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**Memoirs of
Alexander Khatisian
Prime Minister of the
Republic of Armenia
and Armenian Views**

Numan HAZAR



Ankara • 2023

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FOREWORD

As Armenia gained independence and established its first republic between the years of 1918-1920, Alexander Khatisian became its first Foreign Minister and later, after Mr. Hovhannes Kajaznuni, its second Prime Minister. He kept his memoir penned in Armenian. It was published, in Armenian, in 1930 at Athens and in 1968 at Beirut by the Dashnaktsutyun, a political party well known for its notorious radical and militant past as well as contemporary activities. This was also translated into and published in French in 1989 at Athens.

Khatisian's memoir covering a period which reflects also on our recent history and conjures memories has been translated into Turkish from Armenian and then also into English by the TEKAR foundation with the specific initiative of its chairman, Mr. Mehmet Arif Demirer.

In the second publication of the Armenian version, a foreword was added, interpreting the memoir from the view point of the Dashnaktsutyun with the objective to keep the Armenian goals and dreams alive and to carry it on to the future through the diaspora.

Following a study and assessment at the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), we reached the conclusion that the memoir of Khatisian published by the Dashnaktsutyun to support its narrative and carry on the Armenian dream to the future-contrary to Khatisian's own thinking- needed a closer look in light of the Dashnaktsutyun's interpretation. Thus, we approached Ambassador Numan Hazar who has deep knowledge on the subject. Responding positively, Ambassador Hazar has prepared this report by hand in three languages: Turkish, French and English.

AVİM is obliged for this invaluable study and contribution of Ambassador Hazar. We also extend our thanks to our esteemed readers for their interest in the subject.

Alev KILIÇ
Ambassador (R.)
AVİM Director

Ambassador (R) Numan HAZAR



Born in Tarsus, Turkey. Graduated in 1966 from the Diplomatic Section of the Faculty of Political Science, Ankara University. Entered in 1967 Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Served in various diplomatic posts abroad: Second Secretary in Ottawa, Canada; First Secretary, in Nicosia, Cyprus; Political Counselor and First Counselor, in Washington, D.C., USA for two terms (seven years); Deputy Chief of Mission in New Delhi, India; Minister-Counselor, in Bonn, Germany;

In Ankara, he served at the Office of the President of the Turkish Republic as well as Cultural Affairs, Policy Planning, Council of Europe Departments, Director General for Africa, East Asia and Pacific/Islamic Conference Organization (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

He was Ambassador to Lagos, Nigeria, Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and later to UNESCO in Paris.

He served as Ambassador/Diplomatic Adviser to the Minister of National Defense and later as Chairman of the Inspection Board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Retired in 2010. Appointed by Turkey in 2011 as Turkish Member for the ECO's (Economic Cooperation Organization, based in Tehran, Iran) Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and elected as Chairman of the EPG which was charged with the restructuring of the Organization.

He lectured courses on foreign policy, diplomatic correspondence and negotiation techniques at the Faculty of the Political Science of Ankara University as well as at the International Relations Department of the TOBB Economy and Technology University in Ankara.

He is also member of the Board of the Foreign Policy Institute in Ankara as well as the Center of Human Rights Research and Implementation of the Maltepe University, in Istanbul.

He is the author of eight books in Turkish on "Africa in the Process of Globalization and Turkish-African Relations", "International Politics and Civilizations", "Effects of Science and Technology on Civilizations and Foreign Policy", "Human Rights and Diplomacy", "Turkish-African Relations, Turkey's Strategy of Outreach to a Friendly Continent", "Turkish Foreign Policy under the Shadow of the Soviet Threat-the Case of North Africa", "Memoirs of Foreign Policy, Notes from My Diary 1967-2018", "Clash of Civilizations, Armenians and Frozen International Conflicts". His articles on different international issues were published in German, French and English in various countries.

MEMOIRS OF ALEXANDER KHATISIAN PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND ARMENIAN VIEWS

Numan HAZAR

Ankara, 2023

Memoirs of Alexander Khatisian and Armenian Views

Alexander Khatisian (A. Khatisov in Russian) is an important figure in the history of Armenia. He played an important role in the evolution of the Caucasus during the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire from the stage of history after the First World War.

After the Bolshevik Revolution that took place in Tsarist Russia in 1917, the Transcaucasian Federation was created with the participation of Azerbaijanis, Georgians and Armenians. This Federation later declared its independence under pressure from the Ottoman state.

Khatisian was among the Armenian representatives of the Transcaucasian delegation, which took part in the Trabzon talks (February 23-April 1, 1918) between the Ottoman Empire and the Transcaucasian Federation, and in the Batumi conference (April 1-May 26, 1918), which later culminates in the Treaties of Batumi.

He had talks with the head of the Ottoman delegation, Rauf Bey (Orbay) during the Trabzon meetings, and with the head of the Ottoman delegation, Deputy Foreign Minister Halil Bey (Menteşe) during the conference in Batumi as well as with Vehip Pasha, military representative and Commander of the Third Army. He also met Cemal Pasha, who visited Batumi during the Batumi Conference.

Later, the Transcaucasian Republic dissolved and Georgia declared independence on May 26, 1918, Azerbaijan on May 28, 1918, and Armenia on May 28, 1918.

Khatisian was the head of the Armenian delegation to the Gyumri talks (November 24-December 3, 1920) which were held after the victory of the armed forces of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (GNAT) under the command of Kazım Karabekir Pasha against the Armenians. On the night of December 2-3, 1920, Khatisian signed the Treaty of Gyumri on behalf of Armenia. Kazım Karabekir Pasha signed the Treaty of Gyumri on behalf of the Turkish government (GNAT).

The Treaty of Gyumri is the first international peace treaty signed by the Turkish government (GNAT), i.e. by the new emerging Turkish state in Anatolia.

In the process leading to the Treaty of Gyumri, Georgia and Azerbaijan came under Soviet control. Then the Bolsheviks dominated in Armenia.

During this whole process, Khatisian had contacts and meetings with the Turkish Delegation in Gyumri under the chairmanship of Kazım Karabekir Pasha.

Khatisian also held talks with Grand Vizier Talat Pasha and Deputy Commander-in-Chief Enver Pasha in Istanbul. He was also granted audience by the Ottoman sultan and the crown prince.

Khatisian gives detailed information about all these meetings in his memoirs.

Khatisian served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, which was established in 1918, then became the second Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia after the first Prime Minister of Armenia, Hovannes Katchatznoui.

Khatisian, who visited Paris after the establishment of the Bolshevik regime in his country, followed the peace talks held by the allies there and with the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne after the Turkish War of Independence explained its views and assessments.

The memoirs of Alexander Khatisian were published in Armenian in Athens in 1930 by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsoutioun). The book is titled “The Birth and Development of the Republic of Armenia”.

Esat Uras, who knows Armenian, referred to Khatisian’s book and made

some quotes in his book (in Turkish) titled “Armenians in History and the Armenian Question” published in 1950.¹

Armenian American historian Richard G. Hovannisian also referred to the Memoirs of Khatisian in a book published in 1967.²

The second Armenian edition of Memoirs of Khatisian was again produced by Dashnaksoutioun in 1968 in Beirut. This edition includes an interesting preface by Chavach Toriguian, which includes an assessment of Khatisian’s Memoirs.

The French translation of Memoirs of Khatisian was published by Dashnaksoutioun in 1989, for some reason still in Athens. The book is titled “Birth and Development of the Armenian Republic”. In the French translation, the word “éclosion” is used instead of the word “birth”.³

The publication dates of the second Armenian edition and the French translation are also interesting. The second edition in Armenian was published, during the Soviet period, three years after the 50th anniversary of the so-called Armenian Genocide, in Beirut where Armenians were actively working against Turkey. It should be noted that the publication of the French translation in 1989 coincided with the change of policy aimed at ending Armenian terror against Turkish diplomats and obliging the Parliaments of Christian Countries to adopt Resolutions on the genocide against the Turkey. Behind all these efforts hide the Dashnaks.

There was no text translated into Turkish for the Memoirs of Khatisian. Mehmet Arif Demirer, author and president of the Turkish-Armenian Subject Research Foundation (TEKAR), published the Turkish text of much of the Memoirs in 2020. Yavuz Aydın translated the book from Armenian to Turkish. He also published the full text of the memoirs in 2021. In 2022, the book was republished as the 1st publication of the TEKAR Foundation with the title “Khatisian, 1930, The Documentary-Memory Book of Khatisian, one of the founders of the Armenian Republic.

This time in English, a book edited by TEKAR Foundation President Mehmet Arif Demirer in 2023 as the second book published by the Foundation. It was published under the title “The Birth and Development of the Republic

1 Uras, Esat; The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question, Documentary Publications, Istanbul 1988.
2 Richard G. Hovannisian; Armenia on the Road to Independence 1918, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1967, p. 195.
3 Khatisian, A.; Ecllosion et Développement de la République Arménienne, Traduit de l’Arménien, Publication de la F.R.A. Dachnaksoutioun, Athènes, 1989.

of Armenia”. The editor-translator of the English text is Fatma Sarıkaya.⁴

It has been important and useful that the Turkish and English texts of Khatisian’s Memoirs are provided by TEKAR as a book for historians and researchers.

It is clear that the contribution of TEKAR is commendable, because despite research, it has been understood that there is no English or Russian translation of the book other than the French translation.

In the 1989 French edition of the book, a long preface was published with the translator’s note. In this preface, detailed opinions and assessments on the Armenian movements in the Ottoman Empire, the games of the imperialist states, the process leading to the treaties of Gyumri and Lausanne and the betrayal of the Armenians by the imperialists are mentioned. Also included in the French translation is Chavach Toriguian’s preface written for the second Armenian edition of the book. In this preface by Toriguian, there are also criticisms of the tricks of the imperialist countries which betrayed and abandoned the Armenians.

In the first part of the French translation, the biography of Khatisian as well as his opinions and evaluations on his personality written by Simon Vrastian, one of the main Armenian politicians who served as Prime Minister for a short period in 1920, are also included.

The original texts in French as well as the English and Turkish translations of all these texts from the book of Khatisian translated into French, which we have spoken of above, are presented in the appendix. In these texts, assessments were made of Khatisian’s significant personality as a realistic and sincere politician.

After this introduction, it would be useful to provide summary information on the content of the texts of the French book containing the Memoirs of Khatisian.

In the preface, which is included in the French edition as the Translator’s Note, Armenian movements are addressed in the historical process. In this context, the following views are included:⁵

4 Khatisian, *The Birth and Development of the Republic of Armenia*, TEKAR Foundation Publication-2, Sonçağ, Ankara, 2023.

5 Khatisian, A. ; *Ecllosion et Développement de la République Arménienne*, Traduit de l’Arménien, Publication de la F.R.A. Dachnaksoutioun, Athènes, 1989, p. 7-24.

“Independence in 1918 was short-lived. Because independence was achieved thanks to the conditions created by the Soviet revolution. There were additional reasons for resorting to Russian protection. Victims of massacres committed by the Turks between 1895 and 1915 and knowing that they were threatened even beyond the border of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians had an additional reason to seek Russian protection. To the problem of the eventual independence of the Armenian oblast from Russia were therefore added two other problems: that of the reconstitution of a United Armenia and that of the resettlement of refugees. The latter were about three hundred thousand in Russian Armenia, thus increasing by a good third the number of a population struck as much as themselves by epidemics, famine, prey to unspeakable physical and moral distress. Having suffered in their flesh for having sided with the States of the Entente Cordiale and their allies, having brought to these same Allies their contribution to the victory, the Armenians were not forbidden to think that the Allies and in particular the British would help them to recover these territories essential to their survival which the Georgians or the Tatars disputed with them.

But it was also not forbidden to think that because of the commitments made by these same Allies, the Armenians were going to receive ample territorial compensation in Turkish Armenia. They were therefore invited to lower their claims in Russian Armenia accordingly. It was by invoking the future Peace Treaty with Turkey where everything should, they were assured, be settled to their satisfaction that the French and the British advised the Armenians to lay down their arms. Thus were stopped, in Transcaucasia, the victorious offensives of Antranik or Dro.

As for the Americans, it was the classic scenario that the smarter ones got caught up in. President Wilson said one thing, his subordinates said another,

Admiral Mark L. Bristol went so far as to bluntly confide in Khatisian, shamelessly explaining to him how little the opinion of the President of the United States counted in this matter. This Bristol was American High Commissioner in Constantinople, an armenophobe by principle and avowed “Turcolâtre” (admirer of Turks).

As far as Armenians are concerned the questions they ask themselves are haunting: “Did we do the right thing? Should it be done otherwise? Could we? Have we been careful in choosing our alliances? Why have we been betrayed? Were we wrong to raise volunteers for the Russian front? Should we restrain our political parties? Was it possible? Should we speak with the Turk? or Russian? Or both at the same time? Did our insignificance condemn us to being

crushed whatever the solution chosen? Are we cursed by the Gods?” or “It’s Fatality’s fault!”

Who would have dared to imagine (between 1915 and 1918), that one day, in 1922, the Turkish statesmen, proven responsible for the crimes committed against the Armenians, would be arrested, transferred to Malta, then released by those who had denounced them as war criminals?

Who could have imagined that, not only would nothing be done to liberate our territory, but that regions that were indeed liberated such as Eastern Thrace and especially Cilicia would be returned to the Turks by France in December 1921, which would have the result of condemning by the cold of a rigorous winter one hundred and twenty thousand Armenians to evacuate their homes within a fortnight? And why? If not to keep Syria at a lower cost!

Who would have imagined it? The great statesmen had trumpeted: “The Turks will be driven out of Europe!” and they went to invite the Turks in full rout to return to Europe.

What Cassandra, fallen from Charybdis to Scylla, would have dared to foresee that Turkey, disarmed by the Armistice of Mudros in the autumn of 1918, was going to receive the equivalent of two hundred million francs in arms, in tanks, in airplanes from the hands of France when this champion of civilization was leaving Cilicia to help the Turks drive the Greeks out of Smyrna and throw them into the sea?

Who, at the end of the world war, could have imagined, even in spirit (when all the treaties recalled the imprescriptible rights of the Christian minorities to Justice and Security), that the cowardly complicity of the Allies would consecrate the eviction from Asia Minor of all that remained of these same minorities? And, to finish, who would have believed the great allied powers, suddenly changing their language, were going to say to the Christians: “What do you want? There is nothing to do. You can no longer live with the Turk. Go somewhere else!”

The game was played over the heads of the Armenians and they had nothing left to try!

And looking back on our history, we can perhaps say to ourselves that a forecast of the inevitable fate, we should have dealt earlier with our northern neighbor and thus avoided the Armenian-Turkish war with the loss of a significant part of Russian Armenia.

Or perhaps we could say that it was appropriate to set aside any timorous politics, to recognize the strength of Kemalism, to agree with it on much more modest borders than those promised by Wilson.

The Ottoman Empire had succumbed to the power of the Allies and in the first half of 1920 Constantinople was occupied by the Allies.

Armenia, the “little ally” that had shed so much blood and received such beautiful promises, its cause was just! Helping him to triumph was a duty of conscience for civilized humanity.

Before the war as after the war, the Allies had said it clearly and clearly, the emancipation of Armenia was one of their fundamental objectives. But Turkey was defeated. Tell him their will? Was it so difficult for the victorious and omnipotent Allies? The declarations of the Allies took shape in San Remo and finally, on August 10, 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed. Seen through the spectacles we were wearing that day, was it so grossly deceiving ourselves to tie our fate to the fate of the Allies?

However, events took a different course...”

Who can ever know whether he did wisely or not for the remote consequences of things? For excellent minds, the men in power in Erivan from 1918 to 1920, as well as those who represented the Armenian nation in Paris during and after the war, being what they were: conscientious administrators and good patriots, they could not act otherwise than they did. A Katchaznouni, a Roupen Ter Minassian had the temptation of a more realistic policy because it was less ambitious, but they were not listened to and they did not think they had to persist. Khatisian’s book constitutes in this respect a spontaneous testimony that is difficult to refute.

Boghos Noubar Pasha never set foot in Armenia. He would not refuse the honor of being the first Head of State of United Armenia... provided he could reside in Paris! Aharonian accepted the heroic, thankless, humiliating and above all fruitless task of negotiating with the Ittihadists of Constantinople; At Mudros, Raouf bey (Orbay), instructed by the Porte to seek an armistice from the Allies, suggested that Khatisian go with him on board the ‘Agamemno’ where Admiral Calthrope representing Great Britain had hoisted his flame. Khatisian did not think he should defer to this invitation. “The Allies had won,” he wrote; our hopes were linked to their victory”.

The arrival of Khatisian would have greatly embarrassed the Briton.

The Armistice of Mudros omitted to stipulate, as it should have done, the disarmament of the Turkish troops in Anatolia. It also contained very ambiguous clauses with regard to Armenia and the Armenians. And Khatisian to write with bitterness: “The Armistice contained the seeds of all the eventualities which became thereafter the sad reality”.

Not only did the Allies do nothing to make United Armenia viable, but they opposed the consolidation of the Yerevan Republic.

From dream to reality

A final word.

We have been able to read in Khatisian the story of the long quest of the Armenian leaders to provide the resurgent nation with the protector who would have guaranteed it a sufficient period of stability and security to pull it out of the rut, allow it to heal its wounds, to develop its soil and its subsoil, to raise its economy, to preserve it and put it in a condition to defend itself against the Turk and to prepare it to play its part in the concert of nations.”

The last section of the preface is written under the title “**From dream to reality**”.

As mentioned earlier, the second edition of Khatisian’s book in Armenian was published in Beirut in 1968. The preface to this edition written by Chavach Toriguian is also included in the French translation of the book published in Athens in 1989. In this preface, Toriguian explains his opinions and assessments of both Khatisian’s book and the events mentioned in the book. Since it will be interesting for our topic, these reviews and ratings will be briefly mentioned below: ⁶

“One of the most realistic personalities and one of the most remarkable statesmen in our history, Khatisian, the author of these memoirs, showed seriousness, realism and sincerity in politics. The period to which he refers is that of hunger, epidemics, border disputes, infighting and war. The establishment of a nation-state at this time was an important turning point. Our nation-state was first recognized “de facto” by our allies, and “de jure” recognition was achieved with the Treaty of Sèvres. Unfortunately, the conditions of the time put an end to our young republic which lasted two and

⁶ Khatisian, A.; *Ecllosion et Développement de la République Arménienne*, Traduit de l’Arménien, Publication de la F.R.A. Dachnaksoutioun, Athènes, 1989, p.31-36.

a half years. The destruction of Turkish Armenia, the return of Russia to the Caucasus, the indifference of Europe and America led to the inevitable loss of our independence.

When we take a look at the past, we can say that we had to come to terms with our northern neighbor and avoid the Turkish-Armenian war and the loss of part of Russian Armenia in September-December 1920. By eliminating timorous politics and recognizing Kemalist power, we could come to an agreement with it on more modest borders than Wilson suggested. It's easy to say now. At that time, Russia was in turmoil after the revolution, the country of the Ottoman Empire, which had been defeated in the war, was occupied. The Allies made a beautiful promise of freedom to Armenia, which shed blood for them. They explained that Armenian emancipation was their main goal. Was it difficult for the victorious and powerful allies to dictate what they wanted to Turkey? The Treaty of Sèvres is also signed. Have we made a mistake in linking our fate to the fate of our allies?

But things turned out differently. With the help of Russia, Turkey rose up and threw the Armenian question in the face of the allies. Armenia was also Sovietized. Two reasons influenced the course of events. The first was in the Armenian provinces during the armistice of Mudros.

First, in the armistice of Mudros, no provision was made regarding the Turkish occupation of the Armenian provinces and the disarmament of the Turkish armed forces. Second, the delay in signing a peace treaty with the Turks led Turkey to take advantage of disagreements between the allies. In 1923, the Allies had nothing more to impose on Turkey in Lausanne.

The Treaty of Gyumri of December 2, 1920 and the Treaty of Kars of October 13, 1921 are the treaties that Turkey imposed on the Republic of Armenia.

Armenia becomes the Armenian Soviet Republic. From now on, the diaspora has great responsibilities. The mistakes of the past must not be repeated. The Diaspora should promote our cause abroad, announce 'the denial of justice' to which we have been exposed in the legal, social and cultural fields and demand compensation. For example, all foreign publications on 'genocide' should be republished.

The diaspora must organize itself and emerge as an economic power. In this context, unity within the diaspora is important as well as unity between the diaspora and the homeland.

Planning for the future will be easy if you have a firm grasp of the past. In this regard, we should correctly write the history of the Republic of Armenia 50 years ago. History should not be twisted, facts should be known.”

This preface by Chavach Toriguian is dated November 20, 1968. At that time, Armenia was a Soviet republic. This preface for the second edition of Khatisian’s memoirs in Armenian, held in Beirut, contains interesting information in terms of Armenian views and assessments of developments after World War I.

As previously reported, in the French edition of Memoirs of Khatisian, Simon Vrastian wrote his biography and made the following assessments of Khatisian’s personality in his CV:

“Khatisian played an important and effective role in the life of Armenians, both in the Caucasus and in Russia. When Transcaucasia left Russia, he devoted himself to the service of the Armenian nation with all his existence. After the establishment of the Soviet regime in Armenia, he traveled to Paris and defended Armenian interests during his talks with representatives of various governments and at the League of Nations as a member and vice-president of the Armenian delegation. At the end of all his activities, he wrote his Memoirs. He served the Armenian people selflessly without expecting anything in return. He spent serious and painful times defending the Armenians in Europe, who were also exposed to dangers during the last war. The reward for this was also sad. The people he freed from the clutches of tyranny condemned him cruelly to life in prison and to suffering. Justice was quick to appear, but his health deteriorated. He died on March 10, 1945, leaving an unforgettable memory.”

More than a hundred years have passed since the Treaties of Gyumri and Kars. I wonder if the Armenians did “From dream to reality” mentioned in the preface.

More than a hundred years have passed since the Treaties of Gyumri and Kars, to what extent have Armenians adhered to the expression “From dream to reality” mentioned in the preface? Are they still in the games seen in the story? Do they feed dreams?

In this context, when we look at developments after World War II, the Soviet Union, which emerged victorious and powerful from the war, began to follow the policy of Tsarist Russia. It again realized its expansionist tendencies in Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries. It annexed the Baltic countries to the Soviet Union and established satellite states in Eastern Europe. Because she is

not in a weak state like she was after the First World War. She had also signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, constrained by circumstances. Now, in a situation where she is strong, she has come to believe in making up for the losses she cannot digest. In 1945, it unilaterally abolished the “Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality” signed on December 17, 1925, under various pretexts. Subsequently, she demanded corrections to the border between Turkey and the Soviet Union. As a result, the Soviet Union demanded Ardahan for the Georgian Soviet Republic and Kars for the Armenian Soviet Republic.

These claims signify the rejection of Brest-Litovsk and a return to the Berlin Treaty of 1878. The area claimed by the Soviets, as in history, is of strategic importance to the expansionist ambitions of imperialist Russia. In this policy, Georgians and Armenians were undoubtedly used for Russian purposes. The Soviet Union then had to inform Turkey in writing (presumably without asking the Georgians and Armenians for their opinions) that it was giving up these demands in 1953 due to world conditions at that time. The expression used in the Soviet document on this subject is “The governments of Armenia and Georgia considered that it was possible to ignore their territorial claims”.

As this development shows, the Armenians were used by an expansionist power for their own ends.

Then, in the period immediately following the 1974 Cyprus peace operation by Turkey, Armenian terrorist acts against Turkish diplomats intensified. After the loss of many lives, it was seen that terrorism proved useless and this time an intensive work was started by the Diaspora with the aim of adopting “genocide” resolutions against Turkey from the parliaments of the world, especially from Christian countries.

While all of this is being done, it has not gone unnoticed that the goal is to ensure that Diaspora Armenians, who have significant populations in the United States, France and other countries, do not lose their national identity through assimilation.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, close ties were established between the Republic of Armenia and the Diaspora. The diaspora has become an important player in determining Armenia’s political preferences.

Another interesting point is the reference to “Western Armenia” in the Declaration of Independence of Armenia, which declared its independence in 1991. This Declaration, which includes the territorial ambitions of Armenia towards Turkey, has also been accepted as part of the Armenian Constitution.

Armenia is known to also include photographs of Mount Ararat, which is not found in its own country, on postage stamps and banknotes.

It has been made clear that the purpose of the adoption of Genocide draft resolutions by the parliaments of foreign countries is to create intense pressure for Turkey's official recognition of the Genocide. Recognition will be followed by a request for compensation from Turkey and then a territorial claim.

All these mentioned developments show that Armenians still cannot go from "dream to reality", even though it has been more than a century since the signing of the treaties of Gyumri and Kars, and they are living in dreams. In other words, they did not learn from what Katchaznouni and Khatisian wrote with a realistic understanding.

ANNEXE I

BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMENIAN REPUBLIC (TRANSLATED FROM ARMENIAN)

A. KHATISIAN

ATHENS

1989

PREFACE TO THE FRENCH EDITION

“I am happy to confirm to you that the Government of the Republic, like that of Great Britain, has never ceased to place the Armenian nation among the peoples whose allies intend to regulate the destiny in accordance with the supreme laws of Humanity and Justice”.

Georges Clémenceau
Letter to Boghos Noubar Pasha
(July 14, 1918)

“We have had enough of the Armenians...!”

Georges Clémenceau to
Boghos Noubar Pasha
(December 19, 1919)

“There are two stories: official, lying story, which is taught, the Delphini ad usum story; then the secret history where are the true causes of the events, a shameful history....”

Honoré de Balzac

TRANSCAUCASIA, THE REVOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

Thus, from May 29, 1918 to December 2, 1920, Armenia was an independent state.

It was not the first time. On three occasions already during its long history, the Armenian people had been masters of their destinies: from 189 to around 30 BC. J.C. with the Artaxias and Tigranes the Great; from 885 to 1045 with the Bagratids; from 1080 to 1375 with the Kingdom of Cilicia.

The fourth period of independence was short-lived: two years, seven months and four days. It is hardly and of this independence, because it was imposed by the circumstances, one can say that the Armenian people did not have much to do with it. However, by its consequences, by its impact on the Armenian sensibility of today, by the kind of continuity ensured by a State dependent at present on the Soviet Union but endowed with a relatively broad autonomy, more homogeneous than all the “Armenias” that preceded it, the “Republic of the F.R.A. Dachnaksoutioun” is far from negligible.

And yet, this Republic was a mere epiphenomenon of the Russian Revolution.

Not the only one! The Romanov Empire having collapsed in 1917, the Baltic Provinces, Eastern Poland, Belarus and Ukraine each tried on their own with more or less success and for varying times to gain access to a form of national sovereignty.

Lenin and his people let it happen. They had no means to oppose it. They didn't care. They expected the Revolution to spread throughout Western Europe and from there spread to the rest of the planet. Moreover, the well or badly understood doctrine of Karl Marx did not exclude in a first stage the emancipation of peoples under the aegis of their bourgeois class. When the Bolsheviks understood that they would have to be content for a long time and perhaps forever with “socialism in one country”, they turned back and set about saving the heritage of the old regime. It was the end of national independence.

Unlike the other parts of the Empire of the Tsars (Baltic Provinces, Eastern Poland, Belarus and perhaps also Georgia and Azerbaijan), which saw in the Russian Revolution the opportunity to realize their aspirations to Independence, the Armenians, one cannot insist too much on it, separated with regret from Russia: as much to form with their neighbors an ephemeral federated State as to constitute a sovereign State. They went to independence because they could not do otherwise, the revolution and the civil war having caused a rupture between the heart and the steps of the old Russian Empire.

As well, the three main peoples of Transcaucasia had little in common. The Tatars were Muslims, the Georgians were mostly Orthodox Christians; Christians also the Armenians, but of a monocephalous church. The Georgians

were sedentary, peasants dominated by a noble class. The Armenians, like them sedentary and peasants, had no aristocracy since the Middle Ages. On the other hand, a strong contingent among them tended to disperse, either to swell the proletariat working on the oil wells or to accede to the bourgeoisie. They were then to be found as doctors or lawyers in most Russian towns. In Tiflis, Batumi, Baku, Rostov-on-Don, Moscow and Saint Petersburg, they were merchants, bankers or industrialists. Skilled workers, skillful craftsmen or shrewd businessmen, they were jealous of other ethnic groups because of their success.

The Tartars, on the other hand, were pastoralists in the process of becoming sedentary. They willingly infiltrated into regions with a Christian population, especially as this population became less dense due to the dispersion of the Armenians.

From all this back and forth, there resulted a notable intermingling of Armenians and Tatars in Georgia, of Tatars and Georgians in Armenia, etc.

There also followed a prodigious territorial dispute between all the peoples of Transcaucasia. Karabakh, the Nakhitchevan region and up to the Erivan Oblast (including the capital) were claimed by the Tatars¹. The Armenians considered themselves at home in Tiflis where they were in the majority and of which they assumed the municipal management. The Georgians had partially justified claims to Lori and Akhalkalak.

Armenians and Tatars sometimes came to blows. The years 1905 to 1907 had, in this respect, left painful memories. They dug a gap between the two populations that has never been bridged.

Armenian, Georgian and Tatar intellectual elites were being formed to varying degrees. In each of the three communities, this class was active. Through its writers, its journalists, its teachers, it developed and modernized the national languages. In so doing, it stirred up local particularisms, but at the same time Russification, or at the very least the practice of the Russian language, was going well. The same intellectual class provided Russia with members of the liberal professions, even administrators, diplomats, soldiers or leading statesmen, such as the Georgian Nakachidze, the Tatar Alikhanov, the Armenian Loris-Melikian. Each of the three peoples, when the time came, had only to draw from this breeding ground to constitute a parliament, a government, a body of civil servants, a general staff. It was both the strength of the countries of Transcaucasia to find fully formed teams, and their weakness, because, formalistic and finicky, these teams too often turned empty. We will have to come back to this point.

Politics attracted these elites. Parties more or less modeled on those of Russia had been formed in the three countries. Armenian, Georgian or Tatar nationalists countered the socialists of the same denomination. All were jealous and feared each other.

THE PROBLEMS OF RUSSIAN ARMENIA IN 1918

Victims of massacres committed by the Turks between 1895 and 1915 and knowing that they were threatened even beyond the border of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians had an additional reason to seek Russian protection. Their situation was indeed complicated by the fact that their nation was spread out on both sides of the Russian-Ottoman border. The part placed under the sovereignty of the Tsar had hitherto been neither the most populated nor the most important. There existed or there had existed until 1914 a Turkified Armenia or occupied by the Sultan.

To the problem of the eventual independence of the Armenian oblast from Russia were therefore added two other problems: that of the reconstitution of a United Armenia and that of the resettlement of refugees. The latter were about three hundred thousand in Russian Armenia, thus increasing by a good third the number of a population affected as much as themselves by epidemics, famine, prey to unspeakable physical and moral distress and, for say it all, on the verge of annihilation.

To accommodate these refugees, to feed them as well as to feed the entire population, Armenia had the imperative need to be able to dispose of all the Armenian lands, in particular Karabakh, the provinces of Nakhitchevan, Lori, Akhalkalak, Sourmalou etc.

Having suffered in their flesh for having sided with the States of the Entente Cordiale and their allies, having brought to these same Allies their contribution to the victory (the battle of Araraï could not be won by Allenby on the front of Palestine only thanks to the breakthrough achieved by the Armenian legionnaires; the cutting of the oil route of the Apsheron peninsula by the Armenians compromised, according to Lüdendorff, the German offensive of the summer of 1918), strengthened by the repeated promises which had been lavished on them, the Armenians were not forbidden to think that the Allies and in particular the British would help them to recover these territories essential to their survival which the Georgians or the Tatars were contesting. In the absence of effective aid, they hoped at the very least that their allies would leave them free to consolidate their positions vis-à-vis the neighbours,

of whom, moreover, the first had compromised with the Germans and the second had on the Turks and continued to do so by admitting demobilized Turkish active officers into its army.

But it was also not forbidden to think that because of the commitments made by these same Allies, the Armenians were going to receive ample territorial compensation in Turkish Armenia. They were therefore invited to lower their claims in Russian Armenia accordingly. It was by invoking the future Peace Treaty with Turkey where everything should, they were assured, be settled to their satisfaction that the French and the British advised the Armenians to lay down their arms. Thus were stopped, in Transcaucasia, the victorious offensives of Antranik or Dro. Soldiers like the French Captain Poidebard (this one in good faith) or the English Colonel Shuttleworth (the one full of the ulterior motives that all the officers of the Indian Army, essentially favorable to the Muslims, nourished) remonstrated with the Armenians who were simple enough to believe them, that by seeking to expand by force of arms on the side of Lori, Akhalkalak, Zangezur or Nakhitchevan, they were compromising their cause, and that both immense territories between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea would be assigned to them. They could only, it was represented to them, upset the Conference of Paris by untimely actions.

As for the Americans, it was the classic scenario that the smarter ones got caught up in. President Wilson was saying one thing, his subordinates were saying another, knowing full well what decision Congress would make. Admiral Mark L. Bristol went so far as to bluntly confide in Khatisian, shamelessly explaining to him how little the opinion of the President of the United States counted in this matter. This Bristol was American High Commissioner in Constantinople, an armenophobe by principle and avowed Turko-lath. But that said, the advice he gave to get along with his friends the Turks while there was still time was almost disinterested. The Armenians showered him with anathemas – very deserved, it must be said – and still curse his memory, but they did not believe his predictions.

We know the rest...

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Since the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne which was to consecrate by its silence the collapse of their hopes, the Armenians have not ceased to question themselves.

The questions they ask themselves are haunting: “Did we do the right thing? Should it be done otherwise? Could we? Have we been careful in choosing our alliances? Why have we been betrayed? Were we wrong to raise volunteers for the Russian front? Should we restrain our political parties? Was it possible? Should we speak with the Turk? or Russian? Or both at the same time? Did our insignificance condemn us to being crushed whatever the solution chosen? Are we cursed by the Gods?”

And to conclude like Charles Bovary: “It’s Fatality’s fault!”

A prelate, author of one of the best books on the massacres and deportations of 1915, events which he experienced and noted on the spot, has a particularly disillusioned view of the evolution of things:

“Who would have dared to imagine (between 1915 and 1918), writes Mgr. Balakian in his “Armenian Golgotha”, that one day, in 1922, the Turkish statesmen, proven responsible for the crimes committed against the Armenians, would be arrested, transferred to Malta, then set free by the very people who denounced them as war criminals?

“Who would have imagined that one day, to the question posed in the English Parliament by a friend of the Armenians, Prime Minister Bonar Law would answer: “After all, we are not the police of the whole world?”

“Which Armenian would have suspected that the twenty-eight super dreadnoughts of the ally who had cried: “This is the last massacre of Armenians”, would remain passive witnesses of the massacre and the burning of Smyrna?

“Who would have thought that the only reaction of English sailors to the massacre and abduction of thousands of Greek and Armenian refugees crammed into the city of Smyrna and then thrown into the sea would be to shoot films from their warships?

“Who could have imagined that, not only would nothing be done to liberate our territory, but that regions that were indeed liberated such as Eastern Thrace and especially Cilicia would be returned to the Turks by France in December 1921, which would have the result of condemning by the cold of a rigorous winter one hundred and twenty thousand Armenians to evacuate their homes within a fortnight? And why? If not to keep Syria at a lower cost!

“Who would have imagined it? The great statesmen had trumpeted: “The Turks will be driven out of Europe!” and they went to invite the Turks in full

roul to return to Europe, which would whet their appetite to the point of demanding their borders prior to the Balkan War of 1913...

“What Cassandra, fallen from Charybdis to Scylla, would have dared to foresee that Turkey, disarmed by the Armistice of Moudros in the autumn of 1918, would receive the equivalent of two hundred million francs in arms, in tanks, in airplanes from the hands of France when this champion of civilization was leaving Cilicia to help the Turks drive the Greeks out of Smyrna and throw them into the sea?

“Who, at the end of the world war, could have imagined, even in spirit (when all the treaties recalled the inalienable rights of Christian minorities to Justice and Security), that the cowardly complicity of the Allies would consecrate the eviction from Asia Minor of all that remained of these same minorities? And, to finish, who would have believed the great allied powers, suddenly changing their language, were going to say to the Christians: “What do you want? There is nothing to do. You can no longer live with the Turk. Go somewhere else!”

“And on this recommendation, the Allies hastened to lock their borders to starving refugees, without fire or place. Above all, no unwanted guests! This could cause problems!...”

To the questions posed by Msgr. Balakian, Mr. Chavarch Toriguian tries to provide some semblance of an answer. As we can see in his preface to the Beirut edition of Khatisian’s book, he is one of those who conclude that the game was played over the heads of the Armenians and that the latter had nothing more to try!

“The annihilation of Turkish Armenia, the return of Russia to the Caucasus, the indifference of Europe and America, he wrote, made the loss of our independence inevitable.

“And looking back on our history, we can perhaps say to ourselves that a forecast of the inevitable fate, we should have dealt earlier with our northern neighbor and thus avoided the Armenian-Turkish war with the loss of a significant part of Russian Armenia.

“Or perhaps we could say that it was appropriate to set aside any timorous politics, to recognize the strength of Kemalism, to agree with it on much more modest borders than those promised by Wilson.

“All of this is easy to say today, but should we ask those responsible for our policy to foresee the improbable, the illogical, the unreal?

“Let’s go back to the period from 1918 to 1920. What then was plausible in politics? The Russian had withdrawn from the lists, defeated, devoured by his internal struggles. The Ottoman Empire had succumbed to the power of the Allies and in the first half of 1920 Constantinople was occupied by the Allies, the area stretching from Smyrna to Afion Karahissar was occupied by the Greeks, Adalia by the Italians and Cilicia by the French. Armenia, the “little ally” that had shed so much blood and received such beautiful promises, its cause was just! Helping him to triumph was a duty of conscience for civilized humanity. We had friends everywhere. From the socialist leaders to the heads of the governments, all lavished proclamations in our favour. Before the war as after the war, the Allies had said it clearly, the emancipation of Armenia was one of their fundamental objectives. But Turkey was defeated. Tell him their will? Was it so difficult for the victorious and omnipotent Allies? The declarations of the Allies took shape in San Remo and finally, on August 10, 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed. Seen through the spectacles we were wearing that day, was it so grossly deceiving ourselves to tie our fate to the fate of the Allies?

“However, events took a different course...”

FROM THE PROBABLE TO THE IMPROBABLE...

With hindsight, it appears today very plausible, in fact, that direct negotiations with Moustafa Kemal Pasha established when he arrived in Samsoun, that is to say from May 19, 1919, when he was worried about the future and ready to “cling to anything, even the snake” would have made it possible to avoid his aggression at the end of 1920, after he had received from France the gifts listed by Mgr. Balakyan. The Republic of Erivan would thus (perhaps?) have succeeded in keeping the regions of Kars, Ardahan, Sourmalou with Ani and Mount Ararat in its wake and, with great luck, saving small fragments of the historical Armenia.

A lesser, but still relatively acceptable result would have been achieved if the Armenians had rallied to the Soviets by May 1920 at the latest, when Captain Moussayelian, who would have become, in this context, a national hero, at the latest instead of ending up in the caponier.

However, the stakes were high, because it is expedient to note here that of all the lands which were Russian under the Tsars and lost after 1917, Kars and Ardahan are now the only ones never to have been recovered by the Soviet Union.

MEN IN POWER

What to think? Who can ever know whether he did wisely or not for the remote consequences of things? For excellent minds, the men in power in Erivan from 1918 to 1920, as well as those who represented the Armenian nation in Paris during and after the war, being what they were: conscientious administrators and good patriots, they could not act otherwise than they did. A Katchaznouni, a Roupen Ter Minassian had the temptation of a more realistic policy because it was less ambitious, but they were not listened to and they did not think they had to persist.

Could they? Who would have approved them? Who would have followed them? Would they not have been at the mercy of the gesture of a lunatic, as was the Minister of Finance Kardjikian on the mere suspicion of having lent a hand in the surrender of Kars in April 1918.

Subsequently, less lenient judgments were passed on the leaders of the independent Armenian Republic by some of its members when they made their examination of conscience, but especially by Soviet historians of the Stalin period (their successors being generally more understanding).

The team, we recognize with a good grace, did not lack competence, competence for peacetime, formed as it was of men who had had the solid training of tsarist officials or a long past of municipal officials.

But in exceptional times, when foreign and civil war broke out on all sides and at all times, when the revolution rocked society, when it was necessary to improvise, to follow intuitions rather than to study files returned from the offices of studies in sub-commissions, these same men proved to be (and Khatisian's book constitutes in this respect a spontaneous testimony difficult to refute) formalists to excess, attached to the letter rather than to the spirit, given to verbalism, prone to elaborate memorandum after memorandum, to vote ridiculous resolutions, to rationalize ad infinitum...

The great notable and the famous man of letters whose destiny made the spokesperson of the Armenians before the Allies did not escape criticism either. They were for sure intelligent, but to act intelligently, intelligence is not enough. And this is how their somewhat naive satisfaction at being called Excellencies does not prevent them from tolerating that the heads of the allied governments, after having received them for the sake of form once or twice, send them back to discuss with the lower echelons ministries. Their desperate shuttle between the capitals, their rather unpleasant attitude of "supplicants" is painful.

They have no great sense of reality. Boghos Nubar Pasha never set foot in Armenia. He would not refuse the honor of being the first Head of State of United Armenia... provided he could reside in Paris! Aharonian accepted the heroic, thankless, humiliating and above all fruitless task of negotiating with the Ittihadists of Constantinople; at the Batumi Conference, the Armenian delegation was publicly insulted by the Turkish delegate Djemal Pasha without appearing to suspect that the only possible response would be to leave the room and slam the door. In general, the Presidents of the two Armenian delegations in Paris as well as the people of the Erivan government seem to ignore that diplomacy is a merciless fight, that one obtains, even from one's best friends, only what one we tear, that feelings count for nothing and that there is no worse condition than that of the negotiator in a position of weakness.

Do they really, in the bottom of their hearts, trust the Allies? In any case, they act just like it. They ask for a lot, expect to get little, take good words at face value. They dare not demand written commitments established in good and due form, resign themselves to remaining vague. However, the decisions concerning them have been taken for a long time in Paris and London and the Allies, at least at the responsible levels, have no concern for the Armenians and their problems.

FROM THE SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT TO THE BATOUM CONFERENCE

The premonitory signs had not, however, been lacking. The Sykes-Picot agreement, this "shocking document"... this "product of greed pushed to its paroxysm"... this "striking example of double game" (Georges Antonius), which made cheap Armenian national aspirations, was denounced in 1917 by the new Bolshevik government, but he had sweated enough to warn the most incredulous Boghos Nubar Pasha had been unofficially warned in London in September 1916 of what was going on (C.J. Walker). Thus the Allies were carving up in advance an Armenia they had undertaken to reconstitute. Perhaps it was time to confuse them because, for a year, the Armenian Cause had held an important place on the international chessboard of diplomacy. Wasn't the government in London exploiting the Armenian Genocide as one of the means - and not the least - to stir up American public opinion with a view to provoking the aid of the United States to the Allies (A. Nassibian)? The head of the Armenian National Delegation in Paris, held a trump card there. He did not think of using it... Two years later, the Armenian negotiators at the Batumi Conference also had a card in their hands which they neglected to put down at the right moment. They did not exploit as they could and should have done,

the success of Sardarabat on the diplomatic level (pp. 55-56). The Turks themselves were almost embarrassed by it and, good players for once, they took it upon themselves, a few days after their defeat, to consent to the Armenians, “in the name of beginning good relations” (sic), a concession that we didn’t wait any longer...

THE ARMISTICE OF MUDROS

Five months passed and Khatisian in turn missed an opportunity to find himself in the front row, even to play the Allies against each other and the Turks against the Allies. At Moudros, Raouf bey (Orbay), instructed by the Porte to seek an armistice from the Allies, suggested that he board the *Agamemnon* with him where Admiral Calthrope representing Great Britain had hoisted his flame. Khatisian did not think he should defer to this invitation. ‘The Allies had won,’ he wrote; our hopes were tied to their victory” (p. 73). Now the British admiral had instructions to negotiate alone with the Turks to the formal exclusion of any other ally, to the great displeasure of Clémenceau who threw a tantrum. Khatisian’s arrival would have greatly embarrassed the Briton.

Would he have admitted it? It’s not certain. But well or badly received, the Armenians would have, at the very least, understood once and for all that the “Little Ally” was fooled and that could have dictated a more opportunistic policy to them. It so happens that the Armistice of Mudros omitted to stipulate, as it should have done, the disarmament of the Turkish troops in Anatolia. It also contained very ambiguous clauses with regard to Armenia and the Armenians.

And Khatisian writes with bitterness: “The Armistice contained in germ all the eventualities which later became the sad reality” (p. 73).

THE ORIENT LEGION

We also do not understand by what aberration Boghos Noubar Pasha agreed to make fight the Legion of the East composed only of Armenians under the command of foreign officers and under French colors while at the same time the Polish and Czech Legions had their own officers and wore their national colours.

THE TREATY OF SEVRES

In the end, the Armenians, despite Poincaré's promise, barely had a jump seat at the Paris Conference. United Armenia was indeed created, but it was created by a stillborn treaty, since it was signed by the Allies who had no intention of imposing it. The Treaty of Sèvres cannot, moreover, be truly understood unless it is placed in its context of treaties which were so many firebrands launched blindly on an ocean of international complications: Trianon, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Versailles!...

THE DOUBLE GAME OF ALLIES

Not only did the Allies do nothing to make United Armenia viable, but they opposed the consolidation of the Yerevan Republic. On the other hand, they did not oppose, or even openly and officially encourage, the initiatives of Moustafa Kemal Pasha.

Did the latter upset the course of Turkish history as much as has been said? Without him, of course, things would have gone less brilliantly, but if he had not existed, well-known Ittihadists were ready to organize the resistance in Anatolia. They had already set up the secret group of "Karakol" (Guide) which was to make an appreciable contribution to Kemalism but would have functioned just as well without it. It was nothing less than a resurgence of the "Techkilati Mahsusa", the special organization designed to bring about subversion among the Muslim subjects of the Allied Powers. As well, two generals with links to the Committee of Union & Progress were there at the head of their troops and ready to carry out the program that Moustafa Kemal was to take on his own: Ali Fuat (in Ankara) and Kâzim Karabekir (in Erzeroum), to say nothing of the main officials who kept partisans in Anatolia until October 1921 and beyond. Moustafa Kemal, himself a member of the C.U.P. but relegated to the background and who had distanced himself from the party, arrived at the right time to spare the Allies the disgrace of having to put the great tenors of the Young Turk party back in the saddle (2).

But the Turkish resistance fighters, whether they were unionists or nationalists, and Mustafa Kemal first and foremost, very compromised with the Bolsheviks from the outset, could not be considered as a bulwark against red peril. They had only one enemy in Anatolia and further east: the Republic of Armenia. It was against it, and at the time against it alone, that Kemalism was armed. It was then sacrificed in Lausanne without profit for anyone, except for the Turks, following dark calculations and deaf rivalries between the British, French and Italians.

A CERTAIN USE OF TERRORISM

Was all lost for the Armenians? Certainly yes! By their fault? Good observers think that they were too eager to beat their culp: the result would have been the same whatever they had done. They were overwhelmed, the bar was too high! There was no more recourse...

The Turks, however, foresaw, quite wrongly, an Armenian action by other means and by other channels. In Lausanne, alarmed by a series of attacks committed by Armenians on former leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress, they were able to ask themselves whether the Dashnaktsoutioun, which knew how to organize revenge so well, was not going to have recourse to terrorism as means of political action. They expected bomb attacks directed against the high personalities gathered at the Hotel Beau-Rivage. The Swiss press reported on it as reported (p. 235) by Khatisian. Of course, nothing happened!

Ultimately, at a crucial period in its history, Armenia lacked the man who would have set it on the narrow but straight path of salvation and renewal. After all, Moustafa Kemal himself in Erzeroum in 1919, “afflicted and unhappy in the face of the gravity of the situation”, or de Gaulle in London in 1940 “Gallic cock drawn up against the Albion bull” were more deprived than Boghos Noubar in Paris in 1918 or Noradounkian and Aharonian in Lausanne in 1923.

Did this man exist? It could have been a civilian. Did the typhus that struck down Aram in Erivan or the firing squad that ended Chaoumian’s career in Krasnovak at the same time suppress the savior?

It could have been a soldier. There was no lack of them, some of the very first order like the generals of Sardarabat and their staffs.

They came, it is true, for the most part from the old tsarist army, conventional if ever there was one. Moreover, they did not speak Armenian. These two circumstances made them unsuitable for ambush fighting and would have kept them out of the political scene if they had imagined playing a part in it. There was no Mustafa Kemal or even Pilsudski among them.

The fact remains that Dro, partisan leader, and Daniel Bek Piroumian, general of the regular army, both Armenian speakers, were soldiers of stature and character. They overshadowed the left-wing policies of the National Committee. The government preferred more docile officers to put them in positions and jobs that might have brought their incumbents to business.

That left Antranik, the legendary guerrilla fighter, the leader with a hundred victories, the one whom the bullets were supposed to never reach, the fedai with the inexhaustible capital of trust, the most popular of the Armenians. Assuredly, this one could speak to the Nation over the heads of the robins of Khorhourt. Everything seemed permitted to him but, apparently, he lacked that excess of audacity, that excess of will which propels men of war beyond the Rubicon. He took refuge in his grumbling and to speak like him, “he left the matter in the middle”!

FROM DREAM TO REALITY

A final word.

We have been able to read in Khatisian the story of the long quest of the Armenian leaders to provide the resurgent nation with the protector who would have guaranteed it a sufficient period of stability and security to pull it out of the rut, allow it to heal its wounds, to develop its soil and its subsoil, to raise its economy, to preserve it and put it in a condition to defend itself against the Turk and to prepare it to play its part in the concert of nations.

A mandate from France could ensure this protection. We also thought of Italy. The United States was solicited and President Wilson considered it more or less seriously.

In the absence of a mandatory power, the prolonged maintenance of a British army in the Caucasus would have had the same result.

Everyone flinched. France, under pressure from its bearers of Ottoman securities and its concessionary companies in Asia Minor, preferred to approach the new Turkey. The Italian dockers won over to communism refused to load the transports bound for the Levant. The Congress of the United States, having returned to the Monroe doctrine, wanted to free itself from the Old World. To hold a garrison in corners as lost as Van or Bitlis seemed madness to him. One would have greatly astonished the Americans of that time to predict that they would nevertheless come there and, the circumstances having completely changed, that their grand-nephews would one day have to pay a high price for what they could have had for nothing.

As for the British, they packed up as they did almost everywhere under the pressure of their trade-unions.

The Republic of Armenia was condemned to disappear and the

Chancelleries, having all the same, a bad conscience of their abandonment, imagined being able to regroup the remains of the community in some “home” where they could safeguard their religion, their culture, their language, their traditions, their “identity”.

Where would this home be located? There was talk of some remote state of the U.S.A., but this project was abandoned as soon as it was proposed. There was also talk of Morocco (for the refugees from Mont Moussa), but Lyautey turned a deaf ear.

It then seemed quite simple to the Allies to establish this home in Turkish territory: Cilicia said the British, Eastern Anatolia retorted the French. It was to want to sell the skin of the bear! Ismet Pasha got everyone to agree: “It was you who made endless promises to the Armenians. We didn’t promise anything!” And the matter ended there...

This time all seemed lost. Yet the solution was within reach. Was she just a stopgap? Maybe, but she was worth what she was worth. Once again, it was the circumstances that decided. And then, when we had said everything, this solution was not so irrational. It basically corresponded to the wishes of part of the population. For protector: the Soviet Union; for “home”, the minimum portion, that is to say what remains today of historical Armenia.

Khatisian’s fears did not materialize. He thought that Russian Armenia, even including Kars and Ardahan, would be far too cramped a territory to house and feed just over a million Armenians. Yet the R.S.S. of Armenia, with its 29,800 km² of land often unsuitable for cultivation, now manages to feed more than three million inhabitants. It is true that we have moved from an agricultural economy to a high-tech industrial economy: machine tools and electronic equipment. It is also true that the limit now seems to have been reached. The time may one day come to take Armenian delegates to the Batumi Conference: “I must remind you that all the states started from little and gradually expanded” (p. 57).

The Soviet Republic of Armenia is, not without doubt the “home”, but the “Armenian redoubt”. It is the object of anxious solicitude and pride of all Armenians with its modern and well-designed capital, with its industrial towns, its well-restored monuments, its University, its world-renowned observatory, with also Etchmiadzine, place of pilgrimage for the Diaspora.

Indeed, in spite of official atheism, in spite of its sometimes heavy tutelage to support, the mode ended up tolerating on the territory of the Soviet Union this small “Vatican” which represents the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzine.

A COMPACT ETHNIC SET

For the first time perhaps in its history, Armenia constitutes a state in the European sense of the term, that is to say a compact ethnic group made up of a single people, which contrasts with the multi-national countries, races so numerous in the East. The proportion of nationals is 89.7.

It is the highest in the whole Union: Russia 82.6; Azerbaijan 73.8; Georgia 68.8 (in 1979).

The R.S.S. of Armenia is not a spontaneous or artificial creation of Bolshevism. She is to a large extent the heiress of the Republic from 1918 to 1920. The leaders of the Dachnaktsoutioun conceived great bitterness when they had to hand over. Popular reaction was more nuanced. The change in the form of government was fairly well received according to Simon Vratsian who, for his part, was always fairly favorable to the “Russian solution”. The writer Léon Surmélian, who was in Nor-Bayazid in the early days of Sovietization, was of a different opinion. He let slip this reflection: “What troubled me was the attitude of the population towards this new regime. They were far too satisfied”!...

ALWAYS THE SAME TASK THAT CONTINUES

Ultimately, if there were other periods of independence, none had this formal aspect, with a Prime Minister, laws, an Official Journal, a free press, a parliament, an army (C. More). Yes! These two years will have deeply marked the History of Armenia. Had it lasted only one day, this period would have shown that the independence of Armenia could not be just a dream!

Alexander Khatisian, for his part, would have accommodated himself well to the new state of affairs provided he could remain in Erivan. He had to leave though. He did it with dignity, but he had the right to write: “The power is in the hands of a new team, moved according to other principles and animated by different motives. I can affirm that it is the same task which is still going on, but in another way and by other methods!”...

The translator

PREFACE NOTES

- (1) We know that Karabakh and Nakhitchevan were annexed to Azerbaijan in 1921-23 despite Armenian protests, the most recent of which relating to Karabakh made the “front page” of the newspapers of the Western world in 1988. This is not the place to dwell on current events that are too recent to be properly appreciated. However, there are two reports that give food for thought. The first is that on the lists published each year in Moscow of Soviet mothers of more than ten children, 7/10 of these prolific citizens are Azerbaijani (S. Afanasyan). The second is that in the U.S.S.R., there are four million Armenians against fifty million Muslims of Turkish race (Sylva Gaboudikian).
- (2) Around February 20, 1920, i.e. three weeks before his death, Talaat Pasha was approached in this regard in Berlin and Düsseldorf, during interviews which lasted two days, by Colonel Aubrey Herbert, Member of the British Parliament in unofficial mission (Cf. Margaret Fitzherbert, in “The Man who was Greenmantle”, John Murray, London 1983, p. 232).
- (3) Every medal has its reverse. On a cramped territory which does not even include all of the Armenian provinces of Transcaucasia, we have wanted to sacrifice too much to modern technology (nuclear power plants, synthetic rubber factory, immoderate exploitation of the waters of Lake Sevan). This resulted in ecological disturbances and pollution of water and the atmosphere, already serious in themselves, but which contributed not a little to creating a climate of anxiety and nervousness in population.

Alexander Khatisian

“It was only after the Russian Revolution of 1917 that Alexander Khatisian entered the ranks of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dachnaksoutioun), but long before that date, in opinion and in sympathy, he was with the Party.

Already in 1905, he had wanted to enroll in the Dashnaksoutioun, but he had been dissuaded from doing so by Rostom, by Hamo Ohandjanian and by other comrades, because as a national personality without a party, he could render more service to the Armenian people and to the Party while remaining outside. His life and work justify this opinion.

Alexander Khatisian belonged to a prominent family. His father was a senior state official, author appreciated in Armenian circles and abroad. His mother was a distinguished person of good extraction. She loved Armenian culture and published novels under the pseudonym Marissian. His older brother Constantine was one of the founders of Dashnaktsoutioun. In this family was born Alexandre on February 17, 1874. He spent his childhood and adolescence in a civilized Armenian environment. Having completed his studies at the State High School in Tiflis, he studied medicine: three years at the University of Moscow, then two years at that of Kharkov. He then completed his specialization in Germany and returning to Tiflis, he devoted himself to his profession.

The medical career, however, was too narrow a framework for a person of Khatisian's ability and character. He was an innate public man, of lofty views, adept at handling crowds. An eloquent orator, pursuing motives and working out projects of the most varied interests, gifted with a capacity for work out of the ordinary, fond of demonstrations and popularity, liberal and opportunist in the good sense of the term, he knew how to eliminate the abstract sides of a question to get to the heart of it. He understood the language of the people in all its categories. Ready to serve the Public, it was clear and easy to understand for everyone. With his distinguished countenance, Khatisian was made for political and public tasks. Also, is it not surprising that soon abandoning a medical career that promised to be brilliant, he devoted himself entirely to the public.

Khatisian was elected municipal councilor of Tiflis in 1902. From 1906, he was Deputy Mayor. He was Mayor of Tiflis from 1909 to 1917. From 1914 to 1917, he chaired the Federation of Forty-four Cities of the Caucasus. He was an influential and esteemed figure in government circles, particularly during the time of Viceroy Vorontsov-Tashkov. Along with political tasks, he also actively participated in the various manifestations of inter-Caucasian life. He was appreciated as a popular speaker. He wrote articles for the press. He published various brochures on Public Health, on the management of Secondary Communities, on economic and cultural issues. He translated works of Armenian literature.

In inter-Caucasian or intra-Russian life as in Armenian life, Khatisian played an important and effective role. At the time of the Armenian-Tatar clashes, for example, he helped by all means to the success of the self-defense of the Dashnaktsoutioun. His action to put an end to the fighting was decisive. When the tsarist government began to persecute the dachnaktsagans, Khatisian devoted himself body and soul to alleviating the condition of the prisoners. In general, he was the rectifier of injustices with the Government. He helped

Echmiadzin with his advice and by his interventions during the difficulties she had with the Government. He was a member and then vice-president of the National Office and one of the initiators of the formation of volunteer battalions. As President of the Federation of Caucasian Cities, his role was invaluable in assisting Armenian refugees ruined by the war.

After the collapse of the Tsarist regime, Khatisian's public life took a different course. Tiflis passed into the hands of the Georgians. Transcaucasia clearly separated from Russia and Khatisian put himself body and soul at the service of the Armenian Nation. His old desire to enter the ranks of the Party was now realizable. In 1917-18, he was Mayor of Alexandrapol¹. In the fall of 1917, he took part in the General Assembly of the Nation. After the secession of Transcaucasia, he became a member of the Seim and Minister of Finance designated by the Dashnaksoutioun. In February 1918 in Trebizond and in May in Batumi, he was a member of the Peace Conferences. After the proclamation of the independence of Armenia, he signed with Katchaznoui the Armenian-Turkish peace treaty. Then he was sent to Constantinople in the company of Aharonian to conclude a new treaty.

After the General Armistice, Khatisian returned to Armenia where he received the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. From February 1919 to May 1920, he was Prime Minister. During the summer of 1920, the Government sent him abroad to negotiate the Loan and organize the "Gold Fund". He went to Constantinople, Egypt, France, England, Belgium, Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia. It aroused great enthusiasm everywhere among the Armenian colonies. He returned to Erivan at the time of the war and was commissioned to sign the Treaty of Alexandrapol on December 2, 1920.

After the sovietization of Armenia, Khatisian moved to Paris. He continued his political work as a member of the Delegation of the Armenian Republic, then as Vice-President and finally as President, representing and defending Armenian interests with Governments and the League of Nations. In the years of proscription, he worked for the Armenian press and he published this quality work: "The Emergence and Development of the Armenian Republic".

It is impossible, in a short article, to review completely the numerous and fruitful works of Khatisian. Until his death, he remained on the heights where his vocation had taken him and he served the Armenian people with selfless devotion. He had serious and painful moments during the last war, when he had to defend the Armenians of Europe exposed to danger. And the retribution was bitter. The people he had rescued from the claws of tyranny cruelly condemned him to prison and suffering. Justice was not long in triumphing, but the torments of prison had permanently undermined his already weakened

constitution. He died in Paris on March 10, 1945, leaving an indelible memory in the history of the Armenian Republic.

Simon Vratsyan”

Memorial of the F.R.A.

- (1) Alexandrapol - The city of Gümrü (Koumayri of Armenian Antiquity), now Leninakan, bore the name of Alexandrapol from 1837 to 1924, named after Empress Alexandra, wife of Nicolas 1st. We have retained this spelling in accordance with the etymology and which is the one used by Russian and Armenian authors. It should nevertheless be noted that Western geographers, historians, lexicographers, as well as Tsarist diplomats, when they write in French, invariably use the spelling Alexandropol.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST ARMENIAN EDITION

This book was first published in the magazine “Haïrenik”. Of course, it is not about History, but about materials to be used for History, given in the form of memories. And it is clear that the principal events and the men who have found their way into these pages are those with whom I have been involved or with whom I have come into contact.

Likewise, I am solely responsible for the opinions expressed here.

Nor should it be found extraordinary if, by force of circumstance or by accident, such probative arguments have not been recorded. My role was limited to making my memories of a man public in writing while evoking concomitant events. To do more would have been a Historian’s business.

Alexander Khatisian

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND ARMENIAN EDITION

We must praise the determination to republish this work which deals with one of the most interesting and luminous periods of our contemporary history.

Rather than a historical treatise, it is a collection of memories of one of the most outstanding personalities of the last period of our history and probably the most realistic of our political heads.

A statesman trained under the administration of the Tsars, A. Khatisian gives in this writing the measure of his seriousness in politics, his realism and his sincerity.

We have also attached in the form of an addendum to this edition the very interesting aide-mémoires written day by day by the author during the Lausanne Conference.

A most interesting and luminous period, we wrote. And yet, as we know, it was also a period of famine, epidemics, border disputes, internal struggles, war.

Emerging from a long numbness, the Armenian people finally had their government. This moment when the ideas of Nation and State were restored must be considered by us and for us as a turning point.

The creation of the State by the prodigious way of the battlefields of Sardarapat followed by the consolidation of the national feeling constitutes an important and decisive event and - who can know it? - when in the future Clio will want to draw up the balance sheet of the 20th century despite the immeasurable damage caused by the massacres, the gain to be brought to the credit of our people will perhaps be this construction of an Armenian State.

Our Republic today in some of its most remarkable aspects draws itself from the source of Independent Armenia.

Eh yes! Independent Armenia. First recognized de facto by the Allies, it received de jure recognition from the Treaty of Sevres, and if we emphasize “independence”, this is not the effect of national sentimentality misplaced and chauvinistic

The notion of Sovereign State was clearly defined by Bodin. Europe adopted it in the 17th century. International Law, which is nothing other than the definition and codification of the texts constituting the custom of the countries of Europe, reserves an important place for political independence. It makes it the sine qua non for the admission of a people into the Concert of Nations.

We know today that to be a legal person under International Law, that is to say to have rights and duties based on the Law, political independence is essential.

And above all, given the circumstances which have more than doubled the number of independent States on the surface of the planet in recent years, given

the fact that many of these countries which have become independent are far from having reached the degree of maturity of the Armenian people, it is not possible to ask the latter to discard the idea of independence. And if the international order has given such an important place to the notion of independence, if the peoples have fought so many battles to conquer it, it is because, for these peoples, taking their destiny into their own hands is an instinctive need.

It is about peoples as well as individuals. For both, freedom of expression is a historical and social necessity. The individual, in the highest philosophical sense of the term, has in addition to his personal equation another dimension which, in order to express himself, needs the participation of the community. And the collective expression of the individual is the Nation.

The unfortunate conditions of the moment, however, put an end to our young Independent Republic after two and a half years of existence.

The annihilation of Turkish Armenia, the return of Russia to the Caucasus, the indifference of Europe and America made the loss of our independence inevitable. And looking back on our history, we can perhaps say to ourselves that, in anticipation of the inevitable fate, we should have dealt earlier with our northern neighbor and thus avoided the Armenian-Turkish war from September to December 1920, with the loss of a significant part of Russian Armenia.

Or perhaps we can still say that it was appropriate to set aside any timorous policy, to recognize the Kemalian force, to come to an agreement with it on borders much more modest than the borders promised by Wilson.

All of this is easy to say today, but was it necessary to ask those responsible for our policy to foresee the improbable, the illogical, the unreal? Let us go back to the period from 1918 to 1920. What, then, was plausible in politics? Russia had withdrawn from the lists, vanquished, devoured by her intestine civil wars. The Ottoman Empire had succumbed to the power of the Allies and in the first half of 1920 Constantinople was occupied by the Allies, the area stretching from Smyrna to Afion-Karahissar by the Greeks, Adalia by the Italians and the Cilicia by the French. Armenia, the little ally, had shed so much blood for the Allies and received such fine promises! The Armenian cause was just, helping it to triumph was a duty of conscience for civilized humanity. We had friends everywhere. From Socialist leaders to Heads of Government, all lavished proclamations in our favour. Before the War as after the War, the Allies had said it clearly and clearly: the emancipation of Armenia was one of their fundamental objectives. But Turkey was defeated. Was it so difficult for the victorious and omnipotent Allies to dictate their will to him? The declarations

of the Allies took shape in San-Remo and finally, on August 10, 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed.

Seen through the spectacles we were wearing that day, was it so grossly deceiving ourselves to tie our fate to the fate of the Allies?

However, events took a different course. Taking advantage of the antagonisms between the Allies and benefiting from the help of Red Russia, the defeated Turkey got back on its feet. It smuggled the Armenian Question in the face of the Allies with the help of Moscow, which was interested in the International Revolution far beyond the salvation of the Armenians. And independent Armenia came to an end with the Sovietization of what remained of its territory.

Two main causes influenced the course of events: First, the armistice concluded at Mudros on October 31, 1918 between the English admiral and the Ottoman Empire was fatal to the Armenian people. The clauses of this armistice contained no provision for the disarmament of the Turkish forces or the occupation of the Armenian provinces. Moreover, the ridiculous delay in concluding the peace treaty with Turkey allowed this power to take advantage of the differences of opinion and disputes between the Allies. The more time passed and the more the fatigue resulting from the war, the internal economic and social crises weighed on the allied countries. Wilson, the “friend of the Armenians”, he too does not have a small responsibility with the Treaty that he dragged out, with his mandate on Armenia, with the hopes that the latter aroused.

And if in 1918 or 1919 the Allies could impose any condition on Turkey, it was not the same in 1923 in Lausanne. And then, let’s face it, the Allies had no fundamental interests in Armenia. The refusal of the mandate on Armenia by the American Congress is, in this respect, significant.

The Treaty of Lausanne does not say a word about the Armenian Question. The last international act by which a regulation of the latter was arranged was the Treaty of Sèvres. This treaty, it is true, was not ratified by the signatory States. It is therefore without legal value. But it is the last recognition of our cause signed by the international community and the last formulation of fair arbitration. The Treaty of Alexandrapol signed after it (December 2, 1920) and the Treaty of Kars (October 13, 1921) are treaties imposed by Turkey on the Armenian Republic.

Lausanne did not bring a solution to the Armenian Question. It was classified among the cases that could not be settled. Thus, from the point of

view of the Armenian Question, Lausanne has not replaced Sèvres which remains the only attempt to resolve this Question, having received the support of the international community.

On this, a lot of water has flowed under the bridges. To begin with, the Independent Soviet Republic was united with the Transcaucasian Federation and through this, it entered the Soviet Union to then be directly integrated by the Stalinist Constitution (1936).

Today, the Soviet Republic of Armenia does not have a legal personality: it cannot be part of international organizations, it does not maintain representation in foreign countries, it cannot sign a treaty in its name. , she cannot plead before the International Court of The Hague, etc. In other words, according to the definitions of International Law, it is not a State and it cannot have under this Law either authority or responsibility. The juridical person of Soviet Armenia is an integral part of the Soviet juridical person and it can manifest itself on the international scene only through the intermediary of the latter.

This situation, of course, makes it particularly difficult for the Republic of Armenia to continue defending our Cause.

This is why the Diaspora must organize itself to plead our lawsuit effectively. The steps taken in San Francisco and elsewhere are diffuse efforts in this direction. The fiftieth anniversary of the Genocide was an opportunity to convince us a little more of this necessity. And, from all sides, we were able to hear declarations useful for the disclosure of our Cause. However, it would be beneficial to act henceforth in a more rational and consistent manner and to combine our efforts.

An action like this involves significant material resources. It is normally the responsibility of government-type bodies. All of the Armenian communities could apply to it.

Unfortunately, nothing so far has been able to be done in this direction. In the Armenian Diaspora, as soon as we talk about resolving the Armenian Question, misunderstandings arise. We would understand, however, with a little realism, how futile it is to discuss the practical modalities of a solution whose deadline is still so far away.

Above all, the Armenian dispersal must devote itself to making our Cause known abroad as well as to ourselves. This amounts to denouncing in all its aspects (legal, social, cultural) the serious denial of justice from which we have suffered, and to demand reparation.

As for the form that this reparation should take, the future will provide for it. We'll talk about that when the time comes. Until then, however, we have an immense task ahead of us. For example, it would be appropriate to republish all the foreign literature relating to the Genocide. It is either exhausted, or has been collected by various means to be destroyed. It would be useful to publish new studies to present the historical and legal aspects of the Armenian Question. We need to avoid past mistakes. In other words, we must not seek to arouse pity by describing the sufferings of our people. Pity establishes a relationship of superior to inferior between the one who feels it and the one who inspires it and that is worth nothing. International society is, it must unfortunately be admitted, governed by force and by the reciprocity of interests. These interests are defended by force. When material force is lacking, what comes closest to it is the force of law and international public opinion. Much remains to be done in both directions.

It is necessary, as we have also said, to make known all aspects of our Cause to our people. This is the primordial condition. Anyone making a claim must first be persuaded of the justice of his case and of the possibility of finding a solution.

All of this requires realistic and specialized action, without utopianism or vain popular exaltation.

There remains the problem of the Diaspora. Whatever the situation in Armenia may be, the Diaspora is now here to stay. If she wants to resist, she must organize herself. And in organizing, it is essential to modernize and adapt to current conditions many petrified aspects of our existence.

Throughout history, it is during their decline that we see people clinging to form, when substance is lacking.

It is time for the Diaspora to have a legitimate mode of expression and not shrink back, if necessary, from changing its form to give it new content. Such is the primary characteristic of a living people.

It is still necessary to organize the Diaspora from the economic point of view. Our political leadership has generally been devoid of economic thinking.

In order to accomplish these tasks successfully, spiritual unity is indispensable not only within the Diaspora, but also between the latter and the Motherland. The essential characteristic of the individuals forming the Nation must be the communion of thought on the fundamental questions which concern them.

To achieve this spiritual unity, our history of the last hundred years must come first. That is to say that we must undertake the scientific and critical study of our recent past.

Unfortunately, the differences of opinion have made a veritable mess of historical interpretations. In places, they have even distorted the facts. Only rigorous knowledge of the past will enable us to plan the future with the whole of the Nation and in full understanding of things.

There are, let's face it, comforting clues in this regard. At the beginning, one would have thought that the Armenian Republic and Soviet Armenia were two different worlds, separated from each other and without reciprocal knowledge. The life of the dispersed Armenians was badly affected. Now the fog is dissipating, faces are clearing up, events are becoming clearer. History is objective about Sardarapat and other facts. We must now write the authentic history of this fifty-year-old period.

To explain History, certainly the Historian has the right to do so. But the events and figures of History must be represented without undergoing distortion. The truth must be recognized.

The Cultural Society "HAMASKAÏNE" will, we hope, have made its contribution to the restoration of historical truth by republishing this book. At the very least, it will have provided the materials to do so.

Chavarch Toriguian

Beirut, November 20, 1968



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