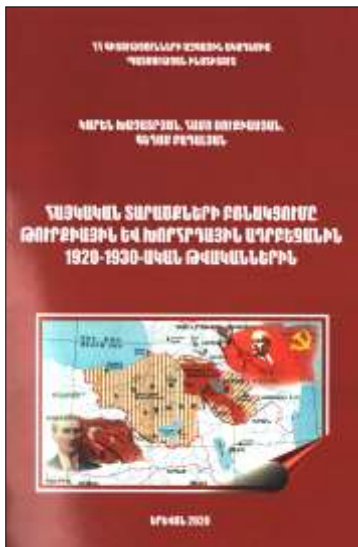


ԳՐԱԽՈՍԱԿԱՆՆԵՐ

BOOK REVIEWS



**ԿԱՐԵՆ ԽԱՉԱՏՐՅԱՆ, ՀԱՄՈ
ՍՈՒՔԻԱՍՅԱՆ, ԳԵՂԱՄ ԲԱԴԱԼՅԱՆ**

**ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՏԱՐԱԾՔՆԵՐԻ
ԲՈՒՆԱԿՑՈՒՄԸ ԹՈՒՐԿԻԱՅԻՆ ԵՎ
ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՅԻՆ ԱԴՐԲԵՋԱՆԻՆ
1920–1930-ԱԿԱՆ ԹՎԱԿԱՆՆԵՐԻՆ**
(Երևան, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստ., 2020,
187 էջ + 1 ներդիր և 2 քարտեզ)

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HAMO SUKIASYAN, GEGHAM BADALYAN

ANNEXATION OF THE ARMENIAN TERRITORIES TO TURKEY AND SOVIET AZERBAIJAN IN THE 1920S AND 1930S

(Yerevan, NAS RA, Institute of History, 2020, 187 pages + 1 loose leaf and 2 maps)

As a result of cooperation between the Chair of History, Yerevan State University and the Institute of History, NAS RA a **valuable study** entitled “The Annexation of the Armenian Territories to Turkey and Azerbaijan in the 1920s and 1930s” **authored by the Doctor of History, Professor Karen Khachatryan, PhD in History, Associate Professor Hamo Sukiasyan and PhD in History Gegham Badalyan** is now available to readers. The editor of the book is K. Khachatryan. The academic board of the Institute of History, NAS approved the book and it was subsequently published by the same research institute in the “Mesrop Arc. Ashtchean” books series. This study is the republished and the complementary version of the authors’ work entitled “The Territory Losses of Soviet Armenia and

the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast in the 1920s and 1930s” (Yerevan, “Zangak”, 2015) which highlights not only the formation of Armenia’s and Artsakh’s borders but also the pivotal issue, concerning the annexation of Armenia’s and Artsakh’s territories to Kemalist Turkey and Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1920s and 1930s.

For political-ideological reasons the study of territorial disputes was not approved in the Soviet era. Such studies were considered as topics that “disrupted the brotherly nations’ friendship” and “contradictory in terms of proletarian internationalism”. After the restoration of Armenia’s independence in 1991, the Armenian historiography was enriched with worthy studies on the loss of the Armenian territories in 1920–1922.

Presently, the interest in the territorial, border issues has increased. It is conditioned by the 44 day war that Azerbaijan and Turkey jointly waged against the Republic of Artsakh in 2020 and by the severe losses that the two Armenian Republics suffered. The issue is also topical due to the 100th anniversary of the three treaties – the Alexandropol Turkish-Armenian Treaty signed on December 2, 1920, the Moscow Russian-Turkish Treaty of March 16, 1921 and the Kars Turkish-Transcaucasian Treaty of October 13, 1921. These three treaties were fatal for Armenians. In this respect, the study “The Annexation of the Armenian Territories to Turkey and Azerbaijan in the 1920s and 1930s” is not only a noteworthy historiographic reference to the unresolved territorial, border issues of the Republic of Artsakh, being still on the agenda of the international diplomacy but also it valuably complements the Armenian historiography.

The valuable documents of the national archives in Georgia, Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh serve as basic source data for the joint research penned by K. Khachatryan, H. Sukiasyan and G. Badalyan. A great many of these documents are available to scholarly diffusion for the first time. The excerpts from the sessions’ resolutions, decisions of the Presidium of Transcaucasian Federation’s Central Executive Committee and commissions determining the borders of the provinces and regions of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, also the detailed reports attached to them are the new-found documents. The book also includes documents from the regional executive committee of the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) and from the regional committee of the Azerbaijani Communist party, various official party notes, accounts, petitions and letters sent from provinces, maps reflecting the changes in the Armenian and Artsakh

borders. Important facts and testimonies are extracted from the published anthologies of documents and maps that were created and published during the Soviet years.

“The Annexation of the Armenian Territories to Turkey and Azerbaijan in the 1920s and 1930s” consists of a preface, three chapters, eight subchapters, an epilogue, Russian and English summaries and a Bibliography. The two colored maps attached to the work highlight the results of the study.

The first chapter, focusing on such issues as the territory and border formation of Soviet Armenia in 1920–1922 also discusses the Sovietization of Armenia, the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia (SSRA) as of the Yerevan Armenian-Russian agreement signed on December 2, 1920. The present chapter also dwells upon the annexation of the Armenian territories to Turkey and Soviet Azerbaijan as a result of Moscow and Kars treaties, Azerbaijani assaults on the Armenian territories up until the beginning of 1922. The authors emphasize the collapse of the first Republic of Armenia conditioned by the Bolshevik-Kemalist severe political, military pressures which paved the way for the annexation of the Armenian territories to Turkey and Soviet Azerbaijan in 1920–1922. Juxtaposing the territorial estimates introduced in different sources, they evidence that according to the third article of the aforementioned Armenian-Russian agreement, the territory of the newly proclaimed Soviet Armenia was to make up more than 43000 sq. km (page 43). However with the Sovietization of Armenia the issue concerning the Turkish occupation of the Armenian territories was firstly eclipsed by the Soviet-Turkish border designation based on the Treaty of Moscow and Treaty of Kars. Thence, the state border designation was initiated by the Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey at the end of 1922. In 1925–1926 due to the work of the Soviet-Turkish committee (having been formed for that particular purpose) the Armenian-Turkish border was set, based on the principles of the aforementioned treaties. In the subsequent decades the border was subjected to re-designation. According to K. Khachatryan, H. Sukiasyan and G. Badalyan, **Armenians’ only achievement was the inclusion of 260 sq. km territory into the borders of Soviet Armenia.** The territory was situated in the Ararat-Kyomurludagh-Arazdayan triangle, lying south of Yerevan province, due to which the village of Kyarki (currently Tigranakert) with a strategic road stretching from Ararat valley to Daralagyaz (currently Vayots Dzor) along with other two villages Jafarlu-Gyunut (Genut) were joined to Armenia. In G. Badalyan’s estimation they

covered about 35-40 sq. km. Nevertheless, the latter were gradually “handed” to Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. The work singles out another advantageous point for Armenians in the Kars Treaty as opposed to the Moscow Treaty. If according to the Treaty of Moscow, Azerbaijan was not entitled to concede its custody over Nakhichevan **Autonomous region to “a third state”**, then with the efforts of Moscow the given condition was eliminated in the Kars Treaty. Moreover, in fact Turkey acknowledged Soviet **Russia’s total control over Transcaucasia** (pp. 49–50). Referring to the Lori neutral zone, the territorial-border issues in Zangezur, NKAO and north-eastern regions of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, the authors of the work state that the resolution of these problems at the beginning of 1922 resulted in reducing the territory of the SSRA for about ¼, approximating it to 32.000–33.000 sq. km (page 73). The changes **made in that period are reflected in the appended map that is entitled “The Formation of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (from December 1920 up to the beginning of 1922).**

The second chapter of the work entitled “The Losses of the Soviet Armenia during the Transcaucasian Federation” illustrates the formation of the Transcaucasian Federation and the ongoing Armenian territorial losses to Azerbaijan in 1922–1936. K. Khachatryan, H. Sukiasyan and G. Badalyan have divulged the territorial losses that Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia suffered in the northeastern, eastern, southeastern parts, bordering on the Soviet Azerbaijan as well as in Lori region bordering on the Soviet Georgia during those years. The **losses entailed even greater reduction in the Armenian Republic’s territory**, rounding up to 29. 742. 59 sq. km.

The third chapter of the work entitled “The Formation of the NKAO and the Territorial Losses” introduces the annexation of Nagorno Karabakh to Soviet Azerbaijan and its territorial losses. As the authors note, on July 5, 1921 at the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the **Russia’s Communist (bolshevik) Party (RC(b)P)** it was illegally resolved that the territory of the NKAO was to make up 8000 sq. km. However, in 1923-1924, breaching that resolution the NKAO was formed only in one part of the Nagorno Karabakh, covering about 5000 sq. km. In the subsequent years the authorities of Soviet Azerbaijan gradually seized about 600 sq. km, leaving the Oblast with a territory of about 4.400 sq. km. Moreover, the autonomous region through the “Lachin corridor” was artificially isolated from Soviet Armenia (pp. 164–165). In the

appended map “The Territorial Losses of the SSRA and NKAO in 1923–1930s” the aforementioned territorial-border changes are clearly depicted.

The authors of the study K. Khachatryan, H. Sukiasyan. G. Badalyan have drawn the following conclusion: as a result of the territorial-border losses, the NKAO, the Soviet Armenia and the Republic of Armenia, being its assignee, appeared in strategically unfavorable conditions. Only due to the Armenians’ victories in the Artsakh liberation fight, many territories formerly annexed to Azerbaijan in the Soviet rule were liberated, becoming an integral and constitutionally ratified part of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) Republic (AR) (p. 167). From September 27 to November 9, 2020, took place a Turkish-Azerbaijani aggression against the Republic of Artsakh, with the involvement of international terrorist forces. As a result, occurred military-political and territorial changes, but the reference to them is a subject of a separate study.

The work “The Annexation of the Armenian Territories to Turkey and Azerbaijan in 1920s and 1930s” is significantly distinct from other Armenian studies published up until now as for the first time it comprehensively illustrates the territorial losses of Soviet Armenia and the NKAO in terms of chronological existence of Transcaucasian Federation (1922–1936).

The study is not only of scientific but also of ideological-political importance. It is a historically substantiated, unbiased answer to the Azerbaijani authors’ works on the given issue that have been written from a completely different angle. That is why it is desirable that the work be translated into Russian and English.

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