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ОСВЕЩЕНИЕ ТУРЕЦКО-АРМЯНСКОЙ ВОЙНЫ 1920 Г. В АРМЯНСКОЙ ПРЕССЕ

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Аннотация. Исследуется освещение турецко-армянской войны 1920 г. в армянской прессе. На основе анализа публикаций в газетах «Арадж» (Ереван), «Мшак» (Тифлис), «Арев» (Александрия) и «Айреник» (Бостон) за август 1920 г. – февраль 1921 г. изучается позиция армянских общественно-политических кругов по поводу продолжающегося военного конфликта между Турцией и Арменией, а также динамика развития их взаимоотношений. Отмечается, что армянская политическая элита переоценила собственные силы и недооценила возможности кемалистской Турции, что значительно повлияло на политические решения. Поддержка Турции Советской Россией и бездействие западных союзников Армении также широко обсуждались в армянской прессе того времени. Подчеркивается мысль о том, что, с одной стороны, оппозиционная пресса обвиняла в сложившейся ситуации правительство Республики Армения, а с другой стороны, периодика Армянской революционной федерации «Дашнакцутюн» пыталась показать, что решающим фактором окончания противостояния являются внешние силы и что поражение Армении в войне фактически неизбежно. С большим опозданием получала информацию пресса армянской диаспоры, что приводило к распространению устаревших и часто вымышленных сведений. Одним из наиболее ярких примеров в данном контексте является сообщение об отвоевании армянами г. Карса. Делается вывод о том, что как правительство Республики Армения, так и оппозиционные силы не основывали свои политические расчеты на адекватной оценке региональной и международной ситуации и прогнозировали события, принимая желаемое за действительное. Именно по этой причине катастрофические последствия войны имели эффект холодного душа для армянского общества.

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АСВЯТЛЕННЕ ТУРЭЦКА-АРМЯНСКАЙ ВАЙНЫ 1920 Г. У АРМЯНСКАЙ ПРЭСЕ

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Анотацыя. Даследуецца асвятленне турэцка-армянскай вайны 1920 г. у армянскай прэсе. На аснове аналізу публікацый у газетах «Арадж» (Ерэван), «Мшак» (Тыфліс), «Арэў» (Александрыя) і «Айрэнік» (Бостан) за жнівень 1920 г. – люты 1921 г. вывучаецца пазіцыя армянскіх грамадска-палітычных колаў наконт ваеннага канфлікту паміж Турцыяй і Арменияй, а таксама дынаміка развіцця іх узаемаадносін. Адзначаецца, што армянская палітычная эліта пераацаніла ўласныя сілы і недаацаніла магчымасці кемалісцкай Турцыі, што значна паўплывала на палітычныя рашэнні. Падтрымка Турцыі Савецкай Расіяй і бяздзейнасць заходніх саюзнікаў Арменіі таксама шырока абмяркоўваліся ў армянскай прэсе таго часу. Падкрэсліваецца думка аб тым, што, з аднаго боку, апазіцыйная прэса абвінавачвала ў існуючай сітуацыі ўрад Рэспублікі Армения, а з другога боку, перыёдыка Армянскай рэвалюцыйнай федэрацыі «Дашнакцэцун» спрабавала паказаць, што вырашальным фактарам заканчэння супрацьстаяння з'яўляюцца знешнія сілы і што паражэнне Арменіі ў вайне фактычна непазбежна. З вялікім спаўняеннем атрымлівала інфармацыю прэса армянскай дыяспары, што прыводзіла да распаўсюджвання састарэлых і часта выдуманых звестак. Адным з найбольш яркіх прыкладаў у дадзеным кантэксце з'яўляецца паведамленне аб тым, што армяне адваявалі г. Карс. Робіцца выснова аб тым, што як урад Рэспублікі Армения, так і апазіцыйныя сілы не засноўвалі свае палітычныя разлікі на адэкватнай ацэнцы рэгіянальнай і міжнароднай сітуацыі і прагназавалі падзеі, прымаючы жаданае за сапраўднае. Менавіта па гэтай прычыне катастрофічныя наступствы вайны мелі эфект халоднага душа для армянскага грамадства.

Ключавыя словы: Сеўрскі дагавор; Першая Рэспубліка Армения; Турцыя; Савецкая Расія; турэцка-расійскія адносіны; рух кемалістаў.

Падзяка. Даследаванне выканана пры фінансавай падтрымцы Камітэта па вышэйшай адукацыі і навуцы Рэспублікі Армения ў рамках навуковага праекта 21Т-6А269 «Адлюстраванне турэцка-армянскай вайны 1920 г. у армянскай прэсе 1920–1940 гг.» і дзяржаўнай праграмы навуковых даследаванняў «Грамадства і гуманітарная бяспека беларускай дзяржавы» Рэспублікі Беларусь у рамках навукова-даследчай работы «Савецкае мінулае ў кантэксце сучаснай гістарычнай палітыкі Рэспублікі Беларусь» (№ дзярж. рэгістрацыі 1.06.14).

REPORTING OF THE 1920 TURKISH-ARMENIAN WAR IN THE ARMENIAN PRESS

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Abstract. The article studies the reporting of the events of 1920 Turkish-Armenian War in Armenian press. The corresponding analysis of the «Yaraj» (Yerevan), «Mshak» (Tiflis), «Arev» (Alexandria) and «Hayrenik» (Boston) newspaper publications for August 1920 – February 1921 allows us to find out position of Armenian socio-political circles regarding possible developments of relations and ongoing military conflict between Turkey and Armenia. It shows that Armenian political elites overestimated their own capacities and underestimated the ones of the Kemalist Turkey, and it greatly influenced the former political decisions. The support of Turkey by Soviet Russia and the inactivity of Western allies of Armenia was also widely discussed in that time Armenian press. On the one hand, the opposition press blamed the government of the Republic of Armenia for that situation, on the other hand, the periodicals of the Armenian revolutionary federation «Dashnaktsutyun» tried to show that external factors had played their decisive role, and that the defeat in the war had been inevitable. The Ar-

menian diaspora press mostly received information with a major delay: outdated and often untrue news circulated for a long time. One of the most memorable examples was the news about the recapture of the city of Kars by the Armenians. The study of the Armenian press before the war shows that both the government of the Republic of Armenia and the main opposition forces did not found their political calculations on adequate assessments of the regional and international situation and thus made their attempts to predict the events, and they accepted their desires instead of reality. It was for this reason that the disastrous consequences of the war had an effect of a cold shower for the Armenian community.

Keywords: Treaty of Sevres; First Republic of Armenia; Turkey; Soviet Russia; Turkish-Russian relations; Kemalist movement.

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Introduction

Turkish-Armenian relations obtained fundamental significance during the entire period of existence of the first republic of Armenia (28 May 1918 – December 1920). It was the Ottoman Empire, that became the first state to recognise Armenia's independence with the Batumi Treaty of 4 June 1918. However, both the provisions of the treaty and the previous development of Turkish-Armenian relations, including the Armenian genocide [1], could not contribute to the formation of equal and sovereign relations between the two states. Added to that, it was a fact that starting from that time until the Armistice of Mudros on 30 October 1918 Turkey became the dominant state in the region. Taking advantage of the situation in Russia, it set out to create a balance of forces in the South Caucasus that fundamentally contradicted the aspirations of the Republic of Armenia for the sovereignty and sustainability of the state. However, as Russia, the former main centre of power in the region, was absent, the Armenian leadership had no other option but to recognise its own country as the leader of the region and had to accept that situation and the entire reality.

The situation changed a lot after the Armistice of Mudros. The Ottoman Empire was defeated and forced to withdraw its troops from the Turkish-Russian borders as of 1914. As for other great powers, Great Britain occupied the dominant position in the region. That was a period when the world's most important political agenda was being shaped at the 1919 Paris peace conference. The hopes of Armenians were directly related to that peace conference. That was reflected in the fact that they sent two delegations to participate in that conference instead of one. One of them represented the Republic of Armenia under the leadership of A. Aharonyan, and the other was headed by a prominent Egyptian-Armenian figure, P. N. Pasha (his father, N. Nubaryan, had been the first Prime Minister of Egypt), who spoke on behalf of Western Armenians.

Hundreds of thousands of Armenians, within the armies of the Russian Empire, participated in the war against the Ottoman Empire. In addition, about 10 thsd volunteers joined them. Armenians diaspora formed a volunteer legion within the French army, known as Eastern and then

as Armenian. Both the Armenian political circles and the Entente states considered the Armenians as allies who had suffered enormous losses during the I World War, so they should receive compensation, and the peace conference should meet their requests. It was obvious that there should be an independent Armenian state in the new world, which should include the Armenian vilayets (provinces) that had been parts of the Ottoman Empire, to which Russian Armenia should also join (perhaps Cilicia would also be included in that state).

Regarding the later events, those expectations did not allow Armenian politicians to correctly assess the decisive changes that took place in the region, and they became of fatal importance for the Republic of Armenia. In particular, the Milli movement led by M. K. Ataturk was extremely important, as it was doing everything to prevent the partition of Turkey as much as possible and exclude the transfer of the Western Armenian provinces to the Republic of Armenia. Besides, close cooperation between M. K. Ataturk and the Bolshevik leadership of Russia was soon established, which had also been directed against Armenia. In September 1920 200 kilograms of gold, sent as aid from Russia, arrived in Erzurum. On 20 September 1920 M. K. Ataturk signed the order to attack Armenia. The attack began on 28 September 1920 [2, p. 75–76].

At the same time, none of the Western allies of Armenia took any practical steps to support the liberation of Western Armenia, the disarmament of Turkish troops there, or the organisation of the repatriation of Armenians. Despite hundreds, perhaps thousands, of corresponding documents circulated in the diplomatic offices of the Entente states, that issue remained unresolved.

Armenia accepted the Treaty of Sevres as the only option for demarcation of the Turkish-Armenian border, and Ataturk's government did not recognise it absolutely. The war became inevitable. Being convinced that the Western countries would not provide any practical assistance to Armenia and receiving a green light from Russia, Turkish troops invaded Armenia at the end of September 1920¹.

¹The topic of the Turkish-Armenian War is discussed in detail in the reports [3–7]. Turkish historians consider the issue mainly within the framework of the war for independence led by M. K. Ataturk [8].

Research methodology

The authors followed the principles of historicity, impartiality, and comprehensiveness. The study used the historical-comparative method, as well as the content analysis of newspaper articles. It was possible to achieve the objectives of the research through the above-mentioned methodology and the involvement of factual materials.

Within the framework of this article, we attempted to analyse not the very military operations and the course and consequences of the war, but their reflection in the Armenian press of that historical period. Its discussions allow a more complete understanding of the spirit of the time the expectations of society and political circles, the way of thinking, and the assessment of those events. It is interesting to evaluate the sources of information, and misinformation, as well as the focus on various actors.

Some of the most important Armenian newspapers of the time, like «Yaraj» (Yerevan), «Mshak» (Tiflis), «Arev» (Alexandria), and «Hayrenik» (Boston), published in the period of August 1920 to February 1921, have also been studied by us. All the materials were subject to content analysis.

«Yaraj» is a daily Yerevan newspaper was published in 1919–1920. It was the press organ of the Bureau of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation «Dashnaktsutyun» (hereinafter – ARF «Dashnaktsutyun»). Its editors were V. Na-

vasardyan, S. Vratsyan, and A. Chilingaryan (R. Darbinyan) [9, p. 34]. «Mshak» (Tiflis) was one of the most important periodicals of the late 19th and 20th centuries in the Eastern Armenian milieu, so its role in social and political life became quite significant. Although Tiflis was located outside the Republic of Armenia, the newspaper's information formed largely local rather than foreign discourse.

Egypt and the USA hosted some of the most important communities of the Armenian diaspora, witnessing huge fundamental transformations as a result of the Armenian genocide which led to the forming of a new system. The Armenian community in Egypt was one of the main centres of the diaspora in the 1920–30s. At the same time, Boston² was one of the centres of the Armenian community in the USA as well as home to one of the largest Armenian communities abroad, and the «Hayrenik» daily had become one of the most influential Armenian periodicals for decades.

From a political point of view, «Yaraj» and «Hayrenik» were the ruling ARF «Dashnaktsutyun» dailies in the Republic of Armenia, «Mshak» was neutral, and «Arev» expressed the views of the Ramkavar (Democratic Liberal) Party, the biggest force opposing the ARF «Dashnaktsutyun» in the Armenian milieu at the time, with the actual leader in the person of the latter, P. N. Nubar.

The eve of the war

The excitement caused by the Treaty of Sevres dazzled the eyes of Armenian politicians observing the events that were taking place in the region. It was reflected in the criticism in the Armenian press of the limited size of the territories to be ceased to Armenia according to the treaty. For example, the first article in «Arev» on 13 August 1920, notifying about the Treaty of Sevres, said that unlike Greeks, Armenians should not be too enthusiastic: first, because they paid a very high price for what they had received. Then, an important part of it went to Armenia just by agreement, and Armenians would need new sacrifices to finally take over those territories. There was a hope that the Greeks would go deeper into Anatolia, towards Ankara and Sivas. It also noted that the great dream of centuries had come true: countless victims were not in vain. Now the question of Cilicia remained the only one³.

On the other side of the ocean, the news of the signing of the long-awaited treaty reached the pages of Boston's «Hayrenik» two days later. They cited A. Aharonyan, the head of the Armenia delegation, who had signed the treaty: «For the sake of the Republic of Armenia, I signed the peace treaty with Turkey, which established the independence of the United Armenia. In this decisive

hour, which opens a new era of freedom and progress for the Armenian nation, we recall with emotion the memory of all those who fell for the sake of the Motherland»⁴ (hereinafter our translation. – *E. M., V. M., M. G., H. M., T. Gh.*).

That time, the trend to overestimate the strength of the Armenian army and underestimate the Turkish forces was evident. Back on 5 August 1920 «Hayrenik» published an excerpt from Al. Khatisyan's interview, given by him to the newspaper «Chakatamart» (Constantinople): «One cannot remain neutral, having seen our army. For two whole years, it was half-naked and half-hungry. All of them are full of love for the motherland and of their belief in victory. And tomorrow you will see what the Armenian army is worth»⁵. H. Kajaznuni, the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, spoke in the same spirit during a meeting with about 400 representatives of the Armenian community in New York on 8 August 1920: «Fight! Endless fight! We are the victorious ones; in this war, victorious is the one who fights for a long time. We will fight until our final victory. I have already sacrificed my two young children; there is the third one; he is also serving in the Armenian army now; he must march and fight, as that is everyone's duty»⁶.

²Los Angeles became the most important centre for American Armenians only in the second half of the 20th century.

³The signing of the Turkish Pact // *Arev*. 1920. 13 Aug. P. 1 (in Armen.).

⁴Aharonyan signs the Armenian-Turkish treaty on behalf of the Republic of Armenia // *Hayrenik*. 1920. 15 Aug. P. 1 (in Armen.).

⁵Armenia and its neighbours. The motherland needs all its children: the army relies on us // *Ibid*. 5 Aug. P. 2 (in Armen.).

⁶A celebration in honor of the first Prime Minister of Armenia, Hovhannes Kajaznuni, and His Holiness Catholicos Khoren // *Ibid*. 17 Aug. P. 2 (in Armen.).

A. Aharonyan's statement, published on the eve of the war, sounds incredibly unrealistic from the distance of a century: «As I said, it depends on the wisdom of the Turkish leaders to avoid all the serious consequences that could be devastating for them by implementing the pact. <...> Contrary to the unspeakable atrocities that the Turks committed against the innocent Ar-

menian people, I believe that if the Turks will sincerely try to make us forget the injustices committed by them in a good neighbourly manner, the Armenian people will pursue fair and honest work, daily earnings. Thus, we will slowly accept that neighbourhood and should not think to respond to atrocities with blood»⁷.

The course of the war

The following was what «Yaraj» wrote about the start of the war: «On the night of 28 September, the Turks made a strong attack on the front of Peneak and Bardus. Our troops showed strong resistance and fortified themselves on the heights of Verishen. On the same day, 28 September, large Turkish forces launched an attack on Karaorgan, from where our troops withdrew to the Soghanlukh mountain range. Enemy forces were also seen in the Karakurt region. It has become clear that the immediate goal of the enemy is to cut the Sarighamish – Kars railway and deprive our troops and people of the Sarighamish and Kaghzvan regions of freedom»⁸. It is clear from the government message that after the start of large-scale operations, the Armenian command deported the population of Sarighamish and Kaghzvan in the night of 29 September, which, according to the statement, was done «in order to avoid casualties and to capture more convenient positions»⁹.

If «Yaraj» started publishing news about the war on 30 September, «Arev» of Alexandria reported the first news about it on 8 October¹⁰ and «Hayrenik» – on 10 October: «Kazim Karabekir Pasha marches through Armenia in the direction of Olti. The Armenian army is bravely resisting»¹¹.

From the beginning to the end of the war, the headline «To the Battlefield» appeared on the front page of «Yaraj». On the cover of the newspaper and in different sections of other pages, one can see various appeals aimed at confronting both external and internal enemies. Thus, since the 30 September issue on, we see the following appeals: «Our age-old enemy has risen again. He is knocking at our doors with red flags. His goal is to subdue Armenia and join the Bolsheviks», «Internal traitors are also waiting for them to come», «Get ready, Armenian people, the Turkish threat is coming», «Who is not with us... is our enemy», «Death to the internal foes, death to the enemy», «Let us strengthen the ranks, strengthen the front», «We suppressed the Bolshevik riots. We will defeat the bloody Turk»¹².

Hopes to liberate Western Armenia as a result of ongoing battles testify to an unrealistic assessment of the situation at the beginning of the war: «It is necessary to get thoroughly ready not only to expel our enemy out of our western borders, but also to strike him with such a final blow that he will no longer be able to resist us in Western Armenia at all. The battles in the direction of Sarighamish, Olti, and Igdir should be battles for Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis. According to that high goal, there should also be the momentum and magnitude of the blow to be stricken by us»¹³.

Newspapers represent the enthusiasm with which the population of Armenia voluntarily went to the front. For example, «Arev» wrote that people were going to Kars on foot, there were no men left on the streets, and everyone was going to join our army¹⁴.

Gradually, that enthusiasm changed to more sober assessments. Speaking about the failure of the offensive operations of the Armenian forces in the direction of Sarighamish and Merdenek on 14 October, the article (sent from Kars) concluded: «First, we saw that the enemy was not to be despised, so we had no right to look at him with too much self-confidence, he is strong enough, experienced, careful, and balanced in what he is doing»¹⁵.

In fact, for the first time since the beginning of the war, on the pages of «Yaraj» we see that the enemy was not underestimated, and calls appear for caution in the next operations, which had been absent in the previous weeks.

T. Pashalyan called on in his article at «Hayrenik» neither to worry too much about failures, nor to be too excited about positive news. He interpreted the retreat of the Armenian troops as a temporary tactical operation: «The reported Armenian retreat, then, was nothing but a temporary movement to stronger and unconquerable places»¹⁶.

On 10 November, in «Arev» we come across the analysis of one and a half months of the ongoing war, where it said that the Turks had achieved their first successes

⁷Aharonyan's statements // Hayrenik. 1920. 21 Sept. P. 1 (in Armen.).

⁸Government message (on September 30). To the citizens of Armenia // Yaraj. 1920. 1 Oct. P. 1 (in Armen.).

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰The new victory of the Armenian army // Arev. 1920. 8 Oct. P. 3 (in Armen.).

¹¹Kazim Karabekir attacks Armenia and sees the heroic resistance of the Armenian army (private telegram) // Hayrenik. 1920. 10 Oct. P. 3 (in Armen.).

¹²Yaraj. 1920. 9 Sept. P. 1 (in Armen.).

¹³Editorial. Towards a decisive blow, towards the final victory // Yaraj. 1920. 10 Oct. P. 2 (in Armen.).

¹⁴Enthusiasm in Armenia // Arev. 1920. 8 Oct. P. 2 (in Armen.).

¹⁵The value of the attempted attack on October 14 // Yaraj. 1920. 23 Oct. P. 2 (in Armen.).

¹⁶Pashlyan T. Military status, balance of forces, assumptions, and probabilities // Hayrenik. 1920. 19 Oct. P. 1 (in Armen.).

without facing any serious resistance. The first real battles took place in front of Kars and near Igdir, in which the Armenian army was victorious. After that, the Armenian army, using the time to prepare, gathering volunteers according to the latest telegrams, defeated the Turks near Sarighamish and Igdir, and the Armenians recaptured those cities¹⁷.

«Yaraj» also criticises Armenia's former allies: «...big and small allies have left the Armenians, their little ally, in the struggle of life and death in front of the enemies and are watching with demonic coldness and indifference how we are being killed, how the little Armenian people are slowly being annihilated»¹⁸. Particularly, France and Italy came under criticism: «While the Turkish troops, disregarding the Treaty of Sevres, advance on Armenia, the two representatives of European diplomacy – France and Italy – are trying to provide moral and material progress to the Turkish thugs who have been fighting alongside Germany for four years»¹⁹.

On 14 November, «Hayrenik» published the news of the fall of Kars, which it got from Paris on the previous day: «After a 4-day fierce battle, Kars was captured by the Turks on 31 October, who had received a significant number of auxiliary forces. Our troops have retreated to Alexandropol with fight»²⁰.

On 22 November, we again came across an article criticising the allies, in which it was mentioned that the defeat of Armenia in the war would be dishonorable for the allies²¹.

We find news about a forced cease-fire agreement with the Turks in the article published on 24 November, but dated 7 November. It said: «After the fall of Kars, under constant pressure from the enemy, our troops were forced to retreat step by step to Alexandropol. Yesterday, on 6 November, the enemy had already approached Alexandropol and threatened the city.

Taking into consideration the threat to the population on the one hand, on the other hand, the desire ex-

pressed by us, as well as by the Turkish government, to start negotiations in order to conclude the reconciliation agreement, the Armenian government turned to their government, offering to start negotiations. The place and time will be decided soon»²².

The resumption of hostilities after the cease-fire violation gave Armenians hope that the situation would change. The press made comparisons with the heroic battles of May 1918: «Let all our thoughts go back to the decisive battle of Sardarapat, where our today's heroes laid the foundation of Armenia's political and national independence with such great courage in May 1918»²³. It continues: «For those who have deep conviction and faith in the endurance of the Armenian race, all these events are just nothing»²⁴.

Faked news also appeared in the press. In particular, there were rumors that the Armenians had recaptured Kars²⁵.

It is interesting that if at the beginning of the war the strength of the Turkish troops was underestimated, then by the end of the war, the opposite attitude was the reason for the failures. A. Rshtuni wrote in Boston's ARF «Dashnaksutyun» organ: «Armenia, with its valiant army, unintentionally entered into a war against forces ten times bigger than itself»²⁶.

In addition to the notes on intermittent cease-fires, small border escalations, and troop movements, «Yaraj» also referred to the negotiations that had begun in Alexandropol in the last days of the war. However, due to the lack of true information, the newspaper was unable to provide details, but only tried to understand the situation and made predictions with some analyses. Information about the negotiations appeared on the pages of «Hayrenik» on 1 December²⁷.

Information about the signing of the Alexandropol Treaty was published in «Hayrenik» on 11 December²⁸. «Arev» mentioned the Alexandropol Treaty on 13 December²⁹ and its articles reviewed it only on 16 January³⁰.

About Turkish-Russian cooperation

Even on the eve of the war, there were reports of Turkish-Russian cooperation: «In the middle of this month, the Turkish troops, wanting to occupy the coal mines, appeared in the direction of the Olti region with

superior forces, forcing our military units to retreat. At the same time, a Soviet Russian military unit, which was located on the north-eastern border of the Ghazakh region, appeared and pushed back the Armenian military

¹⁷The Armenian front // Arev. 1920. 10 Novemb. P. 2 (in Armen.).

¹⁸Drsetsi. We and our allies // Yaraj. 1920. 17 Oct. P. 1 (in Armen.).

¹⁹Editorial. The war of the Armenian people and European diplomacy I // Hayrenik. 1920. 17 Oct. P. 2 (in Armen.).

²⁰Armistice conditions (private telegram) // Ibid. 14 Novemb. P. 1 (in Armen.).

²¹The pathetic condition of Armenia // Arev. 1920. 22 Novemb. P. 3 (in Armen.).

²²From the report of the Armenian government, how the Armistice was concluded // Ibid. 1920. 24 Novemb. P. 2 (in Armen.).

²³To Sardarapat // Hayrenik. 1920. 21 Novemb. P. 2 (in Armen.).

²⁴Let us keep our hearts strong // Ibid. 25 Novemb. P. 1 (in Armen.).

²⁵Armenian-Turkish War // Arev. 1920. 26 Novemb. P. 3 (in Armen.); The Turks ask for a cease-fire as the Armenian forces recaptured Kars (private telegram) // Hayrenik. 1920. 28 Novemb. P. 1 (in Armen.).

²⁶Rshtuni A. «Long live Garapekir» // Ibid. 1 Dec. P. 1 (in Armen.).

²⁷Reconciliation with the borders of the Brest-Litovsk Pact? // Ibid. P. 3 (in Armen.).

²⁸Peace concluded between Turkey and Armenia // Ibid. 11 Dec. P. 5 (in Armen.).

²⁹Agreement between Armenians and Kemalists // Arev. 1920. 13 Dec. P. 3 (in Armen.).

³⁰A copy of the shameful treaty of peace signed between Armenia and the Turks. New details // Ibid. 1921. 16 Jan. P. 2 (in Armen.).

group. Armenian troops resorted to a counter-offensive, drove the enemy from his occupied positions, and took back the Armenian land that the enemy had seized»³¹.

In «Hayrenik» on 14 October we read: «The attack on Armenia by the Turkish nationalists was dictated by the Bolsheviks»³². A day later, in the same newspaper, we read the strong criticism of N. N. Aghbalyan, one of the prominent figures of the ARF «Dashnaktsutyun», directed at Soviet Russia: «Soviet Russia, that poor country sense of mind, soul and essence, wants to support the progress of Ataturk's troops. The insidious and cruel Soviet Russia united with the Turks. It really resembles the old, regressive Russia. It allied with Turkey. This partnership is connected with red blood»³³.

According to «Yaraj», the cooperation between the Turkish and Bolshevik radio stations are the proof that «the immediate attack on Armenia was prepared and carried out with the awareness and support of the Bolsheviks»³⁴. Understandably, the Armenian Bolsheviks receive much more criticism: «Armenian Bolsheviks, tho-

se degenerate elements of our people, today are arming our ancient enemies, and even the blind can see that they are the open traitors of our motherland»³⁵.

«Hayrenik» also blamed the Armenian Bolsheviks: «The weak-minded followers of V. I. Lenin and L. D. Trotskii, who bear Armenian names but have Turkish and Tatar hearts, consider more important Enver and Talaat, the notable friends of their master – V. I. Lenin, than the Armenian national figures and statesmen. Here, we should not want to blame Russian Bolshevism as much as Armenian Bolshevism, which wants to establish contact with the Leninist movement at the cost of jeopardising the vital interests of the Armenian people»³⁶.

On 8 November, «Arev» published the information of a high-ranking official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, who had disclosed in the parliament that the Turkish nationalists had received weapons and munitions from the Bolsheviks via Trabzon and other ports on the Black Sea³⁷.

The reasons for the defeat

As one of the reasons for the defeat «Yaraj» considered the good preparation of the Turks and their good military school. The Turkish military command also possessed great skills, and the troops were more numerous at all fronts than the Armenian forces.

Talking about the reasons for the defeat already on 8 December, «Hayrenik» blamed Armenia's allies for failing to fulfill their obligations³⁸. That idea was developed later: «...with our blood and supreme sacrifice, we actually tested European diplomacy, which for many centuries was soaked in our innocent blood, but we believed that this time it would be somewhat fair and sincere towards us, at least to atone for its terrible sins of the past»³⁹.

«Hayrenik» considered that the government of the Republic of Armenia did all they best, so it should be out of criticism for the defeat: «Our government and army did what was humanly possible to protect the borders of the motherland. Every true Armenian must accept that no one in this world can do what is not really possible»⁴⁰. It also accused the oppositional parties and forces, who had tried to shift the blame of foreign countries to the ARF «Dashnaktsutyun»⁴¹. E. Sahakyan

considered the main reason for the defeat to be «Soviet Russia's invasion of Armenia»⁴².

The first analysis of the reasons for the defeat can be found in «Arev» on 10 December. It mentioned the underestimation of the enemy's forces as the number one reason⁴³. After the war, the hypothesis of betrayal was also discussed. Russian Armenians were blamed for the defeat: the Armenian-Russian anti-national spirit played an important role in the defeat.

The war showed that the Armenian army had no command. Before the fall of Kars, the enthusiasm of the Armenian army was very high, because rumors spread that Andranik would come to Trabzon with Greeks. Even though it was said that he had already landed in Batumi with 10 thsd Armenian volunteers. Armenians thought that the Turkish army was in a state of decay. For that purpose, 50 thsd people were conscripted, but after they had seen the power of the Turks, they became demoralised⁴⁴.

On 31 December, «Arev» published an abstract from «The Egyptian Gazette» (Egypt) that the war could have been avoided if the Treaty of Sevres had been abandoned in advance⁴⁵.

³¹The last hour // Mshak. 1920. 1 Oct. P. 2 (in Armen.).

³²The Turks and the Bolsheviks are working together against the Armenian army // Hayrenik. 1920. 14 Oct. P. 3 (in Armen.).

³³Aghbalyan N. N. Aghbalyan speaks // Ibid. 15 Oct. P. 1 (in Armen.).

³⁴Editorial. Turkish-Bolshevik conspiracy // Yaraj. 1920. 3 Oct. P. 2 (in Armen.).

³⁵Editorial. Solidarity // Ibid. 8 Oct. P. 2 (in Armen.).

³⁶The scum of Armenia // Hayrenik. 1920. 23 Oct. P. 2 (in Armen.).

³⁷Mustafa Kemal and the Bolsheviks // Arev. 1920. 8 Novemb. P. 3 (in Armen.).

³⁸Editorial for history // Hayrenik. 1920. 8 Dec. P. 2 (in Armen.).

³⁹Remarks III // Ibid. 12 Dec. P. 2 (in Armen.).

⁴⁰Editorial. Noisemakers on the case // Ibid. 15 Dec. P. 2 (in Armen.).

⁴¹Editorial. Stand by the people // Ibid. 18 Dec. P. 2 (in Armen.).

⁴²Sahakyan E. The new status. the essence of Russian politics // Ibid. 1921. 1 Jan. P. 1–2 (in Armen.).

⁴³Armenian illusions about the real power of the Turks // Arev. 1920. 10 Dec. P. 2 (in Armen.).

⁴⁴Around the Armenian-Turkish War. Statements, details // Ibid. 31 Dec. P. 2 (in Armen.).

⁴⁵Armenia had the right to be a Bolshevik (issue of 27 December 1920, «The Egyptian Gazette») // Ibid. P. 3 (in Armen.).

Two of S. Boroyan's soldiers, L. Ashchyan and Z. Zardaryan, explained the defeat with Russian-Armenian and Turkish-Armenian contradictions and a negative attitude towards the latter. In the «Arev» editorial office, they said there was a festive mood and a wedding in Kars during the fall. There was a very bad attitude towards the Armenian volunteers who came from Constantinople,

Cilicia. They did not give food or even weapons to the Western Armenian volunteers⁴⁶.

Furthermore, if people like P. Nubar, G. Noratunkyan, and H. Guyumjyan had been in power instead of the ARF «Dashnaksutyun», the result could have been different⁴⁷. Such claims were more indicative of the political struggle than a dispassionate analysis.

Conclusions

The reporting of the Turkish-Armenian War of 1920 in the Armenian press of that period was of key importance both in Armenia and in the Armenian diaspora. People obtained information about it from official state sources, testimonies of individual persons, and, in the case of periodicals published abroad, also from local and European media.

Optimism prevailed on the eve and at the initial phase of the war, which was based on the overestimation of Armenian's own forces and the simultaneous underestimation of the enemy. There were high hopes that the provisions of the Treaty of Sevres would be implemented concerning Armenia. Even sometimes, they were considered the minimum possible, and there were expectations that it would be possible to achieve the annexation of larger territories to Armenia.

During the first month of the war, the newspapers again showed optimism, emphasising the great enthusiasm of the population, the large number of volunteers. Often, an attempt was made to pick out individual facts and present them to the public, paying less attention to failures.

It gradually became obvious that the Armenian side was losing, and the fall of Kars had the effect of a cold shower. Therefore, it was no coincidence that even after that, misinformation that the Armenians allegedly re-

captured Kars took place. The press combined information about losses with its understanding of their causes. If the newspapers of the ARF «Dashnaksutyun» tended to see it as the Turkish-Russian cooperation primarily and the anti-state activities of the Armenian Bolsheviks, as well as the inactivity of the allies, then the periodicals with oppositional orientation, in addition to the above circumstances (or much more), accused the government of the Republic of Armenia of conducting a reckless policy. Often, that criticism based itself on unrealistic assessments, so the political authorities did not consider them as determined by just party interests according to circumstances.

The reporting of the 1920 Turkish-Armenian War in the Armenian press shows that at that time, social and political circles made judgments about the military-political events in accordance with their own ideas, but with no desire to establish justice or make correct assessments. That was also another reason: the fact that in 1920, Armenia faced enormous territorial and human losses. Although various analyses of the war have been made, the study of the mindsets of different layers of the society of that time helps us to form more complete understanding of the problem, and it also brings us better understanding of the logic of decisions made by the authorities.

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⁴⁷Expert. Discussions on the disaster in Armenia // *Ibid*. 9 Febr. P. 1 (in Armen.).