

**NARINE MOVSESYAN\***

*Laboratory Assistant*

*Institute of History of NAS RA*

*narinem2006@gmail.com*

ORCID: 0009-0004-2506-530X

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## **MANIFESTATIONS OF PAN-TURKISM IN THE TURKISH-ARMENIAN WAR OF 1920 (ACCORDING TO THE ASSESSMENT OF THE ARMENIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE TIME)**

**Keywords:** Political relations, Turkish-Armenian War of 1920, the Republic of Armenia, pan-Turkism, historiography, political figures, Bolshevik Russia.

### ***Introduction***

The new reinterpretation of the Turkish-Armenian war in 1920 becomes essential, especially taking into account the current military-political situation of the Republic of Armenia. Now, when the ideology of pan-Turkism and open Azerbaijani aggression reemerged, it became much more urgent to launch a proper historiographical and political counterattack to the Turkish-Azerbaijani falsifications.

Different issues of the Turkish-Armenian war of 1920 had been elucidated in numerous Armenian publications. From the end of the war until today, various assessments of those events have been given by historians, statesmen, and politicians from different political standpoints. Among the completed works, the testimonies of those political and public figures of the time who held various state, military, party or clerical positions in the Republic of Armenia are particularly important. Those authors referred to various situations during the war. All of them emphasize the main grounds and ultimate goal of the war unleashed by the Kemalists. The goal of the latter was realize the plan of

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the establishment of the "Great Turan" fed by the ideology of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism, which was nothing but the continuation of the Genocide executed out in 1915.

Thus, the public demand of the general commander of the Azerbaijani forces, Khalil Pasha, to the Armenians to vacate Meghri district in Zangezur, so that they could establish a direct connection between Turkey and Baku, was evaluated by the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Armenia Ruben (Minas Ter-Minasyan) as a return to the ideology of pan-Islamism and new steps towards the aim of creating a "Great Turan"<sup>1</sup>. In his turn, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (abbreviated: RA) Hakob Ter-Hakobyan (Irazek) notes: "...The to-be-formed Armenia is the barrier that would separate Turkey from its nourishing motherland, Turan... The Armenians were a thorn stuck into the side of Turkism"<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the time had come, "to open the roads to Turan"<sup>3</sup>.

"Turkey, having suffered an irrevocable defeat in the west and south, sought to secure and strengthen its future in the north-east. And the Armenians being stuck as a wedge between Erzurum and Baku, cut the road to Turks"<sup>4</sup>, adds the first Prime Minister of the RA H. Kajaznuni. He writes in regard to the depopulated Western Armenia, that "in order to solve the Armenian Issue in Turkey fundamentally, (that step) was the most drastic and – as the future has shown – the most appropriate one"<sup>5</sup>.

A similar opinion can be found in the report by the diplomatic representative of the RA in Georgia Tigran Bekzadyan, written in August 1920. When presenting the political situation in the RA, he writes: "Owing to this state of affairs, the situation had developed in such a way, that it threatened the security and existence of the state"<sup>6</sup>. Referring to the Turkish-Russian and Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, T. Bekzadyan presents in the same memorandum a method of achieving the goals of the Turks. This method demanded the establishment of a contact with Soviet forces and Azerbaijan, so that a required assistance against Europe could

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<sup>1</sup> Ռուբէն 1991, 145.

<sup>2</sup> Տէր-Յակոբեան 1921, 4–5.

<sup>3</sup> Տէր-Յակոբեան 1921, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Քաջազնունի 1923, 21–22.

<sup>5</sup> Քաջազնունի 1923, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Խատիսյան 1968, 276.

be obtained. The successful end of these measures should be a “destruction of independant Armenia, of the state that prevents the aforementioned connection and serves as a barrier against the formation of a homogenous Muslim mass from the Mediterranean to the shores of the Indian Ocean”<sup>7</sup>.

T. Bekzadyan’s assessment clearly depicts the goal of the Kemalists, the essence of their pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism. He emphasizes that Armenia is the main barrier against the implementation of the aforementioned plans, and correctly mentions how the Turks of Azerbaijan had recently been involved in the implementation of this plan, referring to the Caucasian Tatars of his days, too<sup>8</sup>.

***The Backgrounds of pan-Turkism according to the Assessment of the Armenian Historiography of the Time***

The authors of the time present how the multitudinous Russian forces, which advanced from the East and allegedly should put an end to the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict, captured Karabakh, then Zangezur and Nakhijevan. The witnesses and participants of the events clarify, that the Kemalists and the Azerbaijani troops used that opportunity, and also entered with their detachments to occupy Armenian territories<sup>9</sup>. This indicates, that the statesmen of the time were well aware of how the Kemalists were implementing their long-term plan and clearly paved the way for the “Great Turan”, under the guise of cooperation with Soviet Russia.

H. Ohanjanian, one of the direct participants of the events, referred to the negotiations that should reconcile the Erevan Cabinet with the Kemalists after the defeat of the RA in the Turkish-Armenian war of 1920. Ohanjanian reveals the treachery of the enemy’s actions as follows: “When we met the new demands of the cease-fire were proposed and immediately implemented by them, they brought in new demands, and by implementing them Armenia would be divided, disarmed and become completely incapable of self-defense”<sup>10</sup>. Then the leader of the Republic concludes that in addition to all these circumstances Armenia had to provide to the enemy the security guarantees, which meant that new demands would be forwarded to Armenia in the future. “And this time the problem of the

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<sup>7</sup> Խատիսյան 1968, 273.

<sup>8</sup> Խատիսյան 1968, 273.

<sup>9</sup> Խատիսյան 1968, 274.

<sup>10</sup> Խատիսյան 1968, 286:

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destruction of Armenia would be probably put on public display, and it was for this purpose that the government of Ankara moved its armies against Armenia”<sup>11</sup>.

The Armenian authors had recorded that the Turkish invasion threatened not only independence, but even the existence of the Republic of Armenia, that the purpose of the Turks was the final destruction of our country. These people gave a fair assessment of the essence of the Kemalists’ invasion<sup>12</sup>. One among these analysts, the second Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia A.I. Khatisian, came to an interesting conclusion and finally answered the question, why the Turks could not fulfill their dream of pan-Turkism. He admits that the Bolsheviks were the main allies of the Turks and actively supported the Kemalist attack on Armenia. But in the long run, though they supported each other, the Bolsheviks had to get their share, that’s why they “divided Armenia among themselves”<sup>13</sup>.

H. Ter-Hakobyan, emphasizes the fact that the time chosen by the Turks for the attack was convenient. He mentions a number of reasons that prompted them to start a war and considers the following aim as a primary one: “To open the roads to Turan and to the ‘ally’ Soviet Russia”<sup>14</sup>. Then he mentions the following reasons arising from the primary aim: the alliance with Azerbaijan was of strategic importance, it would later be directed against or in favor of the Bolsheviks, depending on the requirement of the moment. The next task was to eliminate the Treaty of Sèvres and to reach the solution of the Armenian Question by squeezing Armenia, which was the chief bearer of Nationalists demands. So if, nevertheless, the Kemalists failed to eliminate Armenia completely, it was necessary to prohibit at all costs the joining of Western Armenia to Eastern Armenia, and to put Armenia in such a position that it ought to make territorial concessions<sup>15</sup>.

We can see that Ter-Hakobyan, who was a well-known statesman, was quite correct in his conclusion that the ultimate goal of the Kemalists was the implementation of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism. They executed these ideas quite freely, and strived to extend their power to “Muslims living in the vicinity of Masis and Bartogh, who were equally subjected to frequent persecution by the

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<sup>11</sup> **Խատիսյան** 1968, 286.

<sup>12</sup> **Խատիսյան** 1968, 273.

<sup>13</sup> **Խատիսյան** 1968, 293.

<sup>14</sup> **Տէր-Յակոբեան** 1921, 2.

<sup>15</sup> **Տէր-Յակոբեան** 1921, 2.

Armenian authorities”<sup>16</sup>.

Thus, the Armenian government officials were clearly aware of the ultimate goal of the Turks, namely to destroy Armenia and the Armenian people. This thesis could be illustrated by the following apprehension of Ter-Hakobyan why the concept of Armenia was most detestable for the Turks: “Since the old times they like and tolerate everything, but they are seized with an uncommon frenzy, when it comes to Armenians and Armenia”<sup>17</sup>.

The military adviser, Major General G. Korghanian shared the opinion of diplomat. G. Korghanian who participated in the London diplomatic Conference of the Prime Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in February-April, 1920, in his message composed in the same 1920, writes: “the Armenians prevent the implementation of the ideas of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism, the creation of a united Muslim state stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Turkestan steppes”<sup>18</sup>. The figures of the time, when it comes to the issue of the noted goal, did not draw a line between the Turks of the past and the Turks of the present. They thought that the goal pursued by Ottomans or Kemalists in regard to Armenia and its nation did not change during all periods. “Turkey, old or new, has one policy towards the Armenians – to exterminate them in order to obstruct their legitimate claims”<sup>19</sup>. H. Ter-Hakobyan asked: “What is this furious discord for?”. The answer is the same. “First of all, because as far as future Armenia could be the barrier that would really separate Turkey from its nourishing motherland, Turan, where all their ideals are centralized. Armenia was a thorn stuck into the movement of Turkey”<sup>20</sup>.

***The Essence and Purposes of pan-Turkism according to the Assessment of the Armenian Historiography of the Time***

Quite similarly to the Young Turks, the Kemalists had also pursued a goal to unite with Azerbaijan and through it with the Turkic people of Central Asia<sup>21</sup>. Let's highlight this plan, which is not limited to only economic and cultural goals, but also includes military and obviously expansionist goals. We should add that this

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<sup>16</sup> Տէր-Յակոբեան 1921, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Տէր-Յակոբեան 1921, 4.

<sup>18</sup> ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 200, ց. 1, գ. 557, հ. 1, մաս 2, թ. 442.

<sup>19</sup> Տէր-Յակոբեան 1921, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Տէր-Յակոբեան 1921, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Տէր-Յակոբեան 1921, 7–10.

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plan is already a practical implementation of the idea of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism.

Among the Clergy and their deeds we should mention the appeal of the Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg V (1847–1930) to the Armenian people (made on October 4, 1920). The document states: “The enemy comes, the enemy is merciless... having gathered his last strength, he fights desperately and wants to completely deprive us of our homes, our homeland and our freedom...”<sup>22</sup>. The same circumstance, namely, that the Kemalists strived to destroy the Armenians, had been traced in an article “Our Enemies” by Bishop Garegin Hovsepyants, who witnessed the fall of Kars and directly participated in those events. He states the following: “Today, he (the Turk – N. M.) ... with the fury of a mortally wounded beast makes the last attempt to strangle the sacred cause of the political and intellectual revival of the Armenian people, trample the sacrificial Motherland, destroy our state and unite without hindrance with the co-religious Azerbaijan”<sup>23</sup>. In the article under the title “An Internal Enemy” the Bishop Garegin writes: “The Turks treacherously ... entered our borders and want to use our corpses to create an opportunity for unification with Azerbaijan and the Eastern Muslims”<sup>24</sup>.

The danger of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism became so real that even the European figures understood and realized its threat. The Armenian statesmen of that time exchanged their anxiety with them. Thus, Avetis Aharonian, as a Chairman of the RA delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, told to the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.I. Khatisian on March 19, 1920: “England is deeply convinced that the religious and political teachings of the Young Turks, which is pan-Turanism and pan-Islamism, are not merely words and that Turkey, armed with these ideas, can influence Asia and, consequently, the English Muslim possessions and of course Arabia as well”.

England is firmly convinced that until Turkey stands and the Young Turks are the masters of its fate, there is no peace in Asia”<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> The full text of the message in: **Եազըճեան** 2002, 72–74: It was also published in the “Etchmiadzin” weekly newspaper. **Էջմիածին**, 04.10.1920. The October 4<sup>th</sup> date mentioned under the message title is probably the date of its publication.

<sup>23</sup> The full text of the message in: **Եազըճեան** 2002, 74–77. The article was also published in the “Etchmiadzin” weekly newspaper. **Էջմիածին**, 04.10.1920.

<sup>24</sup> See the full message. ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 57, ց. 5, գ. 93, թթ. 20–21, **Եազըճեան**, 2002, 77–80.

<sup>25</sup> ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 200, ց. 1, գ. 290, մաս. 1, թթ. 70–71.

The Armenian newspapers of the time also associated the goals of the Turks with the reinterpretation and continuation of their old pan-Turkic plans<sup>26</sup>. "In addition to the destruction of the Armenian people, the Turks are paving the way for a pan-Turkic union"<sup>27</sup>. The fall of Kars<sup>28</sup> had been considered by the "Mshak" a victory of the pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic ideas, and Mustafa Kemal's goal was to create an empire from Altai to the Mediterranean<sup>29</sup>. This is approved by a letter from Ahmed Mukhtar, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Ankara, addressed to Kazim Karabekir on November 8, 1920, which, in particular, states: "Armenia must be destroyed politically and physically"<sup>30</sup>.

Although many Armenian experts and politicians did not emphasize "pan-Turkism", their memoirs prove that the goal of the Turks was the complete destruction of Armenia<sup>31</sup>.

### **Conclusions**

Thus, the Armenian individuals of the time presented in their letters and memoirs the current political situation in the country, the danger that threatened Armenia on both sides, the abandonment of it by the allies, the unhindered actions of the Turkish army and the fact that its assault was primarily directed against peaceful population, and, thus, clearly represented the essence of Turkey's plans, i.e. to destroy the Armenian nation as an ethnic unity. The authors of the time, who were in the center of the heated events, witnessed all important developments, which they recorded in detail and gave an appropriate assessment, in regard to them. Therefore, their monographs and other publications, as well as writings and correspondence are primary sources of great significance.

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<sup>26</sup> Գործադր, 07.04.1919, Մշակ, 09.05.1920.

<sup>27</sup> Յառաջ, 01.10.1920, 03.11.1920:

<sup>28</sup> One of the great losses of Armenians during the war was the fall of Kars on October 30, 1920.

<sup>29</sup> Մշակ, 21.10.1920, 22.10.1920, 05.11.1920.

<sup>30</sup> Кеворкян 2015, 900.

<sup>31</sup> Кеворкян 2015, 266, Վրացյան 1993, 487–495:

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## 1920 Թ. ԹՈՒՐԲ-ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԸ ՈՐՊԵՍ ՊԱՆԹՈՒՐԲԻԶՄԻ ՆՊԱՏԱԿԻ ԻՐԱԳՈՐԾՈՒՄ (ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԻ ՀԱՅ ՊԱՏՄԱԳՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԳՆԱՀԱՏՄԱՄԲ)

ՄՈՎՍԵՍՅԱՆ Ն.

### Ամփոփում

**Բանալի բառեր՝** քաղաքական հարաբերություններ, 1920 թ. թուրք-հայկական պատերազմ, Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն, պանթուրքիզմ, պատմագրություն, պետական գործիչներ, բոլշևիկյան Ռուսաստան:

Սանձազերծելով թուրք-հայկական 1920 թ. պատերազմը, քեմալականները ձգտում էին իրագործել պանթուրքիզմի ծրագիրը: Հոդվածի նպատակն է վերհանել նշված իրադարձությունների գնահատականը ժամանակի հայ



պատմագրության կողմից: Աշխատանքի համար առաջնային հիմք են ծառայել ժամանակի հայ պատմագրության կողմից կյանքի կոչված մենագրություններն ու հոդվածները, նամակները, զեկուցագրերը, որոնց պարունակած նյութերի համադրման, համեմատման և վերլուծության միջոցով փորձ է արվել վերհանել 1920 թ. թուրք-հայկական պատերազմի ընթացքում թուրքական կառավարության՝ պանթյուրքիզմի ծրագրի իրագործման փաստը:

Ժամանակի հեղինակները շեշտադրում են, որ Հայաստանը գլխավոր արգելքն էր վերոհիշյալ ծրագրերի իրականացման ճանապարհին և իրավացիորեն նշում են, որ վերջին ժամանակաշրջանում այդ ծրագրի իրականացմանը լծվել էին նաև Ադրբեջանի թուրքերը՝ նկատի ունենալով կովկասյան թաթարներին:

Հեղինակները նշում են, որ 1920 թ. թուրք-հայկական պատերազմի միջոցով Մուստաֆա Քեմալը ձգտում էր ուղիղ ցամաքային հաղորդակցություն հաստատել Ադրբեջանի հետ, ինչպես նաև կործանել Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունը:

## ТУРЕЦКО-АРМЯНСКАЯ ВОЙНА 1920 Г. КАК РЕАЛИЗАЦИЯ ЦЕЛЕЙ ПАНТЮРКИЗМА (В ОЦЕНКЕ АРМЯНСКОЙ ИСТОРИОГРАФИИ)

МОВСЕСЯН Н.

### Резюме

**Ключевые слова:** политические отношения, турецко-армянская война 1920 г., Республика Армения, пантюркизм, историография, государственные деятели, большевистская Россия.

Турецко-армянская война 1920 г. имела целью реализовать стратегию пантюркизма. На основе сопоставления и анализа фактов, содержащихся в специальной литературе – статьях, письмах, рапортах и монографиях, делается попытка выявить факт реализации программы пантюркизма, осуществлявшейся турецким правительством в ходе турецко-армянской войны 1920 г.

### **The Manifestations of Panturkism in the 1920 Turkish-Armenian War...**

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Авторы-современники событий подчеркивают, что Армения была главным препятствием для осуществления пантюркистских планов. При этом они отмечают, насколько активно азербайджанские турки, под которыми подразумеваются кавказские татары, подключились к осуществлению данной программы, констатируя, что посредством турецко-армянской войны 1920 г. Мустафа Кемаль стремился установить прямой сухопутный контакт с Азербайджаном, а также уничтожить Республику Армения.