

THE FRENCH POLICY IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
AND TRANSCAUCASIA IN 1920*

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Preamble

In 1920, the French policy implemented in the Republic of Armenia and in the whole of Transcaucasia was essentially different from the trends that had prevailed in 1919. Thus, in May of 1919, at the Paris Peace Conference, the French Prime Minister G. Clemenceau vividly asserted political rights of his country in Cilicia and actively discussed the future shape of the Armenian-Turkish border with the head of the British cabinet D. Lloyd George as well as with US President W. Wilson. G. Clemenceau entered into temporary alliances and strived to resist British pressure linked to this matter. He expressed his displeasure with the British Army which was taking all decisions on the spot unilaterally. These all discussed matters included the military confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the issues of economy, personnel, relations with Russia, and, in particular, Britain's heavy pressure at the talks on Armenian-Turkish border. Furthermore, the huge concessions in the Mediterranean made to Americans by Clemenceau from May till November 1919 had not been accepted by Woodrow Wilson in the long run. So, when the British soldiers were evacuated from the whole of Transcaucasia on September 11, 1919, they remained only in Batum as in their last reserve¹.

Absence of supervisor-State had been revealed by the London Conference of February 12 – April 10, 1920, when its participants began to design the

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¹ For example: *Մարտիրոսյան. 2001, 67*, Махмуриян. 2018, 117–121; *Մարտիրոսյան. 2018, 285*: On withdrawal from Batum on July 7, 1920: The National Archives of Armenia (following – NAA), f. 200, register 1, f. 576, f. 205 rev. – 206, and f. 182 rev.–187 rev.; Овannisian. 1996, III, 362–364; Овannisian. 2007, 579–583.

Armenian-Turkish boundary in every detail². This situation livened up the French diplomats and compelled the Prime Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs A. Millerand and his successor G. Leygues to define some specific policy in regard to Armenia and the whole region. Thus, the Allies made a considerable decision by having recognized the Armenian Government de facto on January 19, 1920. Based on this fact, on February 12, September 20 and November 4, 1920, Millerand and Leygues worked out three Instructions for the French High Commissioners in Tiflis which spelled out their tasks in politics, economy and culture. In the mean time, the overall situation in the Republic of Armenia (the RA) had changed drastically. Consequently, in November 1920, the head of the French Cabinet, Alexandre Millerand, had to take the adverse outcome of the Turkish-Armenian war fully into consideration. If in 1919, his diplomats, namely Charles Marie de Nonancourt, Chief of the Military Mission, together with Antoine Poidebard, military representative in Yerevan, an aviation captain as well as a theologian, were charged to supply the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the routine information needed to define the character and volume of aid required to resist Bolsheviks, then, in February of 1920, they received specific orders concerning all the main fields of their activity. Striving to strengthen its outposted staff, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent to Tiflis its High Commissioner Damien de Martel, who was escorted by Commandant Zinoviy A. Peschkoff³.

The Instructions by A. Millerand, dated February 12, 1920

Thus, A. Millerand's Instructions for Count de Martel, dated February 12, 1920, read that the Commissioner should try to mitigate territorial conflicts in the region and to propose forming of the Confederation of Caucasian States with the aim «to provide an alliance of the mentioned republics with Armenia»⁴. The latter one was regarded as a component of the future united country, which would include provinces of the Western Armenia. That's why the republic around Erevan had not been incorporated into the pan-caucasian context; and the French had emphatically convinced her to remain self-supportive⁵. In his turn, the Armenian Patriarch of

² See: Махмурян. 2017, 48–69; Armenia in Documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917–1920. 2020, 90–107, 110–119; Hovannisian. 1996, III, 20–70; Ованнисян. 2007, 425–484.

³ Documents diplomatiques français 1920–1932, 1920 (following – Documents diplomatiques). 1997, I, 94; Archive du ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, Centre des Archives diplomatiques, La Courneuve, France (following – AMAE); Correspondance politique et commerciale (1918–1940), série Z – Europe, cote 117 URSS 1918–1929, article 645, f. 20 (following – 117CPCOM645, 20). In regard to Z. Peshkov: H u ré. 2006.

⁴ Documents diplomatiques. 1997, I, 172.

⁵ Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939 (following – British Docu-

Constantinople Zaven Der Yeghiayan wrote on February 26 from London to the Head of the French Cabinet that the viability of an extended Armenian state would require an access to the Black Sea and its contiguity with the French zone of influence in the South-West⁶.

In response, in his Instructions Millerand stressed the importance to resist bolshevism and reminded that Georgian and Azerbaijani relations with Russia might transform considerably. That's why Diplomatic Mission should by all its means promote the pro-Western shift of their policy. The Prime Minister considered that political and economic considerations would return Bolsheviks to Transcaucasia. However, the indigenous populations' want for a common market, their historical ties and, even, an interest for mutual defense would appear only after the reconstitution of the potent Russian State. De Martel and his assistant were ordered to watch Bolsheviks' reinforcement closely, to stay away from bolsheviks' quarrels with the local authorities and to keep up the republics' hope for independence.

In the sphere of economy, possible regional export of petroleum was preliminary regulated by the Anglo-French agreements dated April 8 and December 21, 1919, signed by H. Berenger, the Commissioner General for Gasoline and Combustibles together with W. H. Long, the British Minister in Charge of Petroleum Affairs and Lieutenant-Colonel H. Greenwood. In respect of the raw material exports, the Prime Minister mentioned the two equal shares of the concerned parties to be fifty-fifty, although such an amount had been usually planned for enemy countries. Otherwise, each side got only 25 per cent⁷; and the French Instructions constantly underlined the hostile nature of the Bolshevik power that would double their booty. It's also noteworthy that both French and British had no troops to gain a foothold in the Caucasus oilfields.

Very soon the Instructions of February 12 were supported at San Remo when P. Berthelot, Director of Political and Commercial Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and J. Kadman, Director in Charge of His Majesty's Petroleum Department had concluded the third Oil Agreement (very similar to the first one⁸) on April 24, 1920. To ensure their oil shares, the political staff deployed in Tiflis could engage the French agencies in Constantinople, including their Eastern fleet's commandment. Aside from leather, cotton and agricultural pro-ducts, the French were particularly interested in the exploitation of copper mines at Kajaran, as well as of the railway from Julfa to the Caspian seashore, which opened two Eastern trade

ments). 1962, XII, 578. Erevan is a 1918–1920 inscription of Yerevan, also used by the author.

⁶ NAA, f. 200, ref. 1, f. 546, f. 18–19.

⁷ Documents diplomatiques. 1997, I, 173; on agreement: М а х м у р я н. 2002, 26. Texts of these arrangements: British Documents. 1952, IV, 1089–1092, 1114–1117.

⁸ Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920. 1936, II, 655–658.

routes. The diplomatic personnel in Paris appreciated these projects and advised to establish the Banque Franco-Arménienne d'Études (French-Armenian Bank for Research) and a Société Franco-Arménienne d'Importations et d'Exportations (French-Armenian Society for Import-Export), both locally based.

As for propaganda and culture, the Instructions empowered Mr. de Martel to implement the ideas worded by the head of the Military Mission in the Caucasus, Colonel P.-A. Chardigny on November 3, 1919 whereby he proposed to establish French schools, professional colleges and dispensaries⁹ in Transcaucasia. The High Commissioner had to come up with a tight budget and to convey his proposals to Millerand. With reference to that assessment, in 1919, in his correspondence to his War Ministry and the General Staff, P.-A. Chardigny conveyed Britain's strong opposition to Russia's come back to Transcaucasia. As he explained it had been the main reason why the British reinforced Muslims against Armenians¹⁰ here. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan needed some strong warning in order to give up its Pan-Turkic policy. Such a move was «the only decision, capable to provide order in the Caucasus»¹¹.

To sum up, the Instructions demanded from the French political staff to (a) restrict pro-Russian sentiments in Armenia as well as pro-Turkish inclinations of Azerbaijan and (b) to strengthen their independence that would clear the field for their own activity. Besides, the French were comparatively new players in the region, and as such, they actively supported Armenia in the matters of Artsakh and Zangezur (Syunik). So, Captain Poidebard overtly contested the British policy in his open letter to the Prime Minister A. Khatisian, dated February 25, 1920. And in the month of March the British began to complain of the «intrigues and hostile activity» of their continental partners¹².

The French Policy Concerning the Treaty of Sevres

Taking into account the sustained contradictions between the Great (England, France, USA) and regional (Russia, Turkey, Iran) Powers in Transcaucasia, we can put on record that France's expansion was less dangerous for

⁹ AMAE, 46CPCOM7, 87; on initiative by Chardigny: 117CPCOM628, 8.

¹⁰ Archives de la guerre 1914–1918, service historique du ministère d'État chargé de la défense nationale, Vincennes, France; groupe 20N Front Oriental, carte 181 Russie, 1919–1921, dossier 1; Hovannisian. 1982, II, 492.

¹¹ Documents diplomatiques. 1997, I, 514.

¹² See a report on this episode by the officer of the British Commissariat at Tiflis, Lieutenant Colonel C. B. Stokes in his Memorandum «On the Situation in Transcaucasia», sent to the Foreign Office on 21. 03. 1920: British Documents. 1962, XII, 579. Thesis that the Republic of Armenia must include Artsakh and Zangezur, fixed by the Director for political and commercial affairs at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs P. Berthelot in his notes for the British of 12. 12. 1919 and 11. 01. 1920: British Documents. 1952, IV, 954, 1024.

all three republics since it is located farther than Russia and Turkey from them, while having no immediate contiguity with the given region. Besides, it coined a clear-cut position in regard of the Sevres Treaty. Paris persevered in its conclusion and ratification by the Turkish side. To attain this goal, the High Commissioner in Constantinople, J. A. Defrance urged an alliance between the moderate devotees of Sultan and Kemalists. He was ready to support an appointment of Damad Ferid as Grand Vizier and expected from the latter to sign the Treaty and to retire immediately in favour of Ahmed Tevfik Pasha. The French quickly realized the acute danger of the Angora movement and strived to mitigate the Sevres Treaty's provisions but at the same time urged to conclude it and to implement its articles.

The Entente Governments did realize that the Sublime Porte in Constantinople was easygoing in as far as its relations with Europe were concerned. They were equally aware that it cooperated with but did not rule in Angora. Besides, being geographically close to Messopotamia's raw materials, easily accessible to the fleet and suitable for foreign trade, the Mideiterranean and Cilicia as geographical zones were more attractive for Paris when compared to the Republic of Armenia, even with its foreseen access to the Black Sea. French politicians objected to such an arrangement¹³, since such an access would channel Armenian trade to the North (into Russia), whereas they were interested in the raw material and commodity flow to the West and South (into Western Europe and the Middle East). Compared with Cilicia, the Republic of Armenia required more investments and troops, taking into account Angora's clear intent to sabotage and wage war against the clauses of the Treaty of Sevres that was of no secret to anyone since February – April, 1920.

As we see, France had to choose between the overland and maritime policies. The overland one affords big areas, demands money and time; though such an approach develops vast areas in trade and production rather than narrow strips along the trade routes. It requires a prolonged presence, but is much more profitable. And the maritime trade develops only starting and end points on the selected trade routes. Ships are easily protected by convoys; they are cheaper in exploitation and bring in faster dividends. Besides, the maritime strategy usually supposes a seizure of raw materials; and the Western Powers, unlike Russia or Turkey, rarely focused on territorial gains. First of all, they dealt with the supply of raw materials for the metropolitan economy to propel its production and technologies. Thus, they assured both an export of their goods into subordinated areas and a military-political control over them. Owing to the priority of natural resources over the overland strategy, the maritime countries are more inclined to a compromise which benefits the overland partners. They are easier satisfied when obtain anticipated concessions.

Let's also add that interaction of Turkish and Russian overland strategies is

¹³ NAA, f. 200, reg. 1, f. 556, f. 222–223.

characterized by two trends – one which periodically led to devastating wars and the second induces Russia to compromise with the other side at the expense of the Armenian interests. So, de Martel informed Paris on June 17, 1920 that RSFSR sought a pretext to free itself from the good relations with the Republic of Armenia, for the sake of more alluring perspectives of partnership with Kemalists. The more so that «the Armenian soldiers, disposed to fight against the Turks, scarcely accepted attacks on Russians – their old companions in arms. Deprived of a possibility to fully rely on the army, also constrained by the Bolshevik propaganda in its inner life and being powerless against [it], the Government did not hide intricacies of the situation and was expecting the worst»¹⁴. In response, de Martel urged the head of Erevan Cabinet H. Ohanjanian to fight simultaneously against the Red Army and Kemalists, especially on the eve of the final conclusion of the Treaty of Sevres.

As for the different approaches adopted by a group of Western Powers in 1919–1920 with regard to Armenia, those did not include the overland political lineaments. So, when the Ist London Conference created the Armenia Commission to shape its borders, the French expert of this group P. J. Mantoux pointed on March 19, 1920 to the perfect unanimity of the Allies in all military and border matters. At the same time his compatriot member of this Commission A. Kammerer complained about other Entente States' refusal to allocate funds indicating that without this money «we should leave from the beginning any hope to establish an independent Armenian State»¹⁵. Besides, the French were extremely worried about the Kemalists and Bolsheviks' rapprochement. Later on, when the utter defeat of Armenians in the 1920 war with Turkey became obvious, they promptly changed their course on the basis of the political conclusions drawn from this downfall.

The French Support to the Republic of Armenia on the issues of Artsakh and Zangezur

In respect of Armenia proper, on his second working day in Tiflis (March 28), the High Commissioner de Martel had visited Prince M. Tumanian, the Counsellor of the Armenian Diplomatic Mission. The guest informed that the Erevan-centered Republic would incorporate Van, Mush, Erzerum provinces as well as the parts of Vilayet of Trebizond with its eponymous city and Rize¹⁶. On April 11, The High Commissioner had also advised his Prime Minister, that Armenian-Tatar clashes for Artsakh (Karabakh) transformed into an open war, and that nothing but a stern warning by the States of Entente addressed to the Azerbaijani authorities and demanding to

¹⁴ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 152–153.

¹⁵ United Nations Library and Archives, Geneva, Fond League of Nations Secretariat/Political Section/Armenia/Registry Files 1919-1927/Political – General/Armenia/File R566/11/3538/3421/f. 3/Scope ID 175292.

¹⁶ NAA, f. 275, reg. 5, f. 212, f. 62.

give up their Pan-Turkic policy «could ensure order in the Caucasus». The more so that the Tatar-Turkish alliance strived to confront Europe with a fait accompli that «endangered the very existence of Armenia»¹⁷. To neutralize such a threat, they should provide weapons for the Army of RA immediately, strengthen it and take it under control as well as staff it with French Officers and instructors. De Martel regarded the highly probable Kemalist invasion into the Republic with the center in Erevan as a suitable tool to prevent the upcoming international treaty, which prepared the fusion of this State with the Western Armenian provinces.

At this moment, our Republic endured even two menaces simultaneously. The Turks attacked from the West while the Baku authorities assaulted from the East, aspiring to annex Zangezur. They pursued very pragmatic goal to unite with Turkey. That's why on March 8, 1920, official Erevan in common with the Commander-in-Chief of the White Volunteer Army A. Denikin demanded from Millerand to engage actively in the preservation of status quo in this Armenian region. The opinion of de Martel on the dangerous Turkish-Azerbaijani joint war aimed at the denial of the Sevres, had been reinforced on April 28 by the newly arrived Chief of the French Military Mission Lieutenant Colonel E. A. Corbel, who came to Tiflis with de Martel and, at once, sent a report on this interethnic conflict and Pan-Turkic teamwork to his Ministry of War¹⁸.

The High Commissioner began his routine work on March 27, 1920. He began to build up diplomatic agencies. Thus, a Consulate had been opened in Tiflis under L. Nettement, who was instructed to send the Consular Agents into Batum and Yerevan immediately, and the second agency was entrusted to Poidebard, who had quitted the Military Mission. According to Millerand, this Jesuit theologian «spoke Armenian and Turkish, won the sympathy of numerous Armenians and looked suitable to perform such functions»¹⁹.

On May 4 de Martel informed Paris of economic activities of his compatriots in Transcaucasia. Merchants, financiers, industrialists complained that small local Republics were too keen on protecting their interests through the state mechanisms as well as on socialism. They widely used the state monopolies too. The High Commissioner planned to reduce the enthusiasm of the local rulers. He had already agreed with the Cabinet in Yerevan to barter weapons for 640 tons of skins, 160 tons of cotton and 160 tons of copper²⁰. According to de Martel, the British disregarded an inter-Allied nature of the occupation of Batum and greatly impeded the French commerce. Besides, the diplomat doubted the existence per se of all three Republics in the near future, due to the latest establishment of the Soviet regime in Baku²¹.

¹⁷ Documents diplomatiques. 1997, I, 513–514.

¹⁸ Documents diplomatiques. 1997, I, 628.

¹⁹ Documents diplomatiques. 1997, I, 173.

²⁰ AMAE, 117CPCOM641, 111–113.

²¹ See, for example, NAA, f. 200, reg. 1, f. 427, f. 271.

De Martel was sure that Bolsheviks got in touch with M. Kemal, pursuing the aim of ousting the French from Transcaucasia. Mobilization had been carried out all throughout Georgia. Nevertheless, this country was evaluated as not trustworthy while the Republic of Armenia, being «between Azerbaijan and Turks ran a high risk of sustaining a serious damage»²². Generally, the situation depended on the steps and tactics adopted by the Soviet Russia which could be hampered only by internal problems. Another joint dispatch by de Martel, British Chief Commissioner H. C. Luke and Chief of the Italian Mission M. Gabba, maintained that only an urgent support could save the RA.

In his reply of May 11, 1920, Millerand announced the disposition of his Cabinet to supply Georgia and Armenia with munitions, though his Government would not incite them «to resistance, which they could judge to be contrary to their interests. Equally, It would not misadvise them against an amicable arrangement» with the Bolshevik-Turkish block, if this unity safeguards the free trade for the French nationals²³. When De Martel responded on May 30 (after the Sovietization of Azerbaijan), he told about a failed pro-Communist rebellion in Alexandropol, thus any talks between Erevan and Moscow «would not change the Bolshevik plan to join Turkish Nationalists»²⁴. In support of this thesis, on June 4–19, 1920, the intelligence department of the Staff under the Commander of the Armenian Army had sent to the Lieutenant Colonel Corbel a copy of the Turkish-Azerbaijani military convention with an interception of conversations of K. Karabekir, the Commander of the 15th Turkish Army Corps that pertained to an agreement between Kemalists and Bolsheviks²⁵.

On June 17, de Martel once again addressed the situation in Artsakh and Syunik. He correctly depicted the intrusion of the 281st Regiment (33rd Division of 11th Red Army) in the completely liberated and self-determined Artsakh, which had adopted a befitting resolution at its IX National Congress of April 25, 1920. De Martel described the deployment of this Regiment on May 12 at Shushi. He retold how representatives of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasus Front had demanded on May 18 from the Commander of the Expeditionary Force of the RA D. Kanayan to withdraw his troops from the «property of Azerbaijan»²⁶. Kanayan had indeed withdrawn his Detachment into Goris on May 25, meanwhile the Bolsheviks persuaded the local population «to regard them as protectors from now on powerless Tatars»²⁷. And since on this May 25 an anti Soviet mutiny had taken place in Azerbaijan, the head of the RA Delegation in Moscow L. Shant was told on May 31 that all Karabakh together with Zangezur and

²² AMAE, 117CPCOM641, 112.

²³ AMAE, 117CPCOM644, 37.

²⁴ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 58.

²⁵ NAA, f. 275, reg. 5, f. 184, f. 66, 68.

²⁶ NAA, f. 220, reg. 1, f. 563, f. 184.

²⁷ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 152.

Nakhijevan turned into the disputed territories and passed under the Red Army control²⁸. The RSFSR People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs G. Chicherin specified at the negotiations of June 8–10 that disputable Artsakh with its 91,6% of Armenian population would hold a plebiscite while Zangezur with Nakhijevan were recognized as units of Armenia²⁹.

Military and Economic Efforts, Undertaken by France Against the Kemalist Alliance With Bolsheviks

On June 19 the High Commissioner had forwarded to Paris an inquiry of the Yerevan Government concerning the possibility of military collaboration with the Entente for the sake of implementation of the Sevres requirements. The latter had been already published in mass media³⁰. On July 2, 1920, he received a reply by the Secretary General of the Department of political and commercial affairs in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs M. Paleologue, that the Minister of War A. Lefevre with the Minister of Finances F. Francois-Marsal approved a free transfer of cannons and munitions, but that other military shipments would be bartered for raw materials by the French companies housed in Transcaucasia. The Armenian side would receive its cargo at the ports of France; and merchants of the «Société Commerciale Industrielle et Financière pour la Russie»³¹, «Union Commerciale Franco-Russe», «Banque Commerciale Russe pour le Levant», of the trading houses «Chabrières, Morel & Cie», «Panassié», «Société Industrielle et Métallurgique du Caucase», «Société du Manganèse de Paris», the French trade companies «Optorg» etc., would exchange foreign supplies for local natural resources³² in the port of Batum and on the territory of the Republic proper.

For example, the «Société du Manganèse», set up on September 23, 1919, penned a program of ousting of all German assets from Transcaucasia and

²⁸ NAA, f. 276, reg. 1, f. 218, f. 112.

²⁹ О в а н н и с я н. 2007, 734–735. On 19. 06. 1920 a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasus Front G. Ordzhonikidze wired to V. Lenin, I. Stalin and G. Chicherin, that submission of Artsakh to Azerbaijan was used as a mighty tool, capable to reinforce and to preserve shaky power of Soviets in Baku. See: К истории образования НКАО АзССР, 1918–1925, Документы и материалы. 1989, 32–33; the same document: Геноцид армян: ответственность Турции и обязательства мирового сообщества, Документы и комментарий. 2003, 71–72; the similar idea: Հ ո Վ Ր Մ Ք Յ Ն. 2010, 27; Bournoutian. 1999, 99–103.

³⁰ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 153.

³¹ The Russian-French «Société Commerciale Industrielle et Financière», for example, had been established in Paris at the end of November, 1919, with the basic stock of 50 mln. francs. Its President was the former French Ambassador to Russia J. Noulens. The Society procured 8% of annual interest by exporting manufactured goods to Russia, where it bought wheat and provided fund for the purchase of French weapons by A. Denikin. See: J e v a k h o f f. 2011, 204–213.

³² Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 217–218.

directed it to Millerand on February 17, 1920. Its Board held a conference with de Martel before his departure for Tiflis. In the note of May 17, 1920 compiled for the Assistant Director on the Commerce at the French Foreign Ministry J. Seydoux, the metallurgists underlined the importance of the Caucasus with the Donbass for their businesses since these provided 40–45% of France's demand for manganese. Now they got a huge advantage over the British who transported raw materials from India and America. The de facto recognition of all three Republics significantly promoted shipments across the Black Sea despite a monopoly introduced by Georgia that restricted French, Greek, and Armenian traders. The «Société» threatened to create an Anglo-French syndicate. It also begged its Foreign Ministry to impact by all its means on the Georgian Government in order to obtain its authorization for the export of 35 tons of the raw materials stockpiled at the local warehouses. A possibility to purchase some former Russian mines against the Russian war debt was also regarded as an effective method of the economic set up in this region³³.

As to the aforementioned companies, their products' range and prices applicable for Armenia were sanctioned by the Minister of War Lefevre, whereby all deals had to be contracted and signed with the government of RA while all raw materials' exports enjoyed various preferences.

In reference to the political issues, on June 23, 1920, the High Commissioner at Constantinople J.-A. Defrance wired to the Prime Minister to the effect that signing of the Sevres Treaty without a preliminary agreement of Kemalists would exacerbate internal contradictions in Turkey without solving international problems. Whereas mitigation of the Treaty's territorial and supervising requirements would stop Nationalists' attacks on the French detachments in Cilicia. Otherwise the Treaty had to be imposed by force, i. e. by a full scale war. That's why many of the French Army and Navy commanders stationed on the shores of the Bosphorus proposed to make a deal with the Nationalists first, and only then to bargain with the Porte. At the same time, Kemal's intransigent stance on the issue raised doubts as to the success of the entire undertaking³⁴.

Confronting this intransigence, Millerand had instructed on July 2 his Minister of the Navy A. Landry to give an order to the Commander-in-Chief of the French Navy in the Mediterranean, Vice Admiral F. de Bon to interrupt the free cargo traffic between Kemalists and Bolsheviks in the Black Sea³⁵. By July 13, the British had met their ally's demand and shipping was stopped.

The very problem of Russian supplies as a proof of the Turkish-Bolshevik alliance had been elucidated by count de Martel to Millerand in his report sent from Tiflis on July 20, 1920. After a dialogue with the Diplomatic

³³ AMAE, 117CPCOM657, 136, 138–140.

³⁴ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 172.

³⁵ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 218–219.

Representative of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis T. Bekzadian, de Martel noticed that Yerevan understood the real danger of the Red and Turkish armies' joint actions and did its best to prevent the capture of Nakhichevan, required for Moscow's union with Angora. Located just 15 km off Yerevan and instigated by Kemalists, twenty five Tatar villages refused to obey the Armenian law and pay taxes. So, they were confronted by the Armenian army. Kemalists in no time announced their zeal to protect mutineers. When it comes to Armenia, both Turks and the official Baku promptly forget their usual demands of non-interference into others' internal affairs.

De Martel also reported to Millerand about his telegram, sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the day before. This message contained a proposal of a joint military actions with the Allies in Bayazet and Alashkert. The proposal of the Armenian Cabinet stipulated that Allied and Armenian troops would jointly reach the line stretching from Bayazet to Erzerum and Trebizond. Obviously, all this idea was about an approval of the Greek-Armenian military operation by Entente. The Bureau-Government of the Republic of Armenia had not excluded some British or French participation too, since such an approach allowed to repatriate about 300,000 refugees³⁶ into the Western Armenia.

As far as neither the Greek nor the Ottoman Delegations in Paris hurried to pledge their signatures under the Treaty of Sevres, the French side ensured that all procedure be successfully completed. During the bilateral meeting of August 9, 1920, Assistant Director of the Asian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs A. Kammerer strongly rejected all Turkish procrastinations and ordered to place them under home arrest (not let them out for a walk) until the Treaty was concluded³⁷. His order asserts that French politicians did more than simply compromises on the forthcoming Treaty for the sake of avoiding another war, guaranteed by Kemal. It also shows that the text of the Sevres Treaty directly served the French interests which explains their drastic measures aimed at bringing this big international project to fruition.

Unsent Instructions by A. Millerand, dated September 20, 1920

We have to record that after the conclusion of the Sevres Treaty on August 10, 1920 the Republic of Armenia neither took any tough military or political measures concerning her control over the new territories nor initiated any diplomatic contacts with Turks. So, the Prime Minister of France A. Millerand had composed the second Instructions on September 20 which were not sent to his new High Commissioner in the Caucasus Daniel Abel Chevalley. This circumstance would be related to the resignation of the President P. Deschanel, the event that took place on September 17 and had been caused by his mental disease. On September 20, Millerand was obliged to nominate himself for this elections. He became the 12th President of

³⁶ AMAE, 117CPCOM311-1, 44-44 rev. See also: Туманян. 2012, 330.

³⁷ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 410.

France on September 23. His new state position considerably changed his official duties. The Prime Minister's chair was occupied by G. Leygues.

The Instructions of September 20, composed amid the political storm and modified later on, reflected the qualitatively different situation that originated in the Ottoman Empire. This document was compiled on the very same day when the Kemalists' leader M. Kemal ordered the Commander of its Eastern Front K. Karabekir to occupy the Province of Vanand (i. e. the former Kars Region) and to destroy the Army of the Republic of Armenia³⁸. According to Millerand, the Kemalist-Bolshevik military cooperation had a formidable impact on the young Transcaucasian States. Besides, this alliance aspired to convince the local nations that its policy was intended to satisfy their national aspirations and religious feelings³⁹. Meanwhile it was clear that atheism embraced by the Red Army and islam confessed by the Kemalists did not match the Christian images of Georgia and Armenia at all.

Still a head of the Council of Ministers, Millerand worried about Armenia, which, being a friend of the Entente, was then as much accessible to Bolshevism as Azerbaijan to pan-Islamism. He had emphasized political, social and military danger of Bolshevism in the Western Europe and Armenia, in common with the Turkish penetration into Dagestan. Millerand specified that the first British shipment of weapons for Erevan had already arrived in Batum on July 26 and Georgia was receiving 25% of all loads as a transit fee. According to his estimation, Erevan had enough supplies at the moment and was in no hurry to buy additional French equipment stockpiled in Bulgaria. The head of the French Cabinet demanded to ensure profitability of such transactions as well as he demanded the transfer of goods to Georgians in case of payments difficulty⁴⁰.

Besides, D. Chevalley who envisaged to replace de Martel at the beginning of October 1920 was also obliged to ensure that Armenia and Georgia received their free shares of the French military aid, which could have been extended, if possible, to Azerbaijan. Thus, Millerand excluded neither the chance of anti-Soviet uprising in Baku, nor its anti-Russian alliance with Kemalists. The Prime Minister was dissatisfied by 10–12 days delay of messages arriving from Tiflis, and the newly appointed High Commissioner was required to solve communication problems. Chevalley was also instructed to evaluate if the security of the French permanent Consul in Yerevan would be endangered due to intensified military hostilities. Finally, the High Commissioner was ordered to immediately submit his proposals on the support of the Transcaucasian republics, which were valued as fields maximally open for the French influence⁴¹.

³⁸ Atatürk'ün Kurtuluş Savaşı Yazışmaları. 1995, II, 189–190; Hovannisian. 1996, IV, 191, 194; Махмуриян. 2002, 226; *Առաջնություն*. 2019, 75:

³⁹ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 646.

⁴⁰ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 646.

⁴¹ Documents diplomatiques. 1999, II, 647–648.

Generally, the Commissioner was instructed to strengthen the new Caucasian states by every technical and diplomatic means, since the neutralization of Bolsheviks and Kemalists was the only way to clear the local arena for the French political activity. Otherwise, Russia and Turkey could seize the region completely, while the British withdrawal would end any European activity here. Chevalley had also got an order to activate Armenian export, the main approach being that all relations in Transcaucasia should be based on the mutual profit.

Then, at the height of the Turkish-Armenian war of 1920 and contrary to its course, the new French Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs G. Leygues wired on October 8 and 11 to the Commissioner Defrance in Constantinople as well as to his Ambassadors in London (P. Cambon) and Rome (C. Barrere), that he demanded of Turkey to ratify and to fulfil the Treaty of Sevres without any delay. Leygues recorded that he had coordinated with the British and Italians the following program: 1) the British proposed to ratify the Treaty not by the Ottoman Parliament but rather by Sultan Mehmed VI and his Grand Vizier, «as it has taken place in Italy. We would not be stopped by the procedural barriers»⁴². 2) Then England, France and Italy jointly form a new Cabinet in Constantinople which would include moderate Nationalists and 3) such a Cabinet would make void any claims for Kemal's leadership. 4) Once the ratification is done, the Turkish official commission should visit the inner provinces under the control of Kemalists so that the war-torn population gets a chance to obtain peace. 5) Then the Allies would set up international commissions and proceed with the implementation of Sevres⁴³.

On October 13, G. Leygues had a conversation with A. Aharonian, the head of Paris-based Delegation of the Republic of Armenia, listened to his assessment of the Turkish-Bolshevik alliance and enquired about the Armenian Army's advance to the Trebizond – Erzerum line⁴⁴. The latter was tragically at odds with the information about the Turkish military achievements read out by Aharonian. Sarikamish, Merdenek and Novoselim had been already occupied at the moment of their talk; detachments of the Armenian army held positions near Kars, and its Government had appealed from Erevan to the whole civilized humanity for an urgent help⁴⁵.

As late as October 22 the French Charge d'Affairs in the Great Britain A. J. de Fleuriau paraphrased to his Minister a conversation between their Ambassador to Athens R. de Billy and the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs N. Politis. The latter touched upon the issue of a big Greek offensive

⁴² Documents diplomatiques. 2002, III, 74. He meant, that Turkey could follow an Italian pattern and ratify the Treaty by the Ottoman Government or Sultan alone, though this is customary done in the Parliament.

⁴³ Documents diplomatiques. 2002, III, 74–75.

⁴⁴ Ահարոնյան. 2001, 125–126:

⁴⁵ «Մշակ» (Թիֆլիս), 14. X. 1920:

in Asia Minor. Aimed at ousting the Kemalists completely, this operation required the Anglo-French consent and their financial support. De Fleuriau discussed the matter with his British colleague; he also got the head of the Foreign Office involved and now he was asking for further Instructions from Leygues⁴⁶. On the 25th of October, from the Ottoman capital, Defrance had also informed G. Leygues that the future course of official Paris and other Europe, would depend on the course of the Turkish-Armenian war. The replacement of the Cabinet in Constantinople changed nothing in diplomacy as the Sublime Porte had not preliminarily ratified the Treaty of Sevres. On the other hand, Kemal clearly understood that either his future or his complete fiasco were both dependent on the outcome of the military operations.

Defrance wrote that the Kemalists had no doubts that their approval of the Treaty and the disbandment of their troops would make them unfit for a political alliance with the official Ottoman rulers. So, when the Bolsheviks transferred their army into the Caucasus, Kemalists accepted the vitally important support and expected that now Europeans would place them under the Sultan Government either by force or by conciliation. And «since the Allies are determined not to implement the first mode, – recorded the Commissioner, – ...there is not a chance for success in the implementation of the second one»⁴⁷. On the day of the fall of Kars (October 30, 1920), Defrance learnt from a telegram of his Minister that France was extremely interested in the Treaty of Sevres because it paved the way for intellectual, political and economic expansion of their country not in the Caucasus though, but rather in the Mediterranean. The strategy of France comprised the delivery of mandatory aid to those countries, which, like oppressed Armenia, reached their independence as a more self-sufficient degree of management of their national life.

Coastal peoples of the Ottoman Empire as well as inland nations should be aware of the French efforts to ratify the Treaty of Sevres, to restore peace on its basis and to participate actively in their development⁴⁸. In real politics, the wire of October 30 reported the actual withdrawal of the French from Transcaucasia and the shift of their main interest towards Syria and Lebanon.

The Instructions by G. Leygues of November 4, 1920

G. Leygues polished up Millerand's text on November 4, 1920 and directed it as Instructions to the recently arrived French High Commissioner in the Caucasus D. A. Chevalley. The previous text compiled in September was edited by P. Berthelot and read by the Minister of War Andre Lefevre. First of all, the Commissioner was ordered «to unite all the Caucasian forces

⁴⁶ Documents diplomatiques. 2002, III, 143–144.

⁴⁷ Documents diplomatiques. 2002, III, 175.

⁴⁸ Documents diplomatiques. 2002, III, 202–203.

against the tyrannical and criminal Soviet regime»⁴⁹. He had to deal with Dagestan and oil of Grozny, with cessation of the blockade on the maritime route from Novo-rossiysk to Trebizond and with the issue of transition to de jure recognition of independent Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In Leygues's opinion, the latter needed general consent of all the Allies together with the reconstituted Russia. Seen that the massacre of the Ottoman Armenians arose indignation of the whole world, the Treaty of Sevres stipulated Armenia's de jure recognition. The existing Republic was regarded as a natural center of the enlarged state. Leygues expected that Russia should easily accept such a perspective because the new Armenian state would be friendly. It would certainly need Russian protection and would help to spread Moscow's influence in the East.

Meanwhile all three Republics were exposed to the most formidable impact of Bolsheviks and Kemalists, who succeeded in the exploitation of national sentiments. Chevalley had to continue the efforts of de Martel and to reduce the Bolshevik positions in Armenia, as well as countering the pan-Islamic tendencies so eagerly accepted in Azerbaijan. Particularly so, as Armenia «squeezed between the Soviet attacks and the Kemalist invasion was at the moment in a critical situation»⁵⁰. The Allies would supply Erevan with weapons and France would provide its moral support. Besides, Chevalley could urgently suggest additional practical measures. In the sphere of economics the Instructions ordered to remain tolerant in respect of the socialist measures initiated by the local Governments, including their decisions on nationalization. However, the Commissar had to do his best to protect French property and individuals. The diplomat was ordered to promote the trade and mining industry, so that they provided France with raw materials, extremely important for her industry.

Insofar as all Transcaucasian Republics were marked with cordial attitude to the French culture, Chevalley could make use of credits and open a specialized lyceum in Tiflis as well as to affiliate the Armenian University with a corresponding University in France. This instruction was based on the report by A. Poidebard sent on March 15, 1920 to the Chief of the Caucasian Military Mission C. de Nonancourt. Captain Poidebard told in detail about the inauguration of the Erevan Armenian (People's) University. This manifestation had taken place on January 31 in Alexandropol. The British and American Commissioners had promised during their speeches to accredit Historical-Philological Faculty of the University with the oldest faculties of England and of the US. Meanwhile, Y. Ghambarian as a Rector of the first establishment of the Armenian higher education readily responded to the similar statement by Poidebard. Ghambarian was eager to cooperate with the fellow establishment in Paris, so he had outlined his University's prospects for development in a memorandum, delivered to the Captain.

⁴⁹ Documents diplomatiques. 2002, III, 230.

⁵⁰ Documents diplomatiques. 2002, III, 232.

In this document of March 15, entitled «Different faculties of the Armenian University», Ghambarian who authored valuable books in jurisprudence envisaged the expansion of his establishment which, at the time, comprised a single faculty with 250 students. He spoke about future departments of mechanics, electrical engineering, medicine, economics and law, about the School of Engineering and the Institute of Agriculture, and applied for accreditation of his center with the University of Paris. Poidebard also asked to overtake the British and Americans in this matter and to send him several scholar degrees which he could confer to individuals in Armenia⁵¹.

Meanwhile, the overall situation in the Republic was not conducive to learning. The Turkish offensive continued unobstructed. Contrary to the groundless hopes cherished by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia A. Ohanianian, the Allies did confine themselves to the supplies of arms (the 1900 French rifles included), but didn't allocate troops. So, on November 12, 1920, the Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg V Tphisetsi wrote in vain to the President of France A. Millerand: «Exhausted, starving, suffering, the Armenian people is abandoned at the present hour to the enemy, who pursues the annihilation of the people and of the Armenian state as well as the suppression of the faith and the Christian church in the Orient. ... I appeal to the Christian humanity of your Excellency to save the remains of my people in Armenia, by according to it the necessary moral and physical aid until it may be able to collect its scattered forces to be in a condition to defend itself»⁵².

The French Prime Minister wired the next day, on November 13, to Constantinople for DeFrance that the failure of immediate ratification «appeared to be a real success of Mustapha Kemal, especially after his campaign against Armenia»⁵³. Nevertheless, the French would cease their diplomatic pressure upon Sultan's Government, otherwise the Ottoman cabinet would fall and the Kemalists would only get mightier. On November 30, the official Paris got a message from Chevalley, transmitted by DeFrance. It contained the preliminary conditions of the Turkish-Armenian armistice. The Armenian Government had been ready to mitigate the territorial clauses of the Sevres Treaty on the condition that the French assume a mediator's role. Taking into account that the Erevan-based Cabinet had not anticipated the extremely unfavorable outcome of the 1920 Turkish-

⁵¹ AMAE, 46CPCOM10, 112–113, 118; see also NAA, f. 200, reg. 1, f. 412, f. 3; f. 276, reg. 1, f. 131, f. 24, 31; *Վրացյան. 1993, 383–385*:

⁵² United States National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 59 General Records of the Department of State, class 860J.4016P81/doc. 125, in: NAA, collection of microfilms № 46, 1975. T1192 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Armenia, 1910–1929, Roll 6, f. 1 in English; also NAA, f. 57, reg. 5, f. 222, f. 47 and f. 200, reg. 1, f. 249, f. 690 (in French).

⁵³ Documents diplomatiques. 2002, III, 271.

Armenian war and had not changed radically its political course, the next 1921 year would bring great human casualties combined with heavy material, territorial and political losses for Armenia.

Conclusion

In 1920 the French implemented an active and generally pragmatic policy aimed at their economic penetration into the Republic of Armenia and the Transcaucasia as a whole. They also consolidated independence of all regional States. The political course of this Power elaborated by the Prime Ministers A. Millerand and G. Leygues had been aimed at the support to and the implementation of the Treaty of Sevres concluded on August 10, 1920. At the same time, France did everything possible to reach a compromise with the Sultan's Cabinet and the Kemalists in order to weaken the role of the latter. Obstructing the military cooperation of Kemalists and Bolsheviks was another imperative of their policy in the region.

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ՖՐԱՆՍԻԱԿԱՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՈՒՄ ԵՎ ԱՆԴՐԿՈՎԿԱՍՈՒՄ 1920 Թ.

ԳԱՅԱՆԵ ՄԱԽՄՈՒՐՅԱՆ

Ա մ փ ո փ ու մ

Բանալի բառեր՝ Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն, Ֆրանսիա, Թուրքիա, Անդրկովկաս, արտաքին քաղաքականություն, Ալ. Միլերան, Ժ. Լեյզ, 1920 թ. Սևրի պայմանագիր, բարձրագույն հանձնակատար Դ. դը Մարտել, ՌեֆԱՀ:

Ֆրանսիայի վարչապետեր ու արտաքին գործոց նախարարներ Ալեքսանդր Միլերանի և Ժորժ Լեյզի՝ Կովկասում Գերագույն հանձնակատարներին հասցեագրած 1920 թ. փետրվարի 12-ի, սեպտեմբերի 20-ի ու նոյեմբերի 4-ի հրահանգները Անդրկովկասում և Հայաստանում նրանց վարած քաղաքականության նպատակների ու խնդիրների մասին էին: 1920 թ. հունվարի 19-ին Դաշնակիցների կողմից Հայաստանի Հանրապետության փաստացի ճանաչումից հետո, Ֆրանսիան դիվանագիտական աշխատանք ծավալեց այստեղ: Այդ աշխատանքը հիմնականում ուղղված էր առևտրի զարգացման, ռազմական մասնակի օգնության և որոշ զինատեսակների վաճառքի հարցերի, բոլշևիզմին ու քեմալա-խորհրդային համագործակցությանը դիմակայման, Ֆրանսիական դպրոցների բացման ու Երևանի հայկական համալսարանի հետ փարիզյան հավատարմագրման հիմնահարցերին:

Ֆրանսիական կառավարությունը գտնում էր, որ 1920 թ. օգոստոսի 10-ի Սևրի պայմանագիրը նպաստում էր Արևելքում իրենց դիրքերի ամրապնդմանը: Միևնույն ժամանակ ձգտում էր մեղմացնել Հայաստանի օգտին տարածքային պահանջները՝ թուրքական կողմից վավերացնելու և կատարելու նպատակով: 1920 թ. թուրք-հայկական պատերազմն ու Հայաստանի Հանրապետության ծանր պարտությունն արմատապես փոխեցին Ֆրանսիայի վարած քաղաքականությունը և, փաստորեն, տարածաշրջանում հանգեցրին նրա դիվանագիտական գործունեության դադարեցմանը:

Գայանե Մախմուրյան – պ. դ. դ., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտի նորագույն պատմության բաժնի առաջատար գիտաշխատող: Գիտական հետաքրքրությունները՝ Հայկական հարց, Հայոց մեծ եղեռն, Մեծ տերությունների վարած քաղաքականությունը 1918–1920 թթ. ՀՀ-ի նկատմամբ, Ղարաբաղյան շարժումը 1988–1994 թթ.: Հեղինակ է 6 մենագրության, փաստաթղթերի ժողովածուի և 68 հոդվածի: ggmmakhm@hotmail.com

ФРАНЦУЗСКАЯ ПОЛИТИКА В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ АРМЕНИЯ
И ЗАКАВКАЗЬЕ В 1920 Г.

ГАЯНЭ МАХМУРЯН

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Республика Армения, Франция, Турция, Закавказье, внешняя политика, А. Мильеран, Ж. Лейг, Севрский договор 1920 г., Верховный комиссар Д. де Мартель, РСФСР.

Инструкции премьер-министров и министров иностранных дел Франции Александра Мильерана и Жоржа Лейга для Верховных комиссаров на Кавказе от 12 февраля, 20 сентября и 4 ноября 1920 г. излагают цели и задачи политики, осуществлявшейся ими в Закавказье и Армении. После признания Союзниками Республики Армения де факто 19 января 1920 г. Франция развернула здесь дипломатическую работу. В список поручений входили вопросы развития торговли, частичной военной помощи и продажи ряда боеприпасов, проблемы противодействия большевизму и кемало-советскому сотрудничеству, открытие на месте французских школ и парижская аккредитация Ереванского армянского университета.

Французское правительство считало, что Севрский договор от 10 августа 1920 г. способствовал укреплению его позиций на Востоке. В то же время оно стремилось смягчить его территориальные требования в пользу Армении, чтобы турецкая сторона ратифицировала и выполнила этот документ. Турецко-армянская война 1920 г. и тяжелое поражение в ней Республики Армения кардинально изменили французскую политику и практически привели к прекращению ее дипломатической деятельности в регионе.

Гаянэ Махмурян – д. и. н., ведущий научный сотрудник отдела новейшей истории Института истории НАН РА. Научные интересы: Армянский вопрос, Геноцид армян, политика Великих держав в отношении Республики Армения 1918–1920 гг., Карабахское движение 1988–1994 гг. Автор 6 монографий, сборника документов и 68 статей.
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