasm the Russian Soviet division which at once undertook military operations against Armenia and Georgia.  

The immediate impulse of the Soviet Azerbaijani government was to apply relentless pressure against the Republic of Armenia, demanding the withdrawal within three days of Armenian regular troops from both Karabagh and Zangezur. Upon failure to meet the ultimatum, Azerbaijan threatened to invade Armenia. Significantly, the disputed territory of Zangezur constituted an effective barrier forestalling the liaison between the Bolshevists and Kemalist forces. The annihilation of Zangezur was therefore necessary to carry out the Turco-Bolshevik programme of an offensive against Mesopotamia and Northern Persia.

It is of interest to note that Khatisian, the former Prime Minister, had claimed that it was at Commander Luke's advice that the Armenian troops had advanced into the two disputed provinces to forestall the approach of the Bolshevik troops from Azerbaijan. To the intense dislike of both Baku and Moscow, on 30 April 1920, just three days after the sovietisation of Azerbaijan, the ninth Congress of the Karabagh Armenian Land Union resolutely decided to unite the provinces of Mountainous Karabagh to the republic of Armenia. Dr Hamo

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Ohandjanian, the Prime Minister, writing to Chicherin, complained that Ordjonikidze, the President of the Caucasian Military Cabinet, had rejected the decision of the Karabagh Land Union, considering the region part of soviet Azerbaijan.\footnote{Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 1022, L. 3, File 267, 'Bolshevik Russia and Karabagh', H. Ohandjanian to Chicherin, 31 May 1920.} The Bolshevik reaction was only too natural. Once Azerbaijan had been successfully sovietised, it was indispensable to bring Mountainous Karabagh under soviet control. For the Soviet government it was a matter of time that Armenia would willingly or forcefully fall prey to the sovietisation process.

Thus, the Soviet government skilfully took full advantage of the enmity that existed between the Armeno-Tatars and pushed forward a political feud to squeeze Armenia as hard as possible while she remained pro-Ally and anti-Bolshevik.

Towards the end of April Armenia found herself in open confrontation with the Bolsheviks, Soviet Azerbaijan; the latter had sent an ultimatum, as had the Turkish Nationalist forces. The chances of Armenia's independence was becoming slim. The blockade of fuel-oil from Baku which threatened to paralyse the life-line of Armenia, and the lack of allied support, were additional factors compelling the Armenian government to come to terms with Soviet power. Hence, on 30 April, a mission headed by Levon Shant and including Hambardzum Terterian and Levon Zarafian, departed from Erevan to Moscow. The Armenian delegation were authorised to sign a treaty by which Soviet Russia would:

I recognise the independence of Armenia, including Mountainous Karabagh;

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II accept at least in principle the notion of the annexation of Turkish Armenian provinces by Armenia;

III refrain from intervention in the national policy of Armenia, either directly or indirectly;

IV permit the return to Armenia of Armenians stranded in the North Caucasus and Russia;

V compensate Armenian workers for their hardships during the 'imperialistic' war. 119

During the first meeting, Chicherin, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, informed the Armenian delegation of Soviet Russia's vital need for cooperation with the Turkish Nationalists. Naturally to the utmost satisfaction of the Soviet government, Turkey was prepared to attack the Allies, but Chicherin expressed Turkey's fear that Armenia would advantageously use the moment to strike Turkey in the rear. 120 Thus, at this stage, it was in the interests of the Soviet government to reconcile Armenia and Turkey. The latter, secure from an Armenian assault, would enable the Nationalist forces to strike a decisive blow against the Allies in the common interests of the Soviet government.

The deliberations between the Chicherin and the Shant delegation dragged on to the end of June. The Soviets made various proposals and promises concessions of territory to Armenia hotly disputed with neighbouring Azerbaijan. The


indecisiveness of the Armenian delegates and the delay of the Armenian government to respond instantly to the Soviet proposal played their part in jeopardising Armeno-Soviet talks. As Soviet-Armenian discussions were in progress, a Turkish Nationalist delegation, headed by Bekir Sami, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs in Kemal’s government, arrived in Moscow. Levon Shant’s despatch to Ohandjanian asserted that the purpose of Kemal’s delegates was to secure military aid from the Soviet government. Whatever the object was, it seemed opportune for the Armenian delegates to have some special interviews with the Turkish delegation with a view to settling their mutual scores. Zarafian and Terterian considered it desirable but Shant vigorously opposed.

Towards the end of summer 1920, no finalised agreement had been reached between Chicherin and the Armenian delegation. Internal feuds in Armenia had severely damaged any real prospect of improvements in Soviet-Armenian relations. Since the sovietisation of Azerbaijan, Bolshevik propaganda had intensified in Armenia. General Nazarbekian, had expressed great uneasiness with the fact that the Bolsheviks were making 'intensive propaganda' among Armenian soldiers, the backbone of Armenia’s survival as an independent republic. Soon after, throughout May, Bolshevik agitation culminated in a series of abortive uprisings by Armenian Communists in Alexandropol, Kars and Nor Bayazid. All attempts of the Communists to take over the country were vigorously repressed.

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121. Socio-Political Organisations ‘ Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 4033, L. 3, File 5, L. Shant to H. Ohandjanian, 3 June 1920.
123. Socio-Political Organisations ‘ Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 1022, L. 2, File 48, General Nazarbekian to the Engineer Battalion, Erevan, 6 May 1920.
by the government which resolved not to yield to any pressure from Moscow.

The severe steps taken by the Armenian government to crush the rebellions and the execution of a number of Communist ringleaders had a damaging effect on Armeno-Russian friendship talks. At the end of June, the Soviets presented to the Armenian delegation a proposal along the following lines. Nakhichevan would go to Armenia, Karabagh to Azerbaijan, while the status of Zangezur would be disputed, its final fate to be decided at a later date by B.V. Legran, the Soviet emissary. The Soviet proposal was a considerable shift from its initial one of mid-June which was by far more advantageous. G.V. Chicherin had promised to declare Zangezur and Nakhichevan Armenian territories and Karabagh's legal status would have been decided after a referendum. It seems that Chicherin was trying to solve the Armeno-Azeri dispute along the lines most favourable to the Soviet state. Levon Shant was not prepared to sign away Karabagh to Azerbaijan. Having reached a deadlock, the negotiations in Moscow ended, only to be resumed at a later date in Erevan between Legran and the Armenian government.

After the Bolshevik failure to establish a Soviet government in Armenia by means of propaganda and organised internal rising, it was left to the Red Army and the Turkish Nationalist forces to act simultaneously to squeeze Armenia militarily. By June 1920, Soviet-Kemalist ties had developed into full cooperation. Mustafa Kemal's letter to Chicherin indicated that with the intimate Russo-Turkish friendship practical sequels could be achieved. Kemal considered himself 'lucky' for having established ties with Soviet Russia and expressed his desire to unite both states in their struggle against 'International Imperialism'. Kemal concluded


that:

Turkey expresses his immense delight to you [Soviet Russia] for the sympathy shown towards Turkey in the present war.\(^{127}\)

G.V. Chicherin, in his reply, said that the Soviet government recorded with 'satisfaction' the fact that the programme of the Turkish Nationalists was in 'full accord' with the principles of the Soviet government. That in order to bring about amicable relations and enduring friendship between Turkey and Russia, the Soviet government was ready to send Russian diplomats and Consular representatives to Turkey. Chicherin ended his letter by wishing Mustafa Kemal every success in his present struggle,\(^ {128}\) which was also directed against Armenia.

According to the British War Office, Mustafa Kemal's letters to Moscow asserted that the Turkish Grand National Assembly had 'definitely' decided to conclude a military and political alliance with the Soviet government. In addition to the arms and munitions necessary for the continuation of the national struggle in Turkish Armenia, the Soviet government was asked to advance a sum of £Tqs. 50,000,000 in gold and £Tqs. 5,000,000 of which was to be sent 'as soon as possible' as a first instalment. In return Kemal undertook to attack Armenia. The War Office political report went on to say that the Soviet government agreed in principle to the Nationalist proposals. As, however, the Bolsheviks were anxious for proof of the Nationalists' bona-fide before assenting to all demands, only a sum

\(^{127}\) Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 1022, L. 3, File 270, Kemal Pasha to G.V. Chicherin, June 1920. See also, FO371/5178/E6345/345, de Robeck to FO, Constant. 12 June 1920.

of £Tqs. 500,000 in gold was sent instead of the five million desired. The remainder, it was stated, would be sent later with Shalva Eliava, who was being appointed as Soviet ambassador in Angora. 129

The authenticity of the above political report seems to be unchallenged. Mustafa Kemal’s speech in the Grand National Assembly on 8 July 1920, which was published in the national official gazette, stated that:

We have sought out the Bolsheviks, we have exchanged official correspondence with the Soviet government, the tenor of which you know, and the Soviet government has promised us all manner of material help, arms, guns and money. Of late, the conflicts which arose in the Caucasus prevented the arrival of the help. We are on the point of eliminating such obstacles.

[The obstacle referred to must have been the Republic of Armenia, the sole barrier preventing the military liaison between the two.]

A proclamation issued by Kemal on 5 August of the same year, asserted that:

The sacred forces of Bolshevism holding out its hand to the Turks would always assist the Turks ...

And that Mustafa Kemal made no secret of the fact that:

Victory is to be accomplished through the Bolsheviks. 130

130. Ibid., FO Minutes, ‘Relations Between Bolsheviks and Turkish Nationalists’, 29 Nov. 1920.
Already in May 1920, after 'tentative negotiations' at Trebizond, Bolshevik agents had received full authority to guarantee the Turkish Nationalists that: (a) peace treaty would not be enforced and that Turkey would remain as in 1914, (b) the Soviet government guarantees the supplies of munitions necessary for the Turkish troops. Soviet military aid to the Turkish Nationalists was reported by many political departments. Even the Greek Vice-Consul at Batum had brought to the attention of his government that from Novorossiisk, the Bolsheviks 'regularly' send to the Turkish Nationalists munitions and money in gold, going to Surmena and Rizonte by small craft.

By July 1920, the Polish campaign having turned in favour of the Bolsheviks, Moscow presented an ultimatum to Armenia, demanding the immediate acceptance of the draft treaty of June. The ultimatum demanded the occupation by soviet troops of Karabagh and Nakhichevan. Armenia made no reply to this ultimatum. Armenia had also rejected the ultimatum from soviet Azerbaijan which demanded the withdrawal of Armenian forces from both Zangezur and Karabagh. In consequence, Moscow ordered the 11th Red Army to occupy the disputed regions. At the same time, as the last British troops had evacuated Batum, the Turkish 11th division at Bayazid commanded by Colonel Javid Bey, also advanced and occupied Nakhichevan. According to the British War Office, the simultaneous attacks of both soviet and Turkish troops had been 'organised' and 'developed'


between the Soviet government and the Turkish Nationalists. The Armenians sustained a series of military reverses. The political report of the Armenian government, commenting on the Russian advance in Armenia, stated that the 'ferocious' Bolshevik operation in Zangezur was 'indescribable'. The Soviet government had reached an agreement with Sultan Beg, himself a notorious brigand and with his other accomplices assisted the Turkish bands to overwhelm the Armenian villages and carry out merciless massacres. In Mountainous Karabagh, Bolshevik excesses had also been ferocious.

It seemed ironical that as one of the major war policies of the Allied powers was to contain the spread of Bolshevik power, and to this effect the Republic of Armenia was used as a means, they declined to respond to the 'desperate appeals' of Armenia for assistance.

We can give no real and extraordinary assistance to Armenia.

D.G. Osborne minuted at the Foreign Office. Similarly, Sir John Tilley of the Foreign Office had minuted that the British government was 'not in a position' to take any action, supporting the view that it would not take Russia long to reach her old frontier again. It seems therefore, Britain had come to realise that military aid to Armenia would have been wasteful since the sovietisation of Armenia was certain to happen in due course.

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137. FO371/4944/E8663/1, minute by J. Tilley, 22 July 1920.
Certainly, the independent Republic of Armenia did not stand a chance of survival considering the simultaneous military operations against her by the Bolsheviks, the Turkish Nationalists and the Azerbaijanis. It would have needed at least a third power's military intervention to come to the rescue of Armenia, which was unthinkable at the time.

On 10 August, B.V. Legran, the Soviet representative at Erevan, threatened that the Red Army's advance would continue and compelled the Armenian government to accept the Soviet terms of peace. The Armenian government succumbed. The agreement signed in Tiflis provided for the 'temporary' occupation by soviet troops of Karabagh, Zangezur and Nakhichevan. The agreement also recognised the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Armenia. According to Article 3, the Russian occupation of Karabagh, Zangezur and Nakhichevan would remain provisional pending a peaceful solution under favourable conditions between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Article 5 specified that the railway line between Shakhtakhti and Julfa was to remain under the control of the Armenian government on condition that it would not be used for military purposes.\(^\text{138}\)

According to H. Terterian, the Armenian government, emboldened by its military success in suppressing the May Bolshevik uprising, had underestimated the presence of the Red Army in Baku and Karabagh, and after a series of

military reverses, had been forced to sign the Tiflis agreement.\textsuperscript{139}

But the political report of the Armenian government, commenting on the Armeno-Soviet agreement, expressed its indignation that the Bolshevik Red Army did not cease its attacks on Armenian troops guarding the north-eastern frontiers of the republic. A day after the agreement, Soviet troops had joined with the Tatar bands and harassed the Armenian lines of defence. On 12 August, Soviet-Tatar forces had also occupied four Armenian villages in the district of Karabagh and had destroyed about thirty Armenian villages in Zangezur. While on 19 and 20 August, similar attacks had been carried out in the direction of Gochbeg.\textsuperscript{140} Ohandjanian bitterly complained to Legran and demanded that further persecutions against the Armenian population in Zangezur and Karabagh be immediately stopped.\textsuperscript{141}

The response of Commander Luke, the chief Commissioner, to the agreement was severe. He bitterly criticised the Armenian government for having signed the agreement as an act of betrayal of trust and of treachery towards Britain. Luke further argued that by the agreement Armenia had virtually opened her doors to the Bolsheviks and, in consequence, it would be impossible to contain further Bolshevik aggression. While de Martell, the French High Commissioner of the Caucasus, considered that since the Armenian government had consented to sign


the agreement she had ceased to be an ally of the Entente.  

Such severe criticism and condemnation were unjustifiable. The Armenian government, having hardly any other option, was compelled to yield to Soviet pressure. Avetis Aharonian explained to Lord Derby that under the prevailing conditions Armenia felt 'bound' to accept the Soviet terms. He also stated that Armenia intended to regain possession of the lost territories but the army required rest and should be properly equipped. At the same time, Prime Minister Ohandjianian had responded to British criticism. Ohandjanian reminded Captain Gracey that it was the decision of the British Military Command in the past to transfer Armenian Karabagh to Azerbaijan and not to allow the Armenian occupation of Zangezur which had first struck a blow at the defence of his country. This had eventually opened up the way for the alliance of the Bolsheviks and Turkic Azerbaijanis. He also argued that the Armenian government had for a long time stressed the necessity of urgent military help to Armenia, but the promised armaments had not reached her even in June. General T. Nazarbekian, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armenian armed forces, also considered the late arrival of British arms as one of the causes of the Armenian military reverses.

Thus, it was the British government that had to be criticised and not the Armenian government which felt bound to come to terms with the Bolsheviks.

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143 FO371/4946/E11345/1, A. Aharonian to Derby, 8 Sept. 1920; ibid., min. by R. Donell, 15 Sept. 1920.

144 FO371/4959/E11868/134, H. Ohandjianian to Gracey, 21 Aug. 1920, and Nazarbekoff to Foreign Minister, Erevan, 20 Aug. 1920; also in, A. Nassibian, Britain and the Armenian Question, p. 207.
There were two main reasons for the Russian Bolshevik troops moving into Karabagh, Zangezur and Nakhichevan. First, as seen above, the disputed territories would have come under Soviet jurisdiction. This was merely the first step of the sovietisation process directed against the Armenian Republic; the latter was to bear the same fate in due time. It would simply seem naive to think that the Red Army had entered the disputed territories to stop the inter-racial hostilities between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis. Since soon after the sovietisation of Azerbaijan the Soviet government had 'exploited' their national rancour as a 'pretext' to enable them to move in.

The second reason for the Bolshevik troops moving into the disputed territories was to effect an alliance with the Turkish Nationalists across Armenian territory. For, soon after the occupation of the disputed districts, a Bolshevik delegation had been despatched via Maku and Bayazid to Kemal's headquarters to carry out negotiations. It was also reported that armaments and money, a 'large amount', had been transferred to the Nationalists. The Soviet government therefore, seemed anxious to enforce authority in the Caucasus as quickly as possible and at the same time secure a military junction with the Turkish Nationalists in a common attempt to strike a blow against the Entente.

Events in the Caucasus presaged a poor future for Armenia. On the other
hand, at Sevres, European plenipotentiaries outlined the extent of Ottoman territories to be awarded to the Armenian Republic. It was the Treaty of Sevres of 10 August 1920, signed ironically the very same day as the Armeno-Soviet agreement at Tiflis, which rekindled Armenian expectations for a just and durable solution. But the Treaty of Sevres, which promised so much to Armenia, turned out to be a mere illusion, since neither power was willing to enforce its implementation. Resistance to surrendering any Ottoman territory to the Armenian state was one of the chief aims of the Turkish Nationalist movement. To give effect to this goal, a comparatively strong Turkish force under the command of Kiazim Karabekir was assembled and maintained in and around Erzerum. The Soviet government as well adopted a hostile attitude towards the Sevres treaty. She could not afford to alienate Mustafa Kemal for the sake of a pro-Allies Armenia. Nonetheless, the resolutions of the Sevres treaty were in breach of those of the Tiflis Agreement. Thus, it was in the interest of both the Nationalists and Bolsheviks to renounce the Treaty of Sevres.

Article 88 to 93 of the Sevres treaty directly referred to the future status of Armenia. Turkey in Article 88, recognised Armenia as a free and independent state. The signatories agreed to entrust President Wilson with the task of delineating the historically Armenian territories which were completely and inhumanely depopulated by the Turkish government. The final boundary was to be fixed between Turkey and Armenia in the vilayets: Erzerum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis. Article 89 also specified that Armenia would have access to the sea, and the demilitarisation of any portion of Turkish territory adjacent to the said frontier. By Article 90, Turkey renounced all rights and title to the territory transferred to Armenia. The clause also made it clear that Armenia would have

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148. PP, 1920, vol. LI, no. 11, British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Armenia, Belgium, Greece, the Hedjaz, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Serb-Croat-Slovene State and Czecho-Slovakia, p. 4.
to assume financial obligations in proportion to the former Turkish territory awarded to her. Article 91 and 93 referred to the establishment of a Boundary Commission to trace on the spot the Caucasian frontiers (by the states themselves, or failing that, by the principal Allied powers) and to the protection of non-Armenian inhabitants within Armenia. 149

The signing of the Treaty of Sevres was certainly a national day of celebration for the Armenian people. It was the recognition of the right of the Armenians over their national home where they had lived from biblical times. The Treaty was in a sense the decolonisation of the Armenian Eastern Provinces from Turkish occupation. But sadly enough, the Treaty of Sevres, a document of historic significance as regards its Armenian clauses, remained only on paper. The Allied powers lacked the effective means to ratify the articles of the treaty. Turkish Nationalist and Bolshevik opposition were the reasons. It would have required another war to impose the will of the powers, but none was committed to resume military hostility. Economic and military retrenchments stood high in the agenda for alleviating the domestic requirements shattered during the war. No troops could be spared to ratify the clauses of the Treaty of Sevres.

By August 1920 Armenia based her claims on the Treaty of Sevres; the Turkish Nationalists on the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Batum; and as for Soviet Russia, she was concerned to end the independence of Armenia by bringing her under soviet domination.

In the autumn of 1920, Armenian chances of survival as an independent state

seemed bleak. The American Senate had decisively rejected the Armenian mandate. The Allied powers showed no intention whatsoever of backing up the Armenian clauses of the Treaty of Sèvres. At the same time the Armenian government was in an uncompromising position with her Caucasian neighbours, as well as with the Bolsheviks and Turkish Nationalists. Thus, under such prevailing conditions, Kemalist Turkey found herself in a favourable position to act freely to extend Turkey's boundaries at the expense of Armenia. The Soviet government too found the time opportune to order the Red Army to increase pressure on Armenia.

Soon after the signing of the Armeno-Soviet Agreement, a clear understanding had also been reached between Lenin and Mustafa Kemal concerning military assistance to be provided by the Bolsheviks for services in Anatolia. The Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean had derived valuable information that a portion of the Russian infantry and cavalry division styled 'soviet deliverance for Anatolia' had already arrived at Erzerum. The General Head Quarters at Egypt put the number of Bolshevik troops for reinforcing Mustafa Kemal at 7,000. This number was derived from American and French sources. An additional 10,000 Russian troops had also reinforced the Turkish Nationalist troops for the impending invasion of Mesopotamia.

Kemal's Congressional speech of 14 August, reveals the authenticity of the information supplied by the C-in-C Mediterranean. Mustafa Kemal stated that on 11 August the union of the Red Army with the Turkish Nationalist army was accomplished. That the Turkish troops were received by the Bolsheviks with

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'extraordinary ceremonies' and that the combined forces of the two governments continued to take 'common measures'. Elaborating on the subject of Soviet-Turkish cooperation, Kemal asserted that the Bolshevik government had taken practical steps to conclude an agreement with them, and had sent an army (referring to the soviet deliverance troops). Continuing, Kemal attributed the 'vague and neglected' state of affairs in the East for the past two months to the situation in Poland. The Armenians and Georgians, taking advantage of Russia's engagement in Poland, had turned the state of affairs in their favour. But, Kemal added, despite this the Red Army arrived at Nakhichevan and established contact with them, making the Bolsheviks and Turks 'masters of the situation'. Concluding, the Turkish leader stated that it was 'most probable' that the Soviet government would finally decide to teach 'Armenia a lesson'. In his turn, Kiazim Karabekir, attached the 'utmost importance' to the 'destruction of Armenia' and gave on various occasions evidence of his 'eagerness' to attack Armenia.\(^{152}\)

On 24 August 1920, a Treaty had come into force between Kemalist Turkey and Soviet Russia. In article three of the Treaty signed in Moscow, the two contracting parties undertook to establish 'as soon as possible' a rail link in order to facilitate the 'swift' and 'unhampered' transport of 'persons and goods',\(^{153}\) (or rather troops and military supplies). This could only have been achieved at the expense of the Republic of Armenia. With this Treaty in consideration it did not take long for Kiazim Karabekir to fulfil his 'eagerness' for the destruction of

\(^{152}\) FO371/5179/E115136/345, Political Report, 'The Turkish Nationalists and Bolsheviks', Constant. 10 Nov. 1920. See also, FO371/5178/E114638/345, FO Minutes, no. 2, 'An Outline of the Nationalists' plans, which included the obtaining of military supplies from Russia, the seizure of as much Armenian territory as possible in order to confront the Entente with an accomplished fact, and a winter invasion of Mesopotamia'. 20 Nov. 1920.

Armenia. Less than a month after the Treaty, on 13 September 1920, Kiazim Karabekir's XVth army corps crossed the 1914 Russo-Turkish frontier and made a surprise attack on Armenia. At the same time Armenia was also being pressed by the Soviet Red Army towards Karakilise on the Dilijan front. The Bolsheviks had also stepped up their 'ferocious attacks' on Armenian inhabitants in both Zangezur and Karabagh, abrogating the Armeno-Soviet agreement of 10 August.\(^{154}\)

A renewed and decisive war had engulfed the Armenian Republic. She was virtually squeezed on all sides. The Turks were relentlessly advancing on the west, the Bolshevik forces were closing in on the north-east, the Azerbaijanis were aggressively manoeuvring on the east and by mid-November Georgian troops were advancing in the indisputably Armenian regions of 'Shahali and Pambak'.\(^{155}\) in the north.

Amid the evident destruction of Armenia, Avetis Aharonian, on behalf of the Armenian government, addressed an urgent appeal to the League of Nations asking for its intervention in any form considered desirable. Aharonian explained that the Armenian forces could have easily defended the frontiers against the attacks of the Turks, if she had not been at the same time threatened by the Bolshevik Red Army and the Azerbaijanis. The best method of frustrating the Turco-Bolshevik plan would be the occupation of Trebizond by the Allies or by a Greek force. Such an occupation would divide the Kemalist troops and Trebizond would


It seems that the Armenian government had come up with a fairly impressive suggestion. To push forward the proposal, General Bagratouni, 'a man of decision', using his military expertise, tried to urge the British government to undertake the operation. But the reply from the Foreign Office was frustrating. Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, considered the Allied occupation of Trebizond 'impracticable' and as to the Greek occupation, 'undesirable'. The only tangible assistance she could afford to make was to send arms to Armenia.

In its desperate plight the Armenian government finally came to realise that the Treaty of Sevres was nothing but a dead letter. The Allies could give no effective diplomatic assistance simply to demonstrate to the Kemalists that they were supposed to implement the provisions of the Treaty of Sevres regarding Armenia. The Allies had actually left Armenia in complete isolation in the Caucasus to combat the far superior forces of the anti-Allied powers.

The Turkish Nationalist armies were well reinforced. In the course of the war between Armenia and Turkey, General Staff Intelligence at Constantinople had full information that several Bolshevik representatives had arrived at Trebizond and two Soviet ships had docked at Trebizond harbour containing military weapons for

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the Turkish forces. On the other hand, Commander Luke had received reliable information that just prior to the Turkish invasion of Armenia, Kemal had received from Soviet Russia via Baku, 'ten poods of Russian gold'. It is interesting that the Turkish Nationalists had made no secret about the fact that they were regularly receiving military aid from the Soviet government. Throughout September the Kemalists published communiques about the situation on the various Bolshevik fronts and also emphasised that they were receiving assistance in money and arms from Soviet Russia. Thus, it had become abundantly evident that the Soviet government was arming the Turks for operations not only against the Entente but also against the Republic of Armenia.

By September 1920, Kemalist Turkey and Soviet Russia were in full accord. In this respect it is significant to examine one of Kemal's important speeches delivered in Trebizond on 20 September, which was directly related to the union of Turkey and Russia. Kemal stressed that Soviet Russia had worked hard to secure a union with the Nationalists and had succeeded in doing so. That:

In view of International policy and especially Turkish policy, our interests ultimately unite us with the Bolsheviks.

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162. Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 4033, L. 2, File 1174, Mustafa Kemal's speech about the union with the Bolsheviks', Trebizond, 20 Sept. 1920.
Significantly the sentence is written in capital letters.

After such considerations it seems quite evident that the responsibility of Turkey's attack on Armenia on 13 September 1920, rested with Moscow rather than Angora. It was in the interest of Soviet Russia to give the green light to the Turkish Nationalists to advance into pre-1914 Armenian territory. A simultaneous Soviet attack on North-eastern Armenia would have induced the Armenian government to accept the Russian terms of sovietisation. Thus, Armenia would have felt bound to seek Soviet protection rather than fall prey to the mercy of Turkey which had a record of massacring the Armenian population in eastern Turkey. The British War Office, commenting on the Turkish attack on Armenia, stated that:

There seems little doubt that the Turks and Bolsheviks have concluded some sort of agreement for common action against the Armenians.  

Colonel Stokes was sure that the Bolsheviks and Kemal had come to an agreement to 'overrun Armenia'. And general Bagratouni, after having evaluated the situation, came also to believe that Soviet Russia was responsible for Turkey's attack on Armenia. Colonel Stokes states that:

There is little doubt that this invasion was the outcome of a joint Bolshevik-Kemalist plan, having for its aim the junction of their

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armed forces and incidentally to compel Armenia to sever all connection with the Allies.

Stokes concludes that the success of the Bolshevik-Kemalist plan would not only strengthen greatly their united front against the Allies, but show the world that the Treaty of Sèvres remained a 'dead letter'. Tigran Bekzadian, the Armenian representative at Tiflis, had also voiced a similar opinion. He pointed out that the 'obstinate resistance' of Bolsheviks at Nakhichevan, the constant despatch of Turkish reinforcements, the establishment there of a Turkish wireless telegraph station to ensure communications between Moscow and Angora, were evident factors, explaining the simultaneous Turco-Soviet offensive against Armenia.

The Armenian Prime Minister had bitterly complained to Chicherin that Soviet Russia was despatching a substantial amount of arms and munitions to the Turkish Nationalists for military operations against Armenia. Ohandjanian added that the Soviet government had on many occasions expressed its friendly attitude towards Armenia but this was in contradiction with the evident Soviet military catering to Turkey against Armenia. At this point, Colonel Stokes had rightly 'distrusted' the Russian Bolsheviks, whose object was 'Russian domination' over Armenia by 'force of arms'.

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Meanwhile, the Turkish Nationalist armies were advancing deep into pre-war Russian Armenia. By 4 October the Turks were already closing in Kars, strategically important for the defence of Armenia. As the Allied powers had turned their back on Armenia, the Armenian government was compelled to approach the Soviet government to stop the Turkish advance. The Bolsheviks responded instantly. The mediation on the part of Soviet Russia could be explained by the fact that the sweeping advance of the Turkish armies had to a certain extent alarmed the Soviet government. Anxiety must have been felt in Moscow whether the rapidity of Turkish successes would have made the Kemalists exceed the limits in territorial terms.

On 13 October, Legran, the Soviet plenipotentiary at Erevan, laid down a package of Soviet conditions before the Armenian government as an attempt to cease hostilities between Turkey and Armenia. The first Soviet condition was for the Armenian government to denounce the Treaty of Sèvres. Secondly, Armenia was asked to facilitate the transport of Bolshevik troops on Armenian railways to join the Turkish Nationalists so that Russia could help Turkey against the Entente. And thirdly, as far as the disputed territories were concerned, they were to be solved through Soviet mediation.169

Colonel Stokes, found the Armenian government determined to refuse the Bolshevik demand, but at the same time she was anxious to defer giving a definite refusal in the hope of: prolonging negotiations with the advent of winter, which would have greatly shortened their lines of defence against the Bolsheviks; and

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securing a secret defensive military alliance with Georgia.\textsuperscript{170}

As both the Bolshevik and Turkish pressure was building up on Armenia, and no intervention by the Allied camp was in sight, Georgia remained the last and only hope for Armenia to combat the aggressors. On 18 October, Ruben Ter Minasian, the Minister of War, accompanied Colonel Stokes to Tiflis to discuss the question of a military alliance with the Georgian government. The efforts to convince the Georgians that her own interests demanded that they should make such an alliance, proved fruitless. The Georgian government refused to accept the suggestions of Ter Minasian. The reason for this refusal was that a war undertaken by Georgia in support of Armenia would lack the support of the Georgian people unless Georgia were herself attacked. In Stokes' opinion, the argument of the Georgians was not convincing. Two factors had probably influenced the decision of the Georgian government. Firstly, Georgia feared that if she supported Armenia, the Turks would retaliate by instigating risings among the numerous Muslims in Georgia. Secondly, it was in Georgia's interest not to jeopardise the negotiations with Azerbaijan and the Bolsheviks for supplies of oil from Baku in return for merchandise from Georgia.\textsuperscript{171}

But the forces working behind the Georgian decision to decline Armenia's offer of military alliance were strong. Already, with the assistance of the Soviet representative in Tiflis, the Georgian government was negotiating with Mustafa Kemal's representative to save itself from a wave of Turkish advances in Georgian boundaries. According to Colonel Stokes, the agreement reached


\textsuperscript{171} FO371/4966/E1552/134, Stokes to Curzon, 22 Nov. 1920. See also DBFP, vol. XII, pp. 644-5, Stokes to Curzon, 7 Nov. 1920.
between Georgia and Turkey, made Georgia refuse to assist Armenia against Turkey.\(^\text{172}\)

As futile discussions were still in progress with the Georgian government, Armenia, to save herself from an impending collapse, on 22 October 1920, presented Legran a set of proposals. Ruben Ter-Minasian staked a claim for Armenia's western frontiers to be further extended to include Trebizond, Erzinjan and Kharput. According to the Armenian government, Legran appeared 'more than willing to accede' to all expectations set forth by Ter-Minasian. Legran had announced that he would be leaving for Baku to submit the Armenian proposals to the Soviet government of Azerbaijan and get in touch with Mustafa Kemal.\(^\text{173}\) This was merely a diplomatic bluff on the part of Legran. Certainly, Kemal would have never consented to any territorial concessions regarding Trebizond, Erzinjan and Kharput. It seems that Legran was trying to lure the Armenian government with false hopes.

Turkey could not wait. On 28 October Kiazim Karabekir launched a massive thrust in the direction of Kars and Igdir. Considerable fighting also took place within twenty five miles of Erevan, the capital itself. At the same time, Soviet troops were building up their pressure on the north-east, in the Dilijan area.\(^\text{174}\) Tigran Bekzadian, the Armenian representative in Tiflis, commenting on the concentration of the Red Armies on the Dilijan region, stated that it was intended to weaken the Armenian resistance against the Turkish Nationalist troops in the


region of Kars.\textsuperscript{175}

On the other hand, the War Office, evaluating the war aims of the anti-Allied powers, stated that the Turkish Nationalists seemed determined to embark on a direct attack upon the 'heart of Armenia'. That such an undertaking would have not only yielded the maximum result, but would have opened up the most direct passage to Baku and Russia. The object of the Red Army's attack from the north-east was intended to divide the Armenian forces. The guerilla fighting taking place at various points in Karabagh and Zangezur must have been probably initiated by the Turks and Bolsheviks with the aim of keeping as many Armenians as possible from the danger zone.\textsuperscript{176} Lord Curzon's opinion about the object of the combined Bolshevik and Turkish Nationalist attack was to 'overrun' and 'destroy' the independent existence of Armenia.\textsuperscript{177}

The Treaty of Erevan between Soviet Russia and the Republic of Armenia signed on 28 October 1920, but never ratified, was the last desperate attempt on the part of the Armenian government to save the country from total destruction. With this Treaty, Soviet Russia and Azerbaijan recognised the independence of Armenia. Article 2, stipulated that the Armenian Republic was ready to accept Soviet Russian cooperation in resolving peacefully with Turkey the territorial disputes over Turkish Armenia if:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{175} Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 1022, L. 3, File 272, H. Ohandjanian to S. Vratsian, Oct./Nov. 1920.
\item \textsuperscript{176} FO371/4961/E13262/134, WO to FO, 26 Oct. 1920. See also, State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, File 602, p. 93, Georgian 'Communist' Paper, 'The Kemalist-Soviet negotiations were playing a decisive role.' 5 Nov. 1920; WO 106/331/224, Summary of Military Events, General Staff, WO, 'A combined movement by the Bolsheviks and Turks against Armenia thus seems to have commenced', 6 Oct. 1920.
\item \textsuperscript{177} DBFP, vol. XII, p. 641, Curzon to Stokes, 21 Oct. 1920.
\end{itemize}
The Turkish government withdrew its forces to the 1914 Russo-Turkish frontier.

The Turkish government denounced the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the Batum Convention.

The Turkish government recognised the independent republic of Armenia with boundaries including the districts of Erevan, Kars, Zangezur, Karabagh and Lori.\(^{178}\)

The Treaty had come too late. Developments in the Caucasus were already unfolding swiftly. Within three weeks Armenia had lost almost everything to the Turks. On 22 October the Armenian troops had already been forced out of Igdir, enabling the Turkish forces to approach the Armenian capital. On 30 October Kars, the chief Armenian fortress, had also fallen\(^ {179}\) to the troops of Kiazim Karabekir. A rising of the Muslim population in the province of Alexandropol had cut communications in the rear of a large part of the Armenian army. Hopeless as the Armenian position was, on 7 November, at the request of the Armenian Commander at Alexandropol, an armistice was granted by Kiazim Karabekir. By the terms of the cease-fire, the Kemalists occupied Alexandropol and the Armenian troops withdrew from the west bank of the Arpa Chai (Akhurian).\(^ {180}\)

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As the Armenian government had accepted Karabekir's terms, the Turkish Foreign Minister overruled them. On 9 November Mustafa Kemal presented a fresh ultimatum with a set of harsher demands which aimed at utterly crippling Armenia. They included the surrender of large quantities of arms and munitions, and in territorial terms it left the Armenian Republic little more than the district of Erevan.  

Even in their desperate position the Armenian government found the Kemalist conditions too onerous to accept. Instead, Armenia asked for a conference to discuss the conditions initially proposed by Karabekir. But Turkey replied by recommencing hostilities and driving the Armenians out of Ani and Karakilise. Having sustained further reverses, the Armenian government sued for a fresh armistice on 18 November.

Amid the Armenian efforts to reach an agreement with Kemalist Turkey, on 22 November, President Woodrow Wilson announced the extent of territories to be awarded to Armenia. The award which stipulated an area of 42,000 sq. Kilometres from Ottoman Armenia, included a 400 Kilometre of coastline along the Black Sea, had come too late. The stark reality was that none of the Entente powers was willing to enforce it. Like the Treaty of Sèvres, President Wilson's award was doomed to remain a non-implemented historic document. It seems that the Armenian government had not pinned its hopes on Wilson's award. The cordon around Armenia's heartland was tightening, and some form of understanding with Turkey was crucial.

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182. FO371/4965/E15131/134, W. Wilson to the President of the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers, encl., 'President Wilson's decision relative to the boundaries of Armenia', 27 Nov. 1920.
Map 8: Armenia: Boundaries Proposed by President Wilson in November 1920

Source: PRO, FO 925/41181
As Khatisian's delegation was preparing to depart to Alexandropol to negotiate with the Turkish Nationalists, the Armenian government asked Legran and Mdivani, the Soviet representatives, to exert pressure on the Kemalists. Legran in reply maintained that Soviet Russia could assist Armenia militarily in case the Armenian government gave access to the Red Army to enter Armenia. Legran argued that this would create a 'real base' for Russian mediation during Armenia's negotiations with the Turks. Legran concluded that the Red Army's presence in Armenia would serve as the only proof to guarantee the halt of further Turkish advances in Armenian territory.\textsuperscript{183} Due to their misguided and single minded ideological commitment to the West, the Armenian government rejected the proposal of Legran, fearing that this might lead to a military occupation of Armenia by the Bolsheviks. Every rejection on the part of the Armenian government to Bolshevik proposals cost dearly. Armenia had been fatally isolated and not only was she shrinking territorially but the lives of the remnant of the Armenians was threatened with annihilation.

The pre-condition for Turkish negotiations at Alexandropol was the annulment of the Treaty of Sevres by Armenia which was considered as an 'Imperialist device of despotism and domination'.\textsuperscript{184} Mustafa Kemal, writing to Simon Vratsian, the last Prime Minister of Armenia, expressed his hope that the negotiations in progress at Alexandropol would lead to an era of security and peace for both nations.\textsuperscript{185} Armenia, having been deserted by the Allied powers, and to save herself from a further wave of Turkish invasion, accepted all

\textsuperscript{183} State Historical Central Archives of Armenia, Fond 200, L. 1, File 602, pp. 334-5, Minutes of a meeting bet. the Armenian government and Legran, 19 Nov. 1920.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., Fond 200, L. 1, File 636, p. 27, Kiazim Karabekir to Al. Khatisian, Alexandropol, 24 Nov. 1920.

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., File 636, Mustafa Kemal to S. Vratsian, 29 Nov. 1920.
the terms demanded by Karabekir.

Thus, with the crushing Treaty of Alexandropol, Armenia was left with a territory of 27,000 sq. Kilometres. The treaty further stipulated that Kars and Surmalu, including Mount Ararat would go to Turkey; Nakhichevan, Shakhtakhti and Sharur were to be disputed land, whose future was to be decided later by a plebiscite; Armenia would be permitted to keep an army of 1,500 troops, equipped with twenty machine-guns and eight cannons; compulsory military service was to be prohibited; Turkey received the right of transport through Armenia and the right to use Armenia's territory for military purposes in case of a threat to her independence. Furthermore, Armenia would declare the Treaty of Sèvres null and void and should see to the departure of Allied representatives in Erevan.186

Humiliating as the treaty was for Armenia, the signature of Khatiašian gave no official recognition. At this stage Soviet Russia was not prepared to assign Armenia to the mercy of Turkey. The process of sovietising the Caucasus clashed with Turkey's intention to reach Baku. The Admiralty weekly Intelligence summary stated that:

The Bolsheviks are nervous of Turkish intentions and evidently aiming at preventing the Turks entering Azerbaijan.187


187. CAB 24/16, File 3/H/7, C.P. 2255, Admiralty Weekly Intelligence Summary, no. 22, 4 Dec. 1920; CAB 24/120, C.P. 2608, memo. by Secretary of State for War, 'The Russians, who feared a junction between the Nationalists and the Azerbaijanis, as a result of Kiazim Karabekir's rapid advance into Armenia in November 1920, retaliated by Bolshevising what was left of Armenia', 19 Feb. 1921.
To forestall any Turkish advance towards Azerbaijan, the Soviet government threatened the Nationalists that such a move would be regarded as casus belli. In late November and early December 1920, the Kemalist-Bolshevik entente was certainly not running smoothly. Antagonism over Armenia and future Turkish ambitions in Transcaucasia, had driven the two parties apart. The Turkish Nationalists aimed at grabbing a large portion of Armenia and then moving into Azerbaijan. In its turn, the Bolsheviks tried to compel Turkey to retire beyond the old Russian frontier.

Amid these considerations, on 27 November, the Soviet government ordered the Red Army to move into Armenia. According to Colonel Stokes, 5,000 Bolshevik troops took the direction of Karakilise and another 5,000 of Erevan. On 2 December, Vratsian's government ceased to exist and Armenia was proclaimed a Soviet Socialist Republic. The Reverend H.W. Harcourt (the Anglican Chaplain in Transcaucasia, 1920-1 and agent of the Armenian Refugees (Lord Mayor's) Fund in Armenia), had rightly stated that the linking up of Armenia with Soviet Russia had come about not from any real Bolshevik feeling but from despair at the lack of assistance by the Allies, and clutching at the only remaining hope of safety.

Soon after the sovietisation of Armenia, the Kemalists realised the impossibility of making further territorial gains and were compelled to feel

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satisfied at having acquired the territories assigned to her under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Whether sincerely or not, Kiazim Karabekir, writing to G.V. Chicherin, welcomed the Red Army's entry into Armenia.\(^{192}\) It seems that after brief tension between Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey, the Soviet government was anxious to restore her friendly relations with Turkey. Although the Soviet government was aware that Kemal's nationalist movement was not of Communist orientation, his possible help against Britain was considered most valuable. At the same time, Enver's Pan-Turanian activities in Russia's Turkish speaking states had caused anxiety among the Soviet leadership.\(^{193}\) It is of interest to note Chicherin's letter addressed to Ahmed Mukhtar, the Turkish Commissar for Foreign Affairs to regain Turkish friendship. Chicherin stresses that the Soviet government was pleased to record that Russia and Turkey, as 'natural allies', were in 'mutual understanding'. That:

![Image](https://example.com/image_url)

\[\text{Turkey and Russia do not have divisive interests, but have such interests which can only consolidate their friendship.}\]^\(^{194}\)

The Soviet government's anxiety to consolidate Turkey's friendship meant that Armenia had to bear the cost for such an undertaking. Lenin was interested in world revolution and not in the fate of the Armenians as such. And when the Soviet Armenian representatives, headed by A. Melikian, approached the Soviet government on the subject of aid for Armenia, Lenin replied that he 'would not'

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\(^{192}\) Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 4033, L. 2, File 1156, Kiazim Karabekir to G.V. Chicherin, 3 Dec. 1920.


\(^{194}\) Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 1022, L. 3, File 325, G.V. Chicherin to A. Mukhtar, Moscow, Jan. 1921.
and 'could not' fight for the inclusion of Kars in Armenia. Lenin, naively hoping for a general rising among the Turkish peasantry argued that:

We are temporarily compelled to sacrifice the interests of the Armenian labour classes to those of the World Revolution.

Remember Comrades that we are not going to fight anybody over Armenia, especially Kemal. 195

One tends to ponder whether the success of the May 1920 Armenian Communist uprising would have left Kars and Ardahan within the present boundaries of Armenia. Certainly it would have been beneficial in terms of saving thousands of Armenian lives lost during the Turkish war between May and November 1920. But on territorial matters Soviet Russia would have most probably ceded Kars and Ardahan and the Surmalu region to the Turks. The Treaty of Moscow, signed between Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey on 16 March 1921, is a clear example to what extent the Soviet government was prepared to assign territories to Turkey at the expense of Armenia. With the Treaty of Moscow, sometimes referred to as the 'treaty of friendship and brotherhood', Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey were brought into a more binding and definite alliance than ever. This Treaty gave a legal form to all the territorial losses of Armenia. The Treaty of Sevres was declared invalid. Kars and Ardahan were left to Turkey, and the new frontier of Armenia was agreed to be from Mount Akbaba south along the Arpa Chai (Akhurian) and the east along the Araxes. Surmalu went also to Turkey as did Mount Ararat, the historic symbol of Armenia. As regards Nakhichevan, both parties agreed that it should form an autonomous

Virtually, the Soviet government had sealed the fate of the Armenian question once and for good, pronouncing it as non-existent. Subsequently, Moscow had also contemptuously disregarded the fact that in February 1921, while the Armenians were carrying out a bitter revolt, the authority in Erevan was not in the hands of the Soviets, but in those of the Committee for the Deliverance of the Homeland. It was only in early April, that is, after the signing of the Treaty of Moscow, that the Red Army re-established control in Armenia. Therefore, it could be said that Armenia's fate have been predetermined by the Soviet government. Consequently, on 13 October 1921, the Soviet-Turkish Conference of Kars, where the Soviet Transcaucasian republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia also participated, reaffirmed the decision of the Treaty of Moscow, leaving vast Armenian territories to Turkey.

Both the Treaty of Moscow and that of Kars, contradicted the principles of self-determination which were so 'eloquently' propagated by Lenin. Therefore, prior to the Bolshevik revolution of 7 November 1917, as the Bolsheviks were not

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Map 9: The Boundaries of Soviet Armenia and Present Republic of Armenia
in power, Lenin and Stalin skilfully exploited the slogan of national self-determination. Once they had seized power, it was in their interest to give it a different, narrow meaning. Furthermore, in practice, not a single nationality in the sovietised states was able to avail itself of the right of self-determination in the form of secession and creation of an independent state, because of the vigorous opposition of the Soviet Central government.

Soviet policy was to strip Armenia of her independent status and impose sovietisation on her. To this effect, as the Armenian government and the people at large stubbornly remained anti-Bolshevik, the Soviet government had encouraged the Turkish Nationalists to exert intense military pressure on Armenia to force the latter to seek Soviet assistance. The Armenian territories in eastern Turkey had been reoccupied by Kemalist Turkey thanks to Soviet Russia. This is eloquently borne out by Kiazim Karabekir who stated that:

> It was Soviet Russia that allowed us to occupy Sarikamish and Nakhichevan.¹⁹⁹

Notably, Nakhichevan had never been initially claimed by Turkey, but Karabekir's account that the green light for the occupation of Nakhichevan had come from Moscow shows clearly to what extent Soviet Russia was manipulating the Kemalist movement for its nefarious purposes. Certainly, the Turkish Nationalists had made good use of the arms, munitions and money supplied by the Bolsheviks. The Russian arms were used not only to drive the Greeks out of the mainland or combat the Allied forces, but were used to force the Armenian troops out of eastern Turkey. Mustafa Kemal in one of his speeches before the Grand

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¹⁹⁹ Socio-Political Organisations' Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 4033, L. 2, File 1148, Kiazim Karabekir's Note in Stenography, 28 Nov. 1920. See also Cebesoy, Ali Fuat, Moskova Hatiralari, 'Chicherin gave his consent for the occupation of Sarikamish and Nakhichevan by the Turks'. p. 83.
Assembly had stated that:

To refuse Soviet help in arms and money was illogical.\textsuperscript{200}

The Armenian government for its part, was totally disillusioned with Allied diplomacy. To the last minute Armenia retained high hopes, despite the fact the Allied powers had long abandoned their interest in the Armenian question. The Western powers found it more important to wean the Turkish Nationalists from the Russian Bolsheviks rather than act as defender of a just solution of the Armenian question. Even before the final collapse of Armenia, a pro-Turkish orientation was considered more advantageous. Concessions to Turkey would have brought the latter into the Allied sphere, thus forestalling the spread of Bolshevism. And as regards Armenia, Osborne had minuted at the Foreign Office that,

I wish the Armenians would accept the Bolshevik terms and purchase peace at the cost of a rupture with the Allies...\textsuperscript{201}

Especially after the sovietisation of the Caucasus -as such considerations turned out to be the main preoccupation of the Entente- the Armenian question was doomed to be left in abeyance.

\textsuperscript{200} FO371/5171/E13552/262, G.H.Q. General Staff Intelligence, Weekly Report, no. 88, (secret), 29 Sept. 1920.

\textsuperscript{201} FO371/4962/E13765/134, minute by D.G. Osborne, 8 Nov. 1920.
Conclusion

Both Tsarist and Bolshevik policy-making treated the Armenian question as one of expediency. The successive Russian governments were not concerned with the fate of the Armenian people at large but considered the Armenian question as subordinate to their national interests. Armenian misgivings towards the Tsarist and then the Provisional governments had made them resort to the victorious Allied powers rather than surrender their national claims to the Bolsheviks. The Soviet government had found it more practicable to simulate sympathy and cooperate with the Turkish Nationalists than act in favour of the Armenian Republic which staunchly remained pro-Ally and anti-Bolshevik.

For just over a half a century (1828-84), the Tsarist government generally favoured their Armenian subjects. It was a period of intellectual and political advancement for the Russian Armenians. But it was only after 1895, with the accession of Nicholas II (December 1894-March 1917), and the appointment of Prince A.B. Lobanov-Rostovsky as Foreign Minister (1895-6), that Tsarist policy dramatically shifted to the right. The consequences were immense as far as the Armenians were concerned. The Russian government embarked on a policy of intense Russification of the Armenian population in the Caucasus. This was followed by the attempted Russian confiscation of Armenian Church property in 1903. Soon after, Russia, acting on the principle of 'divide and rule' had resorted to encouraging a state of hostility and enmity between the Tatars and Armenians which culminated in a series of Armenian massacres throughout the main towns.

1. See above, p. 54.
2. FO424/182, Gosselin to Kimberley, 5 Apr. 1895.
of the Caucasus. The Russian government’s dislike of the independence of the Armenian Church and the professed fear of a revolutionary movement among the Armenian subjects, hoped that by annihilating the Armenians it would also succeed in arresting the liberal movement in Russia.

Ottoman Armenians had lived in no better conditions under the Sultan’s despotic rule and the Young Turk government. The situation was worse. Both governments had engaged in massacring the Armenian population, thus freeing themselves from Armenian reform obligations, which to their intense dislike had brought the involvement of the great powers in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. To this effect, the Young Turk government had been in a more favourable position that the Sultan, since the outbreak of the First World War had afforded an unhindered opportunity to end the Armenian question once and for all by ending the Armenians.

The remark of Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary about Enver, the Turkish Minister of War, is interesting.

I remember saying while the diplomatic struggle was still in progress at Constantinople [1914], that the only way of preventing war was for the Grand Vizier to assassinate Enver, but that in my judgement Enver and his friends belonged to the class of those who assassinate, whereas the Grand Vizier and his friends belonged to the class of those who are assassinated. If we had been Germans, Sir Louis


Mallet might have had Enver assassinated.\textsuperscript{6}

The British Foreign Secretary had certainly not misjudged the character of the Young Turk triumvirate leaders who had launched an inhuman policy of Armenian deportation and physical extermination.

By mid-1916, as the Russian army had victoriously liberated Turkish Armenia, the Tsarist government dramatically switched its direction to an anti-Armenian policy. Armenian refugees returning to their liberated ancestral homeland, were brutally treated by the Russian military authorities. Nicholas II had not kept his promise that a 'most brilliant future awaits the Armenians' once Western Armenia had been successfully conquered. On the contrary, returning Armenians were prohibited from resettling in certain indisputably Armenian districts in which it was planned to settle Cossacks. But the harsh aspect of Tsarist policy was that it wished to have 'as few Armenians as possible' in the conquered Armenian territories.\textsuperscript{7} More inauspiciously, Armenian inhabitants were being disarmed by the Russian military but this was not extended to the Kurds, who continued their unhindered raids against the unprotected Armenian population while the Russian army showed not the slightest desire to intervene.

Thus, Tsarist Russia, knowing all too well the Armenian national aspirations over Turkish Armenia, had embarked on a course to frustrate Armenian claims of autonomy and annex the region to the Russian Empire. It was in accordance with the Sykes-Picot secret agreement that the Russian government had launched its attempt to realise its wartime ambitions at the expense of the Ottoman Empire.

\textsuperscript{6} CAB 1/25/19, 5 Oct. 1917.

\textsuperscript{7} See above, p. 161.
Even the Russian Provisional Government had not relinquished the Tsarist annexationist policy concerning Turkish Armenia. Although embroiled in a political dual with the Bolsheviks and at the same time facing the disintegration of the Russian army, the Provisional Government had initially refused to comply with requests for the transfer of Armenian troops from the eastern front to the Caucasus. It was after the British pressure and hopelessness of the military situation in the Caucasus that the Provisional Government was compelled to transfer the Armenian troops from the eastern front to the Caucasus. Alexander Kerensky's government must have feared that the large concentration of Armenian manpower in Western Armenia would have meant the surrendering of the region to Armenian claims of autonomy. Therefore, Russian territorial interests in Turkish Armenia were not matched by a corresponding interest in the Armenian people.

After the Bolshevik seizure of power and the subsequent withdrawal of the Russian troops from Western Armenia and the Caucasus, there seemed a unique opportunity for the Armenians to repossess their historic homeland. But the Russian retreat had also afforded Turkey a unique opportunity to realise her Pan-Turanian territorial ambitions of conquest. Could Soviet Russia not have signed the Brest-Litovsk treaty? Peace at the expense of Armenian territorial claims had certainly weighed heavier in the scales of Soviet policy. It seemed that she had no other choice but to yield to German and Turkish pressure and purchase peace by using Armenian territories as a tool in the solution to Bolshevik diplomatic problems. But the stark reality was that the Bolshevik government had gone as far as to consent to the Turkish demand to have the Armenian contingents disarmed, whether in Eastern of Western Armenia. Such a pledge was made in the full knowledge that it meant exposing the Armenians to the mercy of the Turkish government, which had a wartime record of massacring the Armenians. This was

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8. See above, pp. 228-9, 277.
also in complete contradiction to the principle of self-determination which the Bolsheviks ardently preached.

The Republic of Armenia had felt jubilant at the signing of the Mudros Armistice. Turkey’s complete defeat must have brightened Armenian prospects for reconstruction and territorial integrity. This could have been achieved if she were not forced to engage in a renewed war with Georgia, Azerbaijan and simultaneously with the Turkish Nationalists and Soviet Russia. The war fought against Georgia could have been avoided if it had not been instigated by the Armenian ultras. It seems that it was Soviet Russia that had taken the initiative to approach the Turkish Nationalists for mutual cooperation, as one of the prime objects of the Soviet government was to gain the sympathy of the Muslim world and at the same time turn the Muslims against the British Empire. This could have effectively been achieved by simulating sympathy and cooperating with the Turkish Nationalists. Ali Fuat Cebesoy, the Turkish ambassador in Moscow, reveals this fact. At the same time, Mustafa Kemal, in one of his speeches, clearly stated that:

Soviet Russia performed enormous efforts in order to effect union with us and succeeded in doing so.

But one should not rule out the fact that for Kemalist Turkey too, it was a tremendous advantage to gain the friendship of Soviet Russia.

The question was whether the Republic of Armenia would survive considering


10. Socio-Political Organisations’ Central Republican Archives of Armenia, Fond 4033, L. 2, File 1174, A Speech by Mustafa Kemal about the Union with the Bolsheviks, Trebizond, 20 Sept. 1920.
the joint military operations of the Turkish Nationalists and Soviet Russia against her. Certainly not. Striking proofs have come to light which reveals the authenticity of an organised Kemalist-Soviet military undertaking against Armenia. But to what extent? The fact should not be ignored that, although the Turkish Nationalists and the Bolsheviks were in general agreement on external issues, there was indeed keen rivalry between them in territorial matters. The Kemalists aimed at reaching Baku whereas the Bolsheviks, aware of this, tried to forestall such a move. Under the prevailing circumstances, it seemed that the Armenian government was unable to profit from this rivalry.

Despite the perilous position of Armenia, and the persistent encouragement of the Allied powers to make the Armenian government continue to hold its anti-Bolshevik policy, the latter failed to assist Armenia effectively. The Treaty of Sevres turned out to be a factitious historic document since neither of the powers was prepared to implement the clauses which directly related to Armenia. On the other hand the Treaty had exacerbated the susceptibilities of Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey who were determined to challenge it.

Under these circumstances it seemed that an American mandate over Armenia would have been the most favourable solution. President Woodrow Wilson was to this effect more than willing to improvise. Writing to the Pope, President Wilson had expressed his determination to come to the rescue of Armenia.

... [I] assure you that I am speaking not only for myself but also I am sure for the whole body of the American people when I say that the sufferings of no other people have appealed to them more deeply than those of the Armenians. It will certainly be one of my most cherished desires to play any part that I can in securing for that

11. See above, pp. 360.
wronged and distressed people the protection of right and the complete deliverance from unjust subjection.  

But Woodrow Wilson did not exercise complete power. His efforts were overruled by the American Senate, who voted against taking up the responsibility of a mandate on Armenia. Fatally isolated, the Republic of Armenia was left drifting between the Bolshevik hammer and the Turkish anvil.

The Armenian government had its fair share of illusion. By the autumn of 1920, it had become abundantly evident that as the Allied powers were not prepared to come to the aid of Armenia, the latter had no other choice but to come to terms either with the Kemalists or the Soviets. The Armenian government must have been aware of this fact. Efforts had been made to come to terms with the Soviet government. But Armenia, basing her aspirations on Allied goodwill, was not prepared to make the least concession to the Soviets. However, it was only after a question of national survival that the Armenian government had been forced to sign the Tiflis agreement of 10 August 1920. But despite the agreement the Soviet government had not kept its pledges. How could it be expected that Soviet Russia, with the 10 August agreement would recognise the 'sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Armenia', since her ultimate goal was to sovietise Armenia? The British Cabinet had well acknowledged that:

> It is impossible to come to terms with the Bolsheviks because they never keep their promises.

Therefore, it seemed useless to come to terms with the Bolsheviks. Unless

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13. CAB 1/28/6, 8 Jan. 1919.
Armenia had been sovietised no agreement between the Soviet government and the Armenian Republic seemed durable.

Nevertheless, one should not undermine the right of a people to struggle to the end in preserving their independence. No matter how negatively international diplomacy had disillusioned the Armenian government, the independent status of the Republic was intended to be upheld. The Armenian Republic would have had a fair chance of survival had it been for the tight Soviet-Kemalist cooperation.

As a last resort, the sovietisation of Armenia, had saved her from future Turkish aggression. But the stark reality was that it was Soviet Russia which had sealed the Armenian question, which for her had meant its historic claims over Turkish Armenia in favour of regenerated Kemalist Turkey. On the other hand, none of the Western powers had signed a clause in the Treaty of Lausanne which made reference to the word Armenia or Armenians. In effect, Armenia had fallen prey to international diplomacy.
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