

RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

To cite this article: Nigar Jamalova, "Diplomatic Activity of the Azerbaijani Government against the Territorial Claims of the Republic of Armenia (1918-1920)", *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 47 (2023): 159-177.

Received: 01.06.2023

Accepted: 17.06.2023

DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OF THE AZERBAIJANI GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA (1918-1920)

(AZERBAJCAN HÜKÜMETİNİN ERMENİSTAN CUMHURİYETİNİN
TOPRAK TALEPLERİNE KARŞI UYGULADIĞI DİPLOMATİK
FAALİYETLER (1918-1920))

Nigar JAMALOVA*

Abstract: *This article examines the activities of the Azerbaijani government against the territorial claims of the Republic of Armenia in 1918-1920. Armenia's ongoing territorial claims and provocations on the front increase the relevance of the issue raised in the article. The documents in English newly included in the article are of scientific and practical importance in terms of supporting Azerbaijan's position against territorial claims.*

Due to the political considerations at the end of the First World War, the search for allies, the liberation of Baku and the protection of territorial integrity, the prevention of massacres, and social and political problems that could arise in the future, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) was forced to give approximately 10,000 km² of the territory of the former Iravan Khanate to the Armenians. However, the Armenian state nevertheless began to make claims to the other territories of Azerbaijan (Zangezur,

* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8764-7816>

Researcher, Institute of History named after A.A. Bakikhanov of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS)

Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku city, H. Javid Avenue 115, Building of ANAS, 6th floor
n.abushova@gmail.com, n.camalova@history.science.az

Tel: +994558957557

Karabakh, Nakhchivan, Kars, part of Gazakh district). Armenians nominated territorial claims on the basis that the Armenian population settled in the indicated areas. Nevertheless, the Armenian population was scattered in the territories they claimed and did not have an absolute majority.

The government of Azerbaijan struggled diplomatically against the territorial claims and military aggression of the Republic of Armenia in three directions: 1) Correspondence and meetings with representatives of foreign countries in the South Caucasus; 2) Bilateral correspondence and meetings with the Armenian state; 3) Struggle in the international arena – the Paris Peace Conference.

Despite the policy of ethnic cleansing committed by Armenian forces in order to occupy the territory, as well as the diplomatic struggle, none of the disputed territories of Azerbaijan were officially given to Armenia, except Erivan, which was compromised during the existence of the ADR. Additionally, none of the major powers of the time or the Paris Peace Conference officially recognized Armenia's territorial claims.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Zangezur, Karabakh, Nakhchivan, Caucasus, Iravan, territorial claims

Öz: *Bu makale, 1918-1920 yıllarında Azerbaycan hükümetinin Ermenistan Cumhuriyetinin toprak taleplerine karşı yürüttüğü faaliyetleri incelemektedir. Ermenistan'ın günümüzde devam eden toprak talepleri ve cephedeki provokasyonları, yazıda gündeme getirilen konunun önemini arttırmaktadır. Makalede yeni sunulan İngilizce belgeler, Azerbaycan'ın toprak taleplerine karşı benimsediği tavrı desteklemek açısından hem bilimsel olarak ve hem de uygulamada öneme sahiptir.*

Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonundaki siyasi değerlendirmeler, müttefik arayışı, Bakü'nün kurtarılması ve toprak bütünlüğünün savunulması, katliamların engellenmesi ve gelecekte ortaya çıkabilecek toplumsal ve siyasi sorunlardan dolayı Azerbaycan Halk Cumhuriyeti (AHC) eski Revan Hanlığının yaklaşık 10.000 km²'sini Ermenilere vermek zorunda kalmıştır. Buna rağmen Ermeni devleti yine de Azerbaycan'ın diğer topraklarına yönelik (Zengezur, Karabağ, Nahçıvan, Kars, Kazah ilçesinin bir kısmı) hak iddia etmeye başlamıştır. Ermeniler, Ermeni nüfusunun belirtilen bölgelerde yerleşik olmasına dayanarak toprak talebinde bulunmuşlardır. Ancak bu taleplerin aksine Ermeni nüfusu iddia edilen topraklarda dağınık bir şekilde yaşamaktaydı ve mutlak çoğunluğa sahip değildi.

Diplomatic Activity of the Azerbaijani Government against the Territorial Claims of the Republic of Armenia (1918-1920)

Azərbaycan hökuməti, Ermənistan Cümhuriyyətinin toprak taleplerinə və askeri saldırganlığına qarşı diplomatik olaraq üç alanda mücadele etmişdir: 1) Güney Kafkasya'daki yabancı ölkələrin təmsilçiləriylə təmaslar və toplantılar; 2) Erməni dövləti ilə ikili təmaslar və toplantılar; 3) Uluslararası arenada, yəni Paris Barış Konferansında mücadele.

Erməni birliklərinin bölgəyi işğal etmək amacıyla tətbiq etdiyi etnik təmizlik siyasətinə və verilən diplomatik mücadeleyə rəğmən AHC'nin varlığı sırasında anlaşma sonucunu verən Erivan dışında Azərbaycan'ın tartışma mövzusu olan topraklarının heçbiri rəsmən Ermənistan'a verilməmişdir. Ayrıca ne dönmənin böyük gücləri ne də Paris Barış Konferansı Ermənistan'ın toprak taleplerini rəsmən qəbul etməmişdir.

Anahtar Kelimələr: Azərbaycan, Ermənistan, Zengezur, Karabağ, Nahçıvan, Kafkasya, Erivan, toprak talepləri

Introduction

As a result of the 44-day Patriotic War (Second Karabakh War) between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia in September–November 2020, which ended with the mediation of the Russian Federation, the issues of border delimitation and regulation of interstate relations have become more urgent. The establishment of a joint working group (commission) for the purpose of demarcation and delimitation of the borders between Azerbaijan and Armenia has also been planned.¹ The scientific investigation of the territorial claims of the parties against each other with the new documents included in the article can contribute to the precise definition of the borders between the two countries, finding ways out of the conflict situation, and speeding up the peace process.

Towards the end of the First World War, the political processes occurring in the South Caucasus created conditions for the emergence of independent states. Observing the successes of the Ottoman state on the Caucasus front, Armenian political leaders appealed to the Ottoman ruling circles and asked them to help in the creation of their state. The information received by the Ottoman state from Tehran embassy noted that “Armenian committees and parties declare that they will fight against Russia if an Armenian state is created by the Ottoman government wherever it is.”² Due to the political considerations, the search for allies, the liberation of Baku and the protection of the territorial integrity, the prevention of massacres, and, social and political problems that could arise in the future, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) stated that it would not object to giving approximately 10,000 km² of its Erivan territory to the Armenians.³

As a result, in May 1918, three republics were established in the South Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia (Ararat⁴). However, the Armenian

1 “Rusiya Prezidenti, Azərbaycan Prezidenti və Ermənistanın baş naziri mətbuata bəyanatla çıxış ediblər (26 noyabr 2021)”, President.az, accessed January 13, 2022, <https://president.az/az/articles/view/54424> ; “Azərbaycan Respublikası ilə Ermənistan Respublikası arasında dövlət sərhədinin delimitasiyası üzrə Dövlət Komissiyasının yaradılması haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı (23 May 2022)”, President.az, accessed January 31, 2023, <https://president.az/az/articles/view/56129>

2 Qiyas Şükürov və Vəlif Qafarov, *Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyəti 1918-1920 (Osmanlı Arşiv Belgeleri)* (İstanbul: Bilnet Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık. A.Ş., 2018), 29.

3 Cəmil Həsəni, *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin xarici siyasəti (1918-1920)* (Bakı: GARISMA, 2009), 78-79 ; *İrəvan xanlığı. Rusiya işğalı və ermənilərin Şimali Azərbaycana köçürülməsi* (Bakı: CBS, 2010), 26 ; Керим Шукюров, *Азербайджан в системе международных отношений: 1648-1991. Документы и материалы* (Баку: ЭЛМ, 2020), 381

4 The state established in the South Caucasus on May 30, 1918, known mainly as the “Republic of Armenia”, was mentioned in a number of sources (Телеграмма. Председателю Совета Министров. От жителей Агдама (Агдам: 15 июня 1919) // Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin İşlər İdarəsinin İctimai-Siyasi Sənədlər Arxivı (ARPIİSSA), Fond № 277, siyahı № 2, iş № 41, vərəq – 36; *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti. Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri* (Bakı: Çarşıoğlu, 2008), 104-112, 198; Андраник Озаян (Документы и материалы) (Ереван, 1991), 18, 296; Ю.Г. Барсегов, *Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Комментарии к документам* (Москва: Мелихово, т. 2, 2009), 183 and etc.) as the “State of Ararat”. Its population mainly referred to this state as “Ararat”.

Diplomatic Activity of the Azerbaijani Government against the Territorial Claims of the Republic of Armenia (1918-1920)

state started to make claims to other historical territories of Azerbaijan (Zangezur, Karabakh, Nakhchivan, Kars, part of Gazakh region). It should be noted that when the ADR was created, its area was 113,900 km². The Republic of Armenia made territorial claims to 16,600 km² of this territory.⁵ Territorial claims were linked to historical and ethnic reasons. Thus, the Armenians who wanted to create “Greater Armenia”, claimed a large territory from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea as belonging to them based on ancient times and intended to establish their state in those claimed territories. Armenians lived in a scattered fashion in these areas, and they made territorial claims based on the settlement of the Armenian population.

Some Armenian authors argue that the emergence of territorial disputes should be attributed to the failure of Tsarist Russia to follow the national-ethnic principle during the administrative division. These authors note that the majority of the population of Nakhchivan, Zangezur, and Karabakh consisted of Armenians, and the number of the Armenian population decreased as a result of the Baku operation by the Turkish army in 1918.⁶ However, English sources confirm that the majority of the population in Nakhchivan, Zangezur, and Karabakh were Muslims⁷ and as a result of ethnic cleansing policy adopted by Armenian political circles, the number of Muslims in Zangezur decreased. However, the complete destruction of Azerbaijanis in Nakhchivan and Karabakh was prevented.

Armenian authors consider that the military operations accomplished by the Turks against the Armenian political circles to prevent the destruction of the local Muslim population and the protection of territorial integrity were related to the ideas of pan-Turkism. These authors accuse the Turks of implementing an ideology aimed at obtaining an ethnically homogeneous territory, in other words, aimed at the destruction of the Christian Armenian population (because they were allegedly viewed as a “foreign element”) that separated the Turkic world geographically.⁸ In their scientific works, however, Azerbaijani

5 İsmayıl Nəcəyev, *Ermənilərin Azərbaycanca qarşı ərazi iddiaları və qanlı cinayətləri* (Naxçıvan: Əcəmi, 2012), 48

6 А.Э. Хачикян, *История Армении (краткий очерк)* (Эреван: Эдит Принт, 2009), 176-178; Т.М. Асоян, *Территориальные проблемы Республики Армении и Британская политика (1918-1920 гг.)* (Москва, 2005), 78 ; Ю.Г. Барсегов, *Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Комментарии к документам* (Москва: Мелихово, т. 2, 2009), 13

7 Şükürov və Qafarov, *Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyəti 1918-1920...*, 1 ; *Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 2, 2020), 149-151 ; *Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 1, 2020), 188, 129-130 ; *Armenia in documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917-1920* (Yerevan: Institute of History NAS of Armenia, 2017), 350 ; *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti. Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri* (Bakı: Çayıoğlu, 2008), 128-137

8 Асоян, *Территориальные проблемы Республики Армении и Британская политика...* ; С.Ю. Аюпян, *Геноцид армян в период Первой мировой войны и его современные этнополитические и международно-правовые последствия* (Ростов-на-Дону: СКНЦ ВШ, 2006), 22 ; Ю.Г. Барсегов, *Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Комментарии к документам* (Москва: Мелихово, т. 2, 2009), 63.

researchers⁹ have demonstrated that it was in fact the Armenian political circles who implemented such an ideology (in a sense; “pan-Armenianism”) against the Turks and were able to create a mono-ethnic territory in and around Erivan by committing systemic ethnic cleansing.

In our opinion, the claims of Armenian authors that the Christian population hindered the geographical unity of the Turkic world are subjective in nature. The Georgians in the South Caucasus were also Christians and, as is known from history, despite having territorial claims against each other (Batum, Akhalsikh, Akhalkalaki, Borchali, Zagatala), they chose to be mainly collaborators with the Turks.

The territorial claims of the Armenian ruling circles, which are considered as being expansionist politics in modern times, served to strengthen the Armenian state. This policy was accompanied by the systemic ethnic cleansing and military aggression of the state of Armenia against the local Azerbaijani people.

The government of ADR fought diplomatically against the territorial claims and military aggression of the First Republic of Armenia (FRA), mainly via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign representatives, the organization of alliances and military formations, and through the implementation of defense measures. The government of Azerbaijan was engaged in diplomatic activities related to the settlement of territorial disputes mainly in 3 directions: 1) Correspondence and meetings with representatives of foreign countries in the South Caucasus; 2) Bilateral correspondence and meetings with the Armenian state; and 3) Struggle in the international arena.

Relationships with representatives of foreign countries

In diplomatic negotiations and correspondence with the Turkish, English, American and Italian representatives in the South Caucasus, the Azerbaijani government argued that the demands of the Armenian authorities on the territorial issue were unfounded.

As soon as the news was received that Kars was ceded to the Armenians by the British, the Azerbaijani government immediately intervened. The appeals of the people of Kars and the government of Azerbaijan were considered. British representative Arthur James Balfour reported in a letter from Paris that

9 V.Ş. Abışov, *Azərbaycanlıların soyqırımı (1917-1918-ci illər)* (Bakı: Nurlan, 2007) ; K.N. İsmayılov, *Zəngəzurda Azərbaycan xalqına qarşı soyqırımı (1918-1920)* (Bakı: Turxan, 2014) ; H.N. Мамедзаде, *Геноцид азербайджанцев в Карабахском регионе Азербайджана (1918-1920)* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, 2014) ; И.В. Нифталиев, *Геноцид азербайджанцев в Иреванской губернии (1918-1920)* (Баку: Турхан, – 2014) ; N.Y. Mustafa, “1918-1920-ci illərdə İrəvan quberniyası ərazisində azərbaycanlıların soyqırımı”, *Nazimmustafa.info*, Bakı, 2010, <http://nazimmustafa.info/?p=251>

“General George Milne’s intention to transfer power in Kars to the officials of the Republic of Armenia was not realized.”¹⁰ After the British left the South Caucasus, Kars was temporarily captured by the Armenians, but was recaptured by the Turkish army in October 1920.

On November 18, 1918, in the meeting of representative from Azerbaijan Alimardan bey Topchubashov with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, he announced Azerbaijan’s position on the Karabakh issue, and indicated that the Armenians were raising the Karabakh issue not just for 5-10 villages, but for 4 districts (Shusha, Javanshir, Jabrayil and Zangezur). He mentioned that although the number of Armenians and Muslims was not equal, Armenians did not necessarily have a majority, and moreover, they were not a local population but were transferred from the Ottoman Empire and Iran after the war with Russia (in the 19th century). Then, in that meeting, Topchubashov stated: “Armenians live mixed with Muslims in Karabakh. However, we support a peaceful solution of the problem.”¹¹

ADR Deputy Foreign Minister Adil Khan Ziyadkhanov asked British General William Thomson to liberate Azerbaijani lands occupied by Armenian military units in Yeni-Bayazid district, the southeast side of Goycha lake and Gazakh district from invaders and to return refugees to their lands.¹² Thomson considered these requests and instructed on the liquidation of the Armenian gangs that invaded the territory of Azerbaijan. However, returning the population was not possible to under the then present conditions, as military clashes were still underway.

Armenians were dissatisfied with the positive attitude of the British, especially Thomson, towards Azerbaijan. The representative of Armenian nationalists, Tigran Nazaryan, expressed his objection to Ronald McDonnell, the British representative in the Caucasus after Thomson, against the liquidation of Andranik Ozanian’s gangs, the transfer of Karabakh to the administration of Azerbaijan, and the disregard of the Erivan government’s claims to Karabakh. In response, Macdonell stated in his report to his government that the Karabakh Armenians were different from their brothers in the Republic of Armenia, that the Karabakh Armenians were a fighting people. He answered Nazaryan that,

“Thomson respected all the wishes of the Karabakh Armenians, and as for the disarmament of Andranik’s gangs, this was his personal loyalty

10 *Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 1. 2020), 264.

11 Мамедзаде, *Геноцид азербайджанцев в Карабахском регионе Азербайджана...*, 11.

12 Господину Командующему Союзными Силами в гор. Баку Генераль Томсону. За Министра Иностраннных Дел Зиядханова (Баку: 24 февраля 1919) // *Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Arxivi* (ARDA), Fond № 970, siyahı № 1, iş № 41, vərəq – 13.

and his request to Karabakh Armenians not to remain under the control of the authorities [Azerbaijan] that Thomson considered appropriate. In addition, a conference was called to resolve all these issues peacefully.”¹³

In his response, Nazaryan stated that there were no representatives from the disputed territories at the conference and that they were controlled by a “fake” parliament and ministers. Macdonell noted that he tried to satisfy Nazaryan, but it did not help.

Five members of the Muslim Committee complained about the attack of Armenians on Muslim villages in a telegram sent to the British representative in Tehran. This situation caused additional difficulties for the Allied troops using the Alexandropol (Gumru)-Julfa railway.¹⁴

The High Commissioner of the Allies in the South Caucasus, Colonel William Haskell’s attempts to create a neutral zone and hand over Nakhchivan to the administration of Armenians also failed because of the efforts of the ADR government. Thus, on August 29, 1919, at a conference in Baku, Haskell proposed the creation a neutral zone in the districts of Sharur-Daraleyaz and Nakhchivan. The American governor appointed by Haskell was tasked with managing the neutral zone. The interests of Azerbaijan and Armenia would be equal in the neutral zone, the Baku-Julfa railway would be under the control of the Azerbaijanis, and both sides were obliged to withdraw their troops.¹⁵

Haskell considered that Azerbaijan had provided the strategically important Alat-Julfa railway to the Italians, therefore he was politically pressuring Azerbaijan by expressing his desire to settle the neutral zone in favor of the Armenians. The Azerbaijani government did not approve of Haskell’s interference in its internal affairs. Haskell’s neutral zone proposal was considered as an interference in the borders by the Azerbaijan state. In order to prevent the intervention, the government of Azerbaijan initiated a diplomatic struggle. Azerbaijan’s Foreign Minister Mammad Yusif Jafarov, who was concerned about deviations from the agreements, called British High Commissioner Oliver Wardrop in Tiflis (Tbilisi) on October 9 and stated that “Alat-Julfa railway is being repaired by the government and providing the road to the Italians under a contract is incorrect information.”¹⁶

13 *Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 2. 2020), 260-261

14 *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti, Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri* (Bakı: Çasıoğlu, 2008), 174

15 От полковника Вильяма Н.Гаскеля Союзного Верховного Комиссара. Председателю Совета Министров Азербайджана (Тифлис: 1 сентября 1919) // ARDA, Fond № 970, siyahı № 1, iş № 93, vərəq – 3-4.

16 *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti. Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri* (Bakı: Çasıoğlu, 2008), 388

Diplomatic Activity of the Azerbaijani Government against the Territorial Claims of the Republic of Armenia (1918-1920)

In October 1919, the government of Azerbaijan proposed to transfer the administration of these territories to Azerbaijan. However, the Azerbaijani side also noted that the mentioned areas were part of Azerbaijan, and although Azerbaijan agreed to the creation of a neutral zone, it demanded Haskell to defend the annexation of these territories to Azerbaijan at the Peace Conference.¹⁷

As a result of Azerbaijan's strict objections and, the government's political maneuver to irritate the American officials by negotiating with the Italians about the Alat-Julfa railway, Haskell accepted the indicated territories as the territory of Azerbaijan. The protests of the local Turkish-Muslim population also played a major role in making this decision. This development of events contributed to the dissatisfaction of Armenia. On October 24, 1919, Lieutenant-Colonel Daly went to Nakhchivan to serve as military governor. In Nakhchivan, Daly faced Armenian protests, and he was informed that an agreement had been reached between Colonel Haskell and the Azerbaijani government, which controlled this area until the decision of the Peace Conference.¹⁸

Bilateral correspondence

The government of Azerbaijan was able to achieve superiority in territorial issues by establishing relations with representatives of foreign countries in the South Caucasus. Thus, the idea of creating an Armenian administration in the Karabakh, Zangezur, and Nakhchivan regions, which were considered controversial, was not realized, and the British, Turkish, American and Italian representatives demonstrated support for the position of the Azerbaijani government. As stated above, Haskell's plan to create a neutral zone in Nakhchivan and Sharur-Derelayaz region also failed as a result of the opposition of the ADR government and the local population.

In order to prevent possible provocations and repressions against Azerbaijanis in the Republic of Armenia (Ararat), and to raise awareness of the events occurring in Armenia and the territories bordering Azerbaijan (Zangezur, Nakhchivan, Karabakh, Kars), contacts and correspondence were constantly established with the representative office of Azerbaijan in Erivan. The telegrams sent by Muhammad Khan Tekinski (the representative of the ADR government in Erivan), to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense of Azerbaijan, and the representative in Tbilisi

17 Г. Союзному Верховному Комиссару полковнику Гаскель. Министер Иностраннных дел (Баку: 4 октября 1919) // ARDA, f. 894, siy.10, sv.99, v. 8-9

18 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti. Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri (Bakı: Çasıoğlu, 2008), 263-264

(Mohammad Bey Aliyev) reported on many issues: the military situation in Nakhchivan, Karabakh, Kars, and Zangezur, the number of troops, the military, financial and food aid of the Allied Powers to Armenia, news distributed by Armenians about the presence of “subversive” Muslim committees in Erivan, the massacre by Armenians against Muslims in the Boyuk Vedi, and the actions of the British and American missions.¹⁹

On June 23, 1918, Azerbaijani representative M.Y. Jafarov officially appealed to the Armenian National Council regarding the organization of the commission on the delimitation of Azerbaijan-Armenian borders.²⁰ However, as none of the parties made a compromise, the commission was not created, and after long negotiations, conferences on border issues were finally held in Baku and Tbilisi in 1919-1920. At the meeting of the South Caucasian Conference held on April 11, 1920, the following decisions were adopted: 1) All armed conflicts in Gazakh, Nakhchivan, Ordubad, and Karabakh were to be immediately stopped; 2) The governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia would immediately prevent possible future clashes between Armenians and Muslims in these areas; and 3) The decision of the conference would be immediately communicated to both governments. At the meeting held on April 12, a commission consisting of 6 people was elected to implement the above decisions and supervise them on the spot, restore the status quo, and investigate the initial causes of conflicts.²¹

The local Turkish population also sent letters to the Armenian government protesting territorial conflicts and military aggression. In the letter dated May 15, 1919, sent by the Muslim population of Nakhchivan to the Prime Minister of Armenia, it was noted that the violence against the Muslim nation was triggered due to the transfer of the Nakhchivan-Sharur-Ordubad regions to the administration of the Republic of Armenia, and the legitimate protest was reported to General Thomson. The letter finally stated: “As a representative of the Republic of Armenia, we inform you that you should not agree with this violence and you cannot enter our regions until this issue is resolved at the conference.”²²

On June 15, 1919, residents of Aghdam, who expressed their complete preparedness to protect Karabakh and Nakhchivan as integral parts of Azerbaijan, wrote to the Council of Ministers: “Ararat [Republic of Armenia]

19 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti. Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri (Bakı: Çəşioğlu, 2008), 199-202

20 Ю.Г. Барсегов, Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Документы и Комментарии: [в 2 томах] (Москва: Кругъ, т. 1. 2008), 234

21 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti, *Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri*, 563.

22 Премьер Министру Республики Армении. От Мусульман Нахчевана (Нахчевань: 15 мая 1919) // АРПИИССА, Фонд № 277, siyahı № 2, iş № 57, vərəq – 14.

can acquire Karabakh and Nakhchivan only by force of arms or without Muslims [after killing all Muslims].”²³

Territorial disputes could lead to conflicts and instability in the South Caucasus region, reducing defenses against foreign invasion. That is, during this period, there was a threat of invasion from the north by the Russian army led by Anton Ivanovich Denikin. On June 16, 1919, a defense agreement was signed between the governments of Azerbaijan and Georgia in Tbilisi. Armenia did not join this agreement. The lack of Armenia’s participation in this agreement was based on the hope that the Allied Powers’ support would maintain Armenia’s independence and, furthermore, that territorial disputes would be resolved in Armenia’s favor. Mika(y)el Papajyanov (Papajanyan), one of the representatives of Armenia at the Paris Peace Conference, explained the reason for not joining the Georgian-Azerbaijani alliance as follows:

“Erivan and Kars provinces are not economically and strategically important for Russia. Denikin convinced the Armenian government that the new Russian government to be established under his authority can recognize the independence of the Republic of Armenia if the independence of Armenia is defended by the conference of the League of Nations.”²⁴

This also indicated that there could be a secret separate agreement between Denikin and Armenian officials. O. Wardrop’s coded telegram dated November 11, 1919, stated that Denikin was propagating information in Azerbaijan and pressuring Armenia to create disturbances in Zangezur in order to facilitate the occupation of Baku by dividing the Azerbaijani forces into two parts.²⁵ The government of Azerbaijan would be forced to direct a part of its military units to this region to prevent a possible military intervention in Zangezur. In this case, the defense of the northern borders of Azerbaijan was complicated due to the deficiencies of the army.

The government of Azerbaijan created conditions for the Armenian population to be represented by deputies in the parliament to defend their interests. In December 1919, the Armenians had 10 seats in the parliament (4 seats for the Armenian Nationalists party headed by Barunyan, 6 seats for the Dashnak party headed by Arshak Malkhazyan).²⁶

23 Телеграмма. Председателю Совета Министров. От жителей Агдама (Агдам: 15 июня 1919) // АРПИИССА, Фонд № 277, сiyahı № 2, іш № 41, vərəq – 36.

24 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti, *Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri*, 335-336.

25 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti, *Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri*, 342.

26 *Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 2. 2020), 199.

Bilateral negotiations and connections to regulate relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia did not yield positive results since the parties mainly resorted to military force in territorial issues, and this situation generated negative socio-psychological effects on the civilian population.

Struggle in the international arena

Territorial issues were observed to be important in the international agreements regarding Armenia and Azerbaijan. Thus, when the Batum contracts were signed in June 1918 between the Ottomans and three countries of the South Caucasus (the terms of the agreements were also acceptable for the Ottoman allies Austria and Bulgaria²⁷), the territories of Nakhchivan and Surmali were united to the Ottomans by being agreed with Azerbaijan.²⁸ The conditions also stipulated that the Republic of Armenia would withdraw the Armenian military forces in Baku.²⁹

The government of Armenia was attempting to resolve territorial issues in the international arena for its benefit. At the Paris conference, Armenian political circles planning the creation of a great and united Armenia proposed 3 schemes regarding the borders of the Republic of Armenia: 1) Boghos (Pogos) Nubar Pasha's "Greater Armenia" project, starting from the Black Sea and extending from Iran's borders to Alexandretta through the Mediterranean Sea (Armenians made up only 3% of the total population in this area); 2) The "six provinces" project, which represented the entity called Armenia together with Sivas, Erzurum, Kharput (Mamurat-al-Aziz), Diyarbakir, Bitlis and Van provinces; 3) The "Erivan project", that is, Armenia, which includes Erzurum province, a part of Trabzon province in the east of Giresun, approximately a part of Bitlis and Van provinces, the territory up to the 30th parallel of north latitude.³⁰ Later, the document stated that the 3rd project was the most modern and was defended by the leaders of the Republic of Armenia in accordance with the present situation of that time.

At the second congress of Western Armenians held in Erivan on February 6-13, 1919, they announced the creation of a united Armenia together with the immigrant Western Armenian government established by Nubar Pasha in Paris. On May 28, the act on "united Armenia" was adopted.³¹ The Azerbaijani

27 Şükürov və Qafarov, *Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyəti 1918-1920...*, 283.

28 Şükürov və Qafarov, *Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyəti 1918-1920...*, 220-222; Шукюров, *Азербайджан в системе международных отношений: 1648-1991...*, 383-385.

29 Şükürov və Qafarov, *Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyəti 1918-1920...*, 233-236; Шукюров, *Азербайджан в системе международных отношений: 1648-1991...*, 388-395.

30 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti, *Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri*, 222.

31 *Qafqazda ilk respublikalar (1918-1921)* (Bakı: İdeal-Print, 2021), 232-233.

government immediately implemented countermeasures and held meetings with the British, one of the leading states of the Paris conference, and officials delegates represented in the South Caucasus, where they announced the position of the Azerbaijani side on territorial issues. Thus, ADR delegates agreed to the representation of Armenians in the government and stepped towards establishing normal neighborly relations with the state of Armenia. On May 23, Topchubashov, in his meeting with Louis Malet, a member of the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, stated about the settlement of the territorial conflict with the Armenians that “if they leave the borders of Azerbaijan [that is, stop military aggression] the Armenians will be represented by 3 ministers in the government of Azerbaijan and 20 deputies in the parliament.”³²

The meeting with Malet in Paris resulted in the British determining decisions in favor of Azerbaijan. Thomson, the head of the British mission in the Caucasus, supported the idea that Karabakh should be part of Azerbaijan. On May 19, 1919, Mallet replied to the Armenian representatives who protested at the Paris Peace Conference that “any solution can only be temporary.”³³

At the Paris conference, Armenian representatives commenced to propagate allegations about the massacre of the Armenian population in Karabakh by Kh. Sultanov. In June 1919, Priest Vahan and M. Bahaturyan, both members of the Karabakh Armenian National Council, presented a memorandum expressing the intentions of the Armenians in Karabakh to General Thomson in Baku. The memorandum objected to the existence of the governor general representing the government of Azerbaijan in Karabakh and indicated 4 ways to solve the problem: 1) Reunification of Karabakh with Armenia pending the decision of the Peace Conference; 2) Re-establishing the Karabakh government that existed before the capture of Karabakh by the Turks; 3) The appointment of a British governor-general who would ensure the interests of local Armenians and Muslims in the Armenian part; 4) The appointment of the British governor-general by providing the right of self-government to all of Karabakh meaning both Armenians and Tatars (Azerbaijani Turks).³⁴ The offer of the Armenians was not accepted.

Armenian government representative Vardanyan stated in his epistle that the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan reported to the representatives of the Republic

32 *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti, Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri*, 301-302.

33 *Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 1. 2020), 305.

34 *Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 1. 2020), 369.

of Armenia in Baku that the British had provided Karabakh to Azerbaijan and thus there could be no other questions about this issue. Vardanyan also added that they would never agree to transfer Karabakh to Azerbaijan.³⁵

Territorial disputes were the main reason why the Armenian representatives at the Paris conference did not respond positively to Azerbaijan's proposal to establish a confederation. Thus, the Armenian representatives who participated in the Paris conference stated that they could join the confederation only in the form of the entire Armenia, which included the territories they claimed in the Caucasus and the Ottoman Empire.³⁶

On January 11, 1920, the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference adopted a decision on the de facto recognition of Azerbaijan and Georgia as new independent states.³⁷ Earl of Derby from Paris emphasized in his telegram to Lord Harding that the de facto recognition of Georgia and Azerbaijan did not apply to their present and future borders, and even the slightest prejudgment could not be made about this issue.³⁸

The recognition of Armenia was to be combined with the agreement with the Ottoman Empire. The de jure recognition of Armenia was confirmed by the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 and the treaty signed on the same day between the Allies and the Republic of Armenia (signed by Avetis Achoranyan, head of the delegation of the Republic of Armenia in Sevres).³⁹

According to the agreement, the Allied Powers and the Ottoman government recognized Armenia within the borders established by the US President W. Wilson (which were canceled as a result of the vote on June 1, 1920). The territory of Armenia defined as 150,000 km² (160,000 km² as indicated in T.M. Asoyan's dissertation⁴⁰) included the regions of Van, Bitlis, Trabzon, and Erzurum. However, the agreement did not specify how these territories would be provided to Armenia and the obligations of the Allies.⁴¹ It is clear that the terms of this agreement concluded with the Ottoman Empire (based in Istanbul) were not accepted by the new Turkish government (based in Ankara) and therefore the terms of the agreement were not accomplished. Consequently, the solution of the issue of de jure recognition and borders of Armenia was practically not implemented.

35 *Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов* (Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 1. 2020), 369-370

36 Əlimərdanbəy Topçubaşov, *Paris məktubları* (Bakı: Azərneşr, 1998), 16-17.

37 *Azərbaycan Paris sülh konfransında (1919-1920)* (Bakı: Ozan, 2008), 5-8.

38 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti, *Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri*, 407.

39 Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti, *Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri*, 45-46.

40 Асоян, *Территориальные проблемы Республики Армении и Британская политика...*, 209.

41 Хачикян, *История Армении...*, 182.

The Paris Peace Conference left the issue of borders to the three republics (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia) unresolved and postponed it until an agreement was reached between them. After the agreement was reached, a commission for the delimitation of borders had to be created.⁴²

The affiliation problem of the territories of Nakhchivan, Zangezur, Karabakh, which are considered disputed between Azerbaijan and Armenia, was not resolved definitively in the international arena either. As a result of the activities of the representatives of Azerbaijan at the international conference in Paris, the solution of territorial issues considered controversial were left unimplemented and was transferred to the responsibility of these parties.

Conclusion

Consequently, the territorial issues that led to disputes and wars between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1918-1920 were not definitively resolved, and this situation caused the civilian population to face social and psychological problems that are still observed today. The affiliation problem of Nakhchivan, Zangezur, Karabakh regions, and part of Kars and Gazakh districts was attempted to be resolved via consultations with representatives of states with conflicting interests in the South Caucasus region, bilateral negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and international conferences and agreements.

The facts presented in the article suggest that British, Turkish, American, and Italian representatives in the South Caucasus region demonstrated support for the position of the Azerbaijani government. The ADR government agreed only with the fact that Erivan was provided to the Armenians, and at the international conference it was agreed that future territorial disputes should be resolved as a result of negotiations between the parties. The territory of Zangezur and a part of Gazakh province were provided to the Armenian Soviet Republic in late 1920 after the collapse of the ADR. In summary, the diplomatic activity of the ADR government on territorial issues can be considered as a historical experience that should be considered as a guiding experience for the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

As a result of the diplomatic activity in the direction of resolving border disputes in 1918-1920, Azerbaijan agreed to transfer Erivan and surrounding territories to Armenians. Later, Soviet Azerbaijan (founded on April 28, 1920) did not object to the transfer of Zangezur and a part of Gazakh district to

42 Ю.Г. Барсегов, *Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Документы и Комментарий: [в 2 томах]* (Москва: Кругъ, т. 2. 2009), 190.

Armenia. However, these territorial concessions led to larger social (refugees, massacres of civilians), economic (crisis, famine, epidemic) and political (occupation or total dependence) problems. To prevent the re-emergence of socio-political problems in modern times, both sides can agree to resolve territorial issues at the level of international law without claiming territories against each other.

The results of diplomatic activities in 1918-1920 demonstrated that the military solution damaged both states politically, economically, and militarily, and decelerated the general development of the South Caucasus region. Today, both sides regularly hold meetings with the participation of the European Union (EU), Russia, and Turkey in order to delimit and demarcate the borders, as well as resolve relations by peaceful means. In these meetings, Azerbaijan and Armenia put forward their conditions and, as in 1918-1920, the parties still cannot not reach an agreement on the Karabakh issue. In the current case, that is, in the background of the complicated political and military situation between EU countries and Russia, it seems more appropriate to leave the border issues to the responsibility of the two countries, as it was in 1920. Currently, commissions have been created and negotiations are underway to resolve border issues within the interests of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

a. Archive Documents

Armenia in documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917-1920. Yerevan: Institute of History NAS of Armenia, 2017.

Azərbaycan Paris sülh konfransında (1919-1920). Bakı: Ozan, 2008.

Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti. *Böyük Britaniyanın arxiv sənədləri.* Bakı: Çəşioğlu, 2008.

Şükürov, Qiyas və Qafarov, Vasif. *Azərbaycan Cumhuriyeti 1918-1920 (Osmanlı Arşiv Belgeleri).* İstanbul: Bilnet Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık. A.Ş., 2018.

Торçубашов, Әлимәрданбәй. *Paris məktubları.* Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1998.

Г. Союзному Верховному Комиссару полковнику Гаскель. Министер Иностранных дел (Баку: 4 октября 1919) // ARDA, f. 894, siy.10, sv.99, v. 8-9.

Господину Командующему Союзными Силами в гор. Баку Генераль Томсону. За Министра Иностранных Дел Зиядханова (Баку: 24 февраля 1919) // Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Arxivi (ARDA), Fond № 970, siyahı № 1, iş № 41, vərəq – 13.

Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов. Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 2, 2020.

Документы Британского национального архива по истории Южного Кавказа 1918-1920 годов. Баку: Турхан ИПО, т. 1, ч. 1, 2020.

От полковника Виляма Н.Гаскеля Союзного Верховного Комиссара. Председателю Совета Министров Азербайджана (Тифлис: 1 сентября 1919) // ARDA, Fond № 970, siyahı № 1, iş № 93, vərəq – 3-4.

Премьер Министру Республики Армении. От Мусульман Нахчевана (Нахчевань: 15 мая 1919) // Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin İşlər İdarəsinin İctimai-Siyasi Sənədlər Arxivi (ARPIİSSA), Fond № 277, siyahı № 2, iş № 57, vərəq – 14.

Телеграмма. Председателю Совета Министров. От жителей Агдама (Агдам: 15 июня 1919) // ARPIİSSA, Fond № 277, siyahı № 2, iş № 41, vərəq – 36.

Шукюров, Керим. *Азербайджан в системе международных отношений: 1648-1991. Документы и материалы*. Баку: Элм, 2020.

b. Copyrighted Works

Abışov, Vaqif. *Azərbaycanlıların soyqırımı (1917-1918-ci illər)*. Bakı: Nurlan, 2007.

Насиєв, İsmayıl. *Ermənilərin Azərbaycana qarşı ərazi iddiaları və qanlı cinayətləri*. Naxçıvan: Əcəmi, 2012.

Həsənli, Cəmil. *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin xarici siyasəti (1918-1920)*. Bakı: GARISMA, 2009.

İrəvan xanlığı. *Rusiya işğalı və ermənilərin Şimali Azərbaycana köçürülməsi*. Bakı: CBS, 2010.

İsmayılov, Kamran. *Zəngəzurda Azərbaycan xalqına qarşı soyqırımı (1918-1920)*. Bakı: Turxan, 2014.

Qafqazda ilk respublikalar (1918-1921). Bakı: İdeal-Print, 2021.

Акопян, Софья. *Геноцид армян в период Первой мировой войны и его современные этнополитические и международно-правовые последствия*. Ростов-на-Дону: СКНЦ ВШ, 2006.

Асоян, Тигран. *Территориальные проблемы Республики Армении и Британская политика (1918-1920 гг.)*. Москва, 2005.

Барсегов, Юрий. *Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Документы и Коментарий: [в 2 томах]*. Москва: Кругъ, т. 1. 2008.

Барсегов, Юрий. *Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Документы и Коментарий: [в 2 томах]*. Москва: Кругъ, т. 2. 2009.

Мамедзаде, Натиг. *Геноцид азербайджанцев в Карабахском регионе Азербайджана (1918-1920)*. Баку: Турхан ИПО, 2014.

Нифталиев, Илгар. *Геноцид азербайджанцев в Иреванской губернии (1918-1920)*. Баку: Турхан, – 2014.

Хачикян, А.Э. *История Армении (краткий очерк)*. Эреван: Эдит Принт, 2009.

c. Internet Resources

“Azərbaycan Respublikası ilə Ermənistan Respublikası arasında dövlət sərhədinin delimitasiyası üzrə Dövlət Komissiyasının yaradılması haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı (23 May 2022)”. *President.az*, accessed January 31, 2023, <https://president.az/az/articles/view/56129>

“Rusiya Prezidenti, Azərbaycan Prezidenti və Ermənistanın baş naziri mətbuata bəyanatla çıxış ediblər (26 noyabr 2021)”. *President.az*, accessed January 13, 2022, <https://president.az/az/articles/view/54424>

Mustafa, N.Y. “1918-1920-ci illərdə İrəvan quberniyası ərazisində azərbaycanlıların soyqırımı”. *Nazimmustafa.info*, accessed April 5, 2018, Bakı, 2010. <http://nazimmustafa.info/?p=251>