

Gaffar akmaklı Mehdiyev

ANASTAS MIKOYAN

*Confessions of an
Armenian Bolshevik*



TERAZI
YAYINCILIK

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INTRODUCTION

My dear friend Gaffar Çakmaklı gave a lecture at the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) last year. During that conference, he made a few important evaluations regarding Anastas Mikoyan. At the end of the conference, I told him that Mikoyan was a particularly important Soviet statesman of Armenian descent, but that he is almost completely unknown in Turkey. I stated that, except for a brief article of esteemed scholar Dr. Mehmet Perinçek, very little is known of him in Turkey. I have highlighted that Mikoyan had many statements supporting the Turkish thesis regarding the Armenian question and that the Armenians accuse him of treason. On the other hand, I added that, when compared to Mikoyan, Hovhannes Kajaznuni has an undeserved reputation in our country. Upon my evaluation, the esteemed Director of AVİM Ambassador Mr. Alev Kılıç stated that a thorough study on Mikoyan was obligatory and that I should conduct it with my friend Gaffar Çakmaklı. This important work in your hands was written upon this recommendation.

Indeed, Hovhannes Kajaznuni, despite obtaining very high recognition in Turkey by means of stating a few sentences on the Armenian question in accordance with the Turkish thesis, Mikoyan, who was a Bolshevik and Dashnak opponent, is barely known in Turkey. Whereas, Mikoyan's criticisms regarding the Armenians' so-called independence war are very important. Mikoyan was a very important figure who had served in very important positions during the Armenian insurrection and Soviet-era Russia. He had very contradictory views regarding the Armenians' struggle for independence, the Turkish-Russian-Dashnak/Armenian relations, and Armenian politics during the Soviet Union period. Despite this, it is surprising that, with a few exceptions, he has not been included in the Armenian historiography in Turkey. His evaluations regarding the Turkish War for Independence are very important, let alone his very contradictory views on the Armenian cause. For this reason, I would like to share with the reader some of my evaluations regarding Mikoyan in order to demonstrate the significance of the book.

First of all, Mikoyan, a statesman who had served in important positions and services for more than 40 years in the Soviet Russian governments, was the son of a middle class and conservative family. For that reason, his father had sent him to Tbilisi for religious education. Afterwards, however, he went to Etchmiadzin and continued his education there. However, contrary to expectations, after receiving his education at the Holy Etchmiadzin Church, Mikoyan became an atheist. The lessons of liberalism and socialism that he had received played a much larger role in the shaping of his character. He joined the Russian revolutionary movement. In 1915, when he was only 20

years old, he formed an Etchmiadzin Worker's Soviet. When the Bolshevik revolution took place on October 1917, he emerged as one of the very important political figures of the Caucasus. He migrated to Baku and first began to publish the Armenian-language newspaper "The Social Democrat" there, and later the Russian-language newspaper "Izvestia Bakinskogo Soveta". During this time of his career, Mikoyan had abandoned his Armenian nationalist partisanship of his youth and began acting like an idealist Bolshevik instead of an Armenian. Due to this path he took, he gained the hatred of both the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis during these years. This is because he played a role in the suppressing the uprising of the Azerbaijani Turkish nationalists known as Musavat.* During the civil war that erupted in Baku on 1918, he was appointed as one of the Red Army's 26 Baku commissars. I will not go into details here as his activities during this mission are relayed in much detail in this book. However, I would like to state that Mikoyan's political life, full of mysteries, began with him fleeing to Astrakhan upon the British soldiers entering Baku. Namely, when the Mensheviks, with which the Bolsheviks were at war, captured and executed the fugitive commissars, Mikoyan was the only survivor. His survival story remained a mystery throughout his life.

In 1921, with the Bolsheviks gaining control of Baku once again, Mikoyan returned to the city and buried his secrets in a common grave together with his brothers in arms. In response to this act of his, he began to be remembered for betrayal by the Armenians. After being elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party (of the Soviet Union) in 1921 and his friendship with Lenin, he was now more a communist than an Armenian. Being sent by Stalin to Rostov as the Chairman of the Northern Caucasus Bureau of the Communist Party reinforced this character of his. His loyalty to the Soviet ideals rather than the people of his own ethnicity enabled him to become a member of the Politburo. If we were to summarize some of his views regarding the political friction between the Turks and the Armenians, what we wish to explain will be better understood.

To begin with, although he had first joined the Andranik gang during his youth in order to fight against the Turkish army, he now -as Bolshevik Mikoyan- viewed the idea of "Great Armenia" as unfounded. In his speeches and writings prepared in 1919, he harshly criticized the Armenian national movement. In a report he sent to Lenin, whom he had just met at that time, Mikoyan displayed the potential to form the image of a prudent communist far removed from nationalist sentiment. In this line, he wrote that "the Armenian nationalist movement had ceased to be a freedom movement and transformed into a reactionary, occupying ('imperialist') movement.". For this reason, he indicated that he found the idea of the "great, singular, and independent

* "Musavat Party" (Eng. Equality Party) was the oldest existing and nationalist political party that was formed in Baku in 1912.

Armenia” as harmful, evil, and reactionary and that the Communist Party should fight against this idealist thought. Mikoyan claimed that Turkey - fighting against the Imperialists- was an ally of the Soviets and it would also support the liberation of the Armenian nation by fighting against the Dashnaks, the pawns of the imperialists. Turkey was not the old Turkey and could not have an offensive demeanor towards Armenia. Therefore, supporting the Armenian nationalists would be a terrible mistake. Armenia’s potential victory over Turkey would have led to the strengthening of imperialism in the Middle East. For this reason, according to Mikoyan, the Armenian Communist Bolsheviks had to accelerate the defeat of Armenia and ensure the sovietization of Armenia.

Mikoyan’s criticism towards the Armenian cause that was led by the Dashnaks was not limited to these. For example, according to Mikoyan, the idea of establishing a “Great Armenia” that comprised seven provinces from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean was a complete fantasy. It was the reactionist Russian General Denikin, the chauvinistic Armenians, and the imperialists who were behind this project. It contradicted with the realities of the region, because Muslims were living in the lands being claimed for the project. For this reason, the “Great Armenia” could not be established based on the will of the majority of the population, but by imposing the power of the imperialist arms. In a setting where Turkey was fighting against the imperialists, Turkey coming face to face with the Armenians had to be avoided.

Mikoyan’s views regarding World War I and the Armenian relocation will mortify those who defend the Armenian thesis. Mikoyan claimed that Armenians in Turkey “had an estimated 300-500 thousand casualties, as a result of the Dashnaks’ short-sighted and adventurous politics.”

Again, Mikoyan stated that he disapproved of the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict; concerning the Karabakh issue, which at the present has brought the two countries on the brink of war, he mentioned the necessity for regions like “Zangezur and Karabakh” to be inside the borders of Azerbaijan. According to Mikoyan, Karabakh could not remain standing without Azerbaijan and for this reason had to be a part of Azerbaijan.

As it is seen, Mikoyan made particularly important evaluations regarding the Armenian question and made confessions and disclosures to the extent that would turn Armenian historiography upside down. For this reason, the fact that he has remained unknown in Turkey until now is a major omission. By means of unearthing Mikoyan’s life and views based entirely on the Russian and the Armenian resources, Gaffar Çakmaklı has made a significant contribution to the Armenian review literature.

Prof. Dr. Kemal Çiçek

IN PLACE OF A PROLOGUE

Was Anastas Mikoyan Actually Involved Dark Deeds?

Anastas Mikoyan was among the USSR's prominent leaders in a 40-year period. They would say this about him in Russian; “От Ильича до Ильича без инфаркта и паралича,” meaning; “The man who has lived from Ilyich [Vladimir Ilyich Lenin] to Ilyich [Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev] without suffering a heart attack or stroke.”** He was incredibly lucky throughout his life. He survived the war as well and was the surviving 27th commissar while the remaining 26 Baku Commissars who were executed by a firing squad and managed to be excluded from Joseph Stalin's massacres of 1937-1938. Stalin's death was fortunate for him as well. Mikoyan, the man who “[did] not burn in fire, nor sink in water”, sustained his leadership qualities even during the periods of Georgy Malenkov, Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev. However, 35-40 years after his death, his name appeared on certain “blacklists”. And what is more, this happened in Armenia -a country Mikoyan loved very much- because he was accused of treason.

Everything had started with him, Anastas Mikoyan's grandson author Stas Namin, who wanted a statue to be erected in honor of his grandfather in Armenia's capital Yerevan and thus made an application to the Armenian authorities. Up until then, Anastas Mikoyan was known as one of the prominent names of the nation, as someone who had put his signature under deeds that were of significance for Armenia and the Armenian people under the Soviet Union. He was considered to be the most famous politician that the Armenian people had raised. When new documents belonging to Mikoyan came to light, the Armenian people began to see him as someone who had betrayed his country.

Some documents that appeared in the media with the code “top secret” also made his political personality put into question. The Yerevan governorate was unable to decide: Should Mikoyan's statue be erected or not? The decision of the Yerevan Municipal Council was suspended.

The newly surfaced documents of Mikoyan had changed the situation; these documents had not been mentioned in Mikoyan's memoirs. This meant that he had hid them from his own people.

** English translation of the aforementioned sentence taken from Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (London: Phoenix, 2004), 83.

It was generally forbidden for figures serving in the Soviet state administration to write memoirs. In very exceptional cases, some people were allowed to write their memoirs. Anastas Mikoyan's book, which was published in Moscow during the 70's by the "Politizdat" Publishing House was among the first books of this nature. Many events in the life of Mikoyan, who had served in important offices starting from the beginning of the 1917 October Bolshevik Revolution and during the periods of Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev, were not included in the memoirs that were about his sixty-year period within the scope of the Soviet history.



Image 1: Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan 1895-1978

All of these are characterized as the dark pages of history in Russia and Armenia. It is claimed in the archive documents of the years 1919-1922 that Mikoyan had been involved in anti-Armenian activities. He is also held responsible for the execution of thousands of Armenians in the years 1937-1938. For certain, he was inevitably obliged to take part in Stalin's "Great Purge" (*Repressiya*) process and this obligation had led to the death of millions of people. However, some historians state that he advocated tolerance for some of the prominent members the Communist Party. In 1937, Mikoyan had been sent to Soviet Armenia to verify the purges among the local communists and intellectuals. However, at first, no information was given regarding what

activities he was involved in Yerevan. Mikoyan made no mention of them in his memoirs either. In a document dated 1 September 1937, which was published in the Armenian press after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became evident that he had a hand in the massacres carried out in Armenia. The NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) had informed Stalin that Mikoyan had requested permission from him to try 700 "anti-Soviet constituents" in Armenia. In the Russian State Archives, in this historical document with Nikolai Yezhov's signature dated 22 September 1937, Yezhov informed Stalin that Mikoyan requested that the number of "Dashnaksutyun and other 'anti-Soviet constituents'" that would be shot had to be increased to 700 people. In the same document, Yezhov himself suggests adding 1500 people to the previous number of people that would be shot, making it reach 2000.

Following the surfacing of this and similar other documents, the Armenian society became angry and said; "Why are we now erecting a statue for a man who supported the execution of so many Armenians?", and added; "Should statues not be erected for those who have lived through 1937?"

While these questions began to be asked at the Yerevan Municipal Council, the Director of the National Archives of Armenia, Amatuni Virabyan, objected to the erection of Mikoyan's statue in the center of Yerevan, stating that there were sufficient documents-evidence that Mikoyan had been involved in the massacre events. After this, documents regarding his "dark deeds" began being presented to the public opinion. In this book, we hope that the information and documents that we have acquired from archives in Armenia and Armenian language broadcasting organizations will grab the readers' attention.

Prof. Dr. Gaffar Çakmaklı Mehdiyev

CHAPTER ONE

Who Was Anastas Mikoyan?



Image 2: Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan

If we are to provide his brief resume, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan (25 November 1895-21 October 1978) was a Soviet statesman and Socialist Labor Hero (1943) who was a former Bolshevik and party official during the years of Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev and who served as a minister, prime minister, etc. for many years.

Mikoyan was born in the Armenian village of Sanahin of Alaverdi, which is now situated inside Armenia's borders. He received education at a religious school. He voluntarily joined World War I and took part in the Armenian Volunteers Unit that fought against the Ottoman State. He enrolled in the Bolshevik Party in 1915 when he was twenty years old and, after some time, he became one of the leaders of the revolutionary movement in Caucasia. Subsequent to the February Revolution of 1917, he organized the Echmiadzin Soviet. Thereafter, he worked in Tbilisi and Baku as a propagandist and was a member of the Tbilisi Party Committee. In 1917 October, he attended the First Congress of Caucasian Bolsheviks Organizations as a representative. Subsequently, he was a member of the Baku Bureau of the Caucasus Regional Committee. He became the editor of the Armenian-language newspaper "The Social Democrat" and later for the Russian-language newspaper "Izvestia Bakinskogo Soveta". In the same year, he carried out intensive work in Baku.

In 1918, he was arrested in Baku by interventionist British troops. After he was released, he continued his party activities and got promoted. In 1919, he had become a member of the Caucasus Regional Committee. He enabled relations with Moscow. With the assignment of the Caucasus Regional Committee on October 1919, he surpassed the Denikin front, arrived at Moscow and met with Vladimir Lenin. During this period, he attended the meetings of Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Organizational Bureau in which decisions were made regarding the formation of a party in Baku and Transcaucasia. In April 1920, he was situated in Baku during the period of the Soviet regime's establishment in Azerbaijan and practiced governorship. From October 1920 onwards, he served in the governing body of Nizhny Novgorod.

He supported Stalin in the power struggle that followed Lenin's death and was appointed to the Central Committee. In 1926, he continued to serve as the People's Commissar for Internal and External Trade, and he imported ideas from the West such as the production of canned goods. Between the years 1924-1926, he served as the Secretary for the Northern Caucasian Regional Committee and worked as a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the North Caucasus. During the years 1926-30, he served as the People's Commissar (Minister) for External and Internal Trade of the USSR. During the years 1930-34, he served as the People's Commissariat of Supply. In 1935, he was elected to the Politburo and during World War II he was placed in charge of organizing the transportation of goods. In 1942, he was chosen for the State Defense Committee. In 1946, he became the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. During the years 1946-55, he served as the Vice-Premier of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union; and during the years 1955-64, he served as the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. During these assignments, he was the Minister of Foreign Trade and then the Minister of Trade of the USSR. During the years 1964-65, he became the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. He was a member of many high-level party organs from the Central Committee to the Politburo of the Party.

After Stalin's death, Mikoyan was assigned under the Malenkov government as the Minister of Trade. He supported Khrushchev in the power struggle to take Stalin's place and was chosen as the First Deputy Premier of Soviet Union in recognition of his services. However, upon Khrushchev holding the Gulf responsible for him being unable to resolve the Hungarian crisis in 1956, Mikoyan lost his influence. He undertook a series of state visits to the United States, Cuba, Japan, and Mexico. He was persuaded to overcome the coup that overthrew Khrushchev (who had allegedly become an increasingly liability to the Party) and brought Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev in his place. In 1963, he attended the funeral ceremony of the US President John F. Kennedy in representation of the Soviet Union.

Mikoyan, who took part in Brezhnev's administration once again, served as the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet between 1964-65 and then retired. He was permitted in 1970 to write his memoirs. He wrote several works on the Soviet economy and the party history. He was rewarded 5 times with the Order of Lenin badge, the Order of the October Revolution badge, and with the Red Flag badge.

As it can be seen, was the deeds of this figure, who served in all ranks of the former USSR, from Lenin to Brezhnev, and held important offices, actually "very dark" as the Armenian historians and researchers are stating?

From the Seminary to Revolutionism

Anastas Mikoyan was born to a carpenter family. After finishing primary school, his father enrolled him in an Armenian religious school (seminary) in Tbilisi. This school was one of the best educational institutions in Southern Caucasia, admitting students from every segment of the population and the Mikoyan family was very poor. Those who graduated from this school could at least become priests. His father wanted to see him grow up to be a priest, nevertheless, Mikoyan grew up to be a revolutionary. The school had become a center that raised many revolutionaries for Russia. Famous Russian authors such as Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov had also graduated from there. Stalin was studying at the Tbilisi Georgian theology school next to this school and Mikoyan had met Stalin there. Tens of known Soviet statesmen who had graduated from the theology departments before the 1917 revolution became some of the people who ruled the USSR in the 1920's and 1930's. Mikoyan's closest friend in the Armenian seminary, for example, was Gevorg Alikhanyan, who was among the leaders of the Communist International (Comintern) (which was made more operational by the Soviet Union in the late 1930's) and one of the founders of Soviet Armenia. He had also made significant contributions to Mikoyan's first revolutionary activity. The Armenian Bolshevik organizations generally emerged in the form of groups of social-democrat bodies from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Essentially, they were engaged in secret activities. The first of these organizations was the secret Marxist group that was established in the summer of 1889 in Celaloğlu (now Stepanavan) as a result of the efforts of Stepan Shaumyan. After the Russian Social Democrat Labour Party's II. Congress of 1903, Marxist-Leninist (Iskra) non-governmental organizations were established in Haghpat, Alaverdi, and Sanahin of the present-day Armenia. Anastas Mikoyan had begun to affiliate with the first Marxist organizations in the Sanahin village where he was born. During the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907, certain liberties were allowed for the secret underground Bolshevik organizations at conducting some activities. By holding legal conferences and

consultations, the Armenian Bolsheviks began publishing legitimate Armenian newspapers: “Kayts” (Eng. Spark), “Norxosk” (Eng. New Word), “Orer” (Eng. Days), and “Факты” (Eng. Facts). The rise of the revolutionary movement supported the ideological and organizational consolidation of the Bolshevik organizations. With the defeat of the Bourgeois Revolution, the Armenian Bolsheviks continued their legal and illegal work. Between the years 1907-1909, the Party’s organizations at Yerevan, Borchaly, Kars, Yeni Beyazit, Kafan, and Etchmiadzin were established. Mikoyan was also given assignments in the setup of these organizations. A while before World War I began, Mikoyan and his Armenian friends decided to take part as volunteers in the war against the Ottoman State. Before the war, a protocol was signed between the Ottoman Armenians’ main political organization, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutyun and the Committee of Union and Progress government. But despite this, it was obvious that the Armenians would fight on the Russian side. In the publications of the Armenian-language press, Armenians were being requested to join the Russians in the war. In the Erzurum Congress, the Dashnaksutyun decided to oppose the Committee of Union and Progress government by using the excuse of the government’s long-term economic, social, and administrative policies and reformist implementations towards the Christians and especially the Armenians. The “Aşhatank” (Labor) newspaper wrote the following on December 1915; “Even if the Dashnaks do not resume their own political movements, the Armenian people would not side with the Turks...”¹ This decision was not only applied by the Dashnaksutyun since the first days of the war, but also by the Hunchak, Reformed Hunchak, Ramgavar committees, and volunteer Armenian gangs. A large fraction of the Armenians situated in provinces that were likely to become warzones (such as Erzurum, Trabzon, Van, Bitlis) joined the Russians with their own weapons; those who had been conscripted fled to join the Russians. The Armenians in Iran, Romania, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States established volunteer regiments and joined the Caucasian Front. The “Mşak” newspaper published in Tbilisi had written the following: “... the Armenians who saw that war was at the door had to benefit from this opportunity.”²

1 *Aşhatank (Labor) Newspaper*, January 3, 1915.

2 *Mşak*, January 13, 1915.

Anastas Mikoyan, the Volunteer Fighter...



Image 3

Famous Armenians who took part in the World War were boasting of the victories of the Russians in the battlefield and were openly supporting the Armenian gangs that were ravaging the Ottoman lands and slaughtering the Turks-Muslims. In the headlines stating that the Armenians were siding with the Russians in the war, news reports were being published regarding volunteers from various parts of the world coming to join the Russian army. One of these volunteers was Anastas Mikoyan. The Armenians in Russia had fully joined as a community to the war against the Ottoman State. In the beginning of 1915, while the military operations on the frontlines of the Caucasus battlefield were continuing, 7 Military Units entered the war together with the Russian Army. The “Mşak” newspaper published in Armenian-language had written the following during that time: “Besides these units, there were already other military units and armed groups in the lands of ‘Western Armenia’ that only consisted of Armenians. Since the beginning of the war, while the Russian Fourth Regiment of the Caucasus Army being defeated at *Bayazıt* and *Eleşkirt*, Armenian volunteers came to its help. Following a successful offensive conducted through the left wing of the Russian army, with the aim of keeping the Turkish Forces in *Sarıkamış* in a blockade, they directed their incessant incursions towards *Muş* and *Bitlis*.”³ According to the news

3 *Mşak*, April 2, 1915.

report, the residents here were annihilated. Afterwards, “Armenians [who were a part of Russian troops] arranged a counterattack in February-May 1915 at *Malazgirt, Çatak, Kötiire, Erciş* and *Van* against the soldiers of the Fourth Army Corps under the command of Abdul Kerim Pasha. The Fourth Army Corps was forced to fall back to *Eleşkirt*. In July, the supporting forces attacked once again, and they succeeded to push back the Turks who had reached the Van Lake shores again. The liberation of the entire South-West region of ‘Western Armenia’ is near.” These are the what “*Mşak*” newspaper reported.⁴

Another newspaper “*Horizon*” was informing its readers of the following news with joy: “16 January 1916. The Russian troops have defeated the Turkish army and Karin [referring to Erzurum] along with the surrounding villages have been captured. Russian soldiers have entered Karin on 16 February and have captured the city.”⁵ According to the information on the site *hayzinvor.am* belonging to the Armenians, the Armenians had gone to war against the Ottoman State as a whole community. The Armenians joining the war were being openly supported by the press. According to what was being written in the newspapers, the Armenians’ active participation to the military operations in the Caucasian war was for the liberation of “Western Armenia” in which they lived and for which they had desired independence for a long time. Since voluntary participation in the war began, the Tsarist government, which had benefitted from this passion of the Armenian people, began to praise the voluntary movement. It had decided to encourage the people with seductive words. “The number of Ottoman Armenians in the Eastern front of the Russian Tsarist army only constituted %13, there were approximately 250 thousand Armenian soldiers. The Armenian soldiers in the armies of France, Britain and the US were more than 50 thousand. Armenian ‘Military Councils’ were established in the central cities of Russia. Its representatives were in almost all towns in the empire. Voluntary organizations were collecting aid to support the Tsarist government in the war. The collected aid money was 1.020.000 rubles in 1915 only. Afterwards, the Armenians living in the Russian Empire had collected 1.444.000 rubles for this.”⁶ Initially, there were four organized *kamavorakan*, i.e. Armenian voluntary units. Andranik Ozanian, Kerri, Hanasortsi Vartan, Hamazasp and others were commanding the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Armenian units at different times. Afterwards, along with the 5th and 6th units, the 7th brigade also entered the war. In the year 1915 alone, the number of volunteers here had increased to 6000. The young Anastas Mikoyan was among these volunteers. After World War I began, Andranik Ozanian

4 *Mşak*, October 5, 1915.

5 *Horizon*, January 16, 1916.

6 “Անդրանիկ Օզանյանի մասնակցությունը առաջին համաշխարհային պատերազմին” [Eng. Andranik Ozanyan’s participation in the First World War], *Hayastani Hanrabedutyun Journal* (10 September 1999).

offered his own services to the Russian Empire. Ozanian was given permission to form Armenian volunteer units to join the battles in the Caucasian front. At the end of 1914, the young Mikoyan joined one of these detachments. In his autobiography, it is shown that the date he entered the Communist party was 1915. However, even though he had in fact joined the party, he did not play a critical role. Mikoyan was not Bolshevik at all at that time and during these years he never had sympathy for them either. He was on well-known Armenian *fedai* Srvantsyan's side as a commissar, but he never mentioned this.

In his work titled "The Path of the Struggle" published in 1970, Mikoyan wrote the following: "War with Turkey concerned the Armenians more. The victories of the Russian weapons were a hope for the Armenians from being freed from Turkish captivity."⁷

Andranik Ozanian was commanding the Armenians' largest military unit in the Russian Army. Andranik's unit consisting of 1200 people joined the first open battle on 16 November 1914 at the Selmas-Van direction. As World War I was beginning, Andranik hurried towards Caucasus. In 12 August 1914, Andranik arrived at Tbilisi, the location where the Caucasus military centers banded together. He met with Chief Commander Mishlyayevski and stated that he was ready to join the war against Turkey. He expressed that he wanted to form a regiment made up of volunteers and, after receiving approval, he established the first voluntary Armenian regiment.

This first group was an Armenian unit.

The second group entered the war on 7 November from the front left direction: *Iğdır-Bayazıt-Berkri-Van*,

The third group entered the war on 13 November from the direction of *Kağızman-Alaşkert-Malazgirt-Bitlis*,

The fourth group entered the war on 13 November from the direction of *Sarıkamış-Orzan-Köprü-Köy-Erzurum*.

In the summer of 1916, the Russian Military Command established five more brigades constituted from the voluntary Armenian troops. One of them was commanded by the Caucasian Cavalry Corps Full General Chernozubov, the remaining four were commanded by Devitte. This decision of the Tsarist government led to objection among the volunteers. Most of the volunteers deserted their military units. The first unit that Andranik was commanding wanted to capture Kotur, starting from mid-November to 18 December. This

7 А. И. Микоян, *Дорогой борьбы* Кн. 1 (М.: Политиздат, 1971).

unit prevented the Turkish army from maneuvering in the direction of Van by controlling the terrain from Van to the town of Saray. This provided the Russians the opportunity to repel the armies of Halil Bey in *Selmas-Dilman*. Mikoyan himself had joined these battles. The Armenian social democrats and Bolsheviks were supporting the Dashnaksutyun Party for its support to Russia in its fight against the Ottoman State. Stepan Shaumyan, one of the known social democrats during those years, stated the following during a meeting organized in Baku on October of 1915: “The Dashnaks have done everything they can for the Turkish Armenians to support Russia... They have established voluntary *drujinas* [military units] with their own money. They have included Turkish Armenians [deserters and even members of parliament].”⁸

Anastas Mikoyan had written these in his memoirs book titled “This Is What Happened” [Rus. *Так было*] published in 1999:

“We, on our part, looked on the Armenian volunteer units as an opportunity to take part in the national liberation movement. We cited the example of the Bulgarians, who fought with the Russians against Turkey in their struggle for national liberation (...)

We signed up as volunteers on a day in November 1914 without saying a word to our parents, and boarded a troop train at Navtlug Station for the border city of Dzhulfa. (...) We spent a week at Dzhulfa undergoing a minimal amount of training, and then we were sent to the front as reinforcements for Andranik’s troops, who were deployed in Persian territory near the Turkish border.

(...) Andranik had already won fame for his military exploits. (...) Later we saw that his authority was unquestioned among the troops under his command. (...)

Our arrival at the front coincided with an offensive that was underway in that sector. The surrounding locale was mountainous and lacked roads. There was snow on the ground up in the mountains. The enemy offered little resistance and our offensive was very successful for several days running. We occupied a series of tiny villages, consisting on the average of ten to fifteen dwellings situated in ravines. The houses were empty. The population had already been evacuated to the rear, leaving everything behind. Overwhelming poverty was in evidence everywhere.

Later, we received orders to begin a retreat, although the enemy had not yet forced us to do so. It was said that the Turkish troops had begun a counterattack farther to the south. (...)

8 Stepan Shaumyan, *Seçkin Eserleri* (Moskova: Siyasi Edebiyat Yayınları), 7-15.

My comrades with whom I had arrived at the front decided to return home, complaining of the campaign's difficulty and of their fatigue. The commanders had nothing against their leaving, but my pride kept me from joining them. I considered it childish to leave after being at the front for less than a month and accomplishing nothing.

After a short rest, our regiment marched into Ottoman territory from the area around the town of Khoya of Persian Azerbaijan. The regiment consisted almost entirely of workers from Baku. (...)”⁹

According to Mikoyan's description in his memoirs, his life in wartime had reached the city of Van in the composition of the Russian-Armenian regiment. Here, Mikoyan became ill and was hospitalized in Tbilisi. After his recovery, he quickly continued his education life and his revolutionary activities in Echmiadzin, Yerevan, and Tbilisi.

9 А. И Микоян *Так было Размышления о миңувшем* (М.: Вагриус, 1999). English translation of the aforementioned part taken from Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, *Memoirs of Anastas Mikoyan (Volume I: The Path of Struggle)*, trans. Katherine T. O'Connor and Diane L. Burgin (Madison: Sphinx Press, 1988), 33, 34, 35.

CHAPTER TWO

Anastas Mikoyan and the Issue of “Turkish Armenia”



Image 4: Vladimir Lenin (left) and Josef Stalin (right)

Anastas Mikoyan had joined the Bolsheviks party in November 1915 as a member. Before long, he was given assignment by the party. His responsibilities were defined as the follows: “Carrying out propaganda activities among students, explaining the main issues of the war with baseline subjects, fighting for the collapse of the Tsarist autocracy, stating national matters to the youth, attempting to deepen the spite and hatred the Armenian youth have for the Ottoman State!”¹⁰

Mikoyan writes all of these in his memoirs. The First World War had given the Bolsheviks a new opportunity to defy the hegemony. In 1915-1916, under the RSDLP (b) Caucasian Bureau leadership, the Bolsheviks of Armenia re-established their organizations or formed new party groups. Their activities became more active during the 1917 October Revolution. Mikoyan became one of the Armenian Bolsheviks who had participated in all these activities led by Stalin and Shaumyan. He was now a trusted member of the Bolshevik Party.

On February of 1917, as a result of the Tsarist autocracy collapsing in Russia and the political command being left to the Temporary Government, the Armenian Bolsheviks took immediate action. Despite that the only Armenian member of the Caucasia Special Committee named “Regulation on ‘Turkish Armenia’ by Temporary Government” was M. I. Papacanyan, the

10 А. И Микоян *Так было.*

Armenian revolutionaries were able to play a part here. Mikoyan explains in his memoirs that he wanted to be at the forefront.¹¹

The political and socio-economic situation that had taken shape in the South Caucasia following the World War gave birth to the Armenians' idea to carry their plan for establishing a state on to these territories. Bringing up the "Armenian Question" to the agenda at every opportunity was among the priorities of the Armenian political organizations. The attitude of the five member Caucasia Special Committee, which came to power on February 1917 with the "Regulation on 'Turkish Armenia' by Temporary Government", was in this direction. The Russian Temporary Government had ended in 9 May 1917; however, the Bolsheviks continued this subject.

Shortly after the October Revolution, Mikoyan was assigned to Baku for party duty. This city was an important industrial center for Russia and the main stronghold of the Bolsheviks in Caucasia. The Baku Soviet included the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks, the Dashnaks, the Socialist Revolutionaries, and other parties. With the proposal of Lenin, the Bolsheviks (in December 1917) assigned RSDLP (b) Central Committee member Stepan Shaumyan to Baku as the Commissar Extraordinary responsible for the Caucasian affairs.

On April 1918, the Council of People's Commissars, of which Mikoyan was also a part of, was announced. Although the policies that the Bolshevik government was pursuing regarding the Armenians was different than those of the previous governments, the Armenian claims and the activities that were supporting them had not changed. Following the Armenian origin Shaumyan being assigned by Lenin in December 1917 as the Commissar Extraordinary to the Baku, the influence of the Armenian Bolsheviks in Caucasia began increasing even more. The subject of "Turkey's Armenia" was brought to the agenda again. The Ottoman lands demanded as "Turkish Armenia" – apart from Kars, consisted of the provinces of Erzurum, Erzincan, Muş, Van and Bitlis and the entire region that comprised of the eastern part of the route formed by these provinces and the regions that reached the Russian border. An Armenian mayor being assigned to the Turkish lands named "Turkish Armenia" had pleased the Armenians even more. The Bolsheviks had supported this as well. Although the policies pursued by the newly established Bolshevik government in Russia, which was a result of the 1917 October Revolution, regarding the Armenians was different than those of the previous governments, the Armenian claims and the activities that constituted support for this had not changed. They had made a tactical change under the Bolshevik flag. People who were previously connected to a different view or party had joined the Bolshevik party and had intensified their activities in Caucasia as

11 А. И Микоян *Так было*.

well as the province of Kars, which was connected to Russia. Although Mikoyan's was officially a Bolshevik, he was acting as an Armenian nationalist.



Image 5: Anastas Mikoyan (left), Josef Stalin (middle) and Suren Spandaryan (right)

Soon after the Bolsheviks seized control, a new public mandate emerged regarding the “Turkish Armenia.” This public mandate, which was signed by V. Lenin, I. Stalin, V. Bonch-Bruyevich, and N. Gorbunov was not a result of their long and collective efforts at all. It was the Armenians who presented it to the Bolsheviks. This public mandate, which was ratified by the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 15 January 1918, being presented brashly and put into practice was a sign of how effective the Armenian Bolsheviks were. As Mikoyan was at the center of these “activities”, he had an obligation to implement the directives from the center. In 1919, he became a member of the Caucasus Regional Committee and kept relations tight with Moscow. With the assignment of the Caucasus Regional Committee on October 1919, he crossed the Denikin front and arrived in Moscow and met with Lenin. In this period, he joined the meetings of the Politburo and the Organizational Bureau of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee in which decisions were made regarding the formation of a party in Baku and Transcaucasia. In April 1920, he was situated in Baku during the period when the Soviet government was being established in Azerbaijan and performed duties as an administrator.



Image 6

The Armenian Bolsheviks also had special plans for the Eastern Anatolia provinces. This was not a program of some party. It was a plan that belonged to all Armenians regardless of their political views. Everyone was supporting this. It is revealed from the new documents that we obtained from Armenia's archives that Moscow's instructions were hindering these Armenian plans from carrying through. Moscow was pursuing a policy to pull Atatürk's Turkey onto its side and the Armenian Bolsheviks were obliged to support this.

In December 1919, RKP (b) the Caucasus Regional Committee member Mikoyan sent a report to Lenin titled "On the Caucasian Issue". In this report, he displayed a view that was different from his own. Perhaps he had understood that if he supported his previous views regarding "Turkish Armenia", this would not have been accepted by Moscow and he would lose his reputation.

A passage from the report:

"... Armenian chauvinists, with the help of the allied imperialist forces and the extreme reactionary Gen Denikin, still cherish an illusion that has become a criminal idea of creating a 'Great Armenia' in its historical areas from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean made up of seven provinces.

The absence of Armenians and presence of exclusively Muslim population on these territories does not embarrass them.

The ‘Great Armenia’ cannot rely on the will of the majority of the population, but it will be forced upon it through the power of the imperialist arms, will be spread by blood and iron on a pile of rubble and corpses of innocent ‘foreigners’ by cleansing ‘Armenia’ from the ‘criminal elements’ of Muslims. The program of creating such a hell and nightmare of violence are successfully supported by the allied imperialist forces, hoping to find the best, the most capable and dedicated agents in the person of the Armenians through whom it wants to rob Turkey, turning it into a colony, an area of the financial capital of allies...”¹²

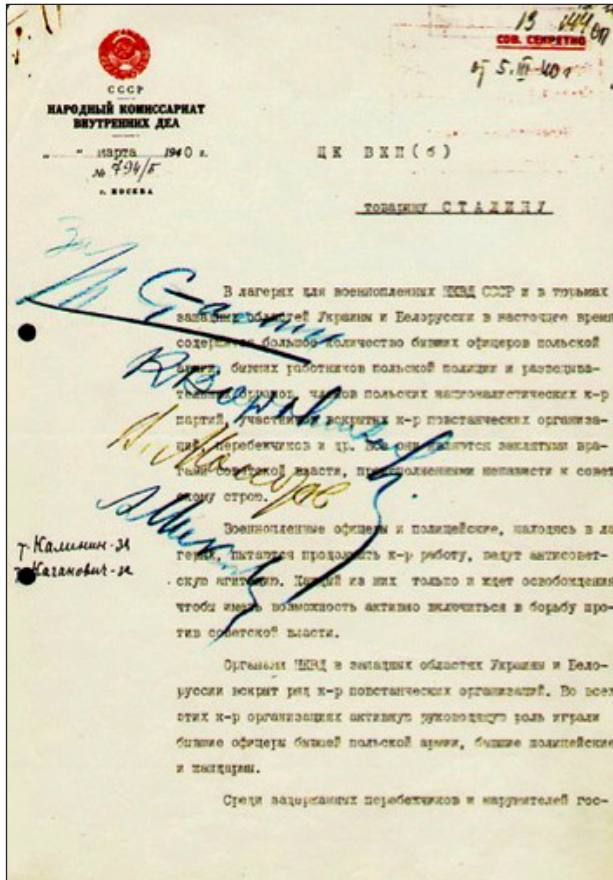


Image 7

12 English translation of the aforementioned passage taken from “A. Mikoyan describes the idea of ‘Great Armenia’ as criminal,” 1905.az, accessed March 20, 2020, <http://1905.az/en/a-mikoyan-describes-the-idea-of-great-armenia-as-criminal/>.

“As the Bolshevik Anastas Mikoyan explained, he emphasized the need for a new and smoother endeavor for the ‘Armenian Question’ before it was too late. Mikoyan, whose political efficiency could not be evaluated as uniform, had harshly criticized the Armenian movement in his comments in 1919. In Mikoyan’s evaluations included in the report he sent to Lenin, who he had recently met, he had displayed the potential of forming the image of a prudent communist devoid of nationalist sentiment. He had written that the Armenian nationalist movement had ended being a freedom movement and became a reactionary, occupying [‘imperialist’] movement. Turkish Armenia considered the idea of a ‘Great, sole and independent Armenia’ as detrimental, evil and reactionary and stated that the Communist party should fight against this. The Armenian nationalist movement being characterized as an occupying imperialist movement is creating new questions and answers due to this movement’s consequences.”¹³

“A thought different than that of the Dashnak leader was being presented. Interestingly enough, the Bolshevik Mikoyan was now considering the ‘Great Armenia’ idea as unfounded. He had stated in his report presented to Vladimir Lenin on December 1919 that the idea of establishing a ‘Great Armenia’, consisting of seven provinces of the Ottoman State from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, was a vain dream and a crime. He had based his approach towards this subject on a few principles: Armenians do not live in the lands of the ‘Turkish Armenia’, there is only a Muslim population; it is not suitable for the will of the majority population and it is the imperialists’ tool; in the post-war conditions it is in conflict with the interests of world revolution and war against imperialism.

13 Firdovsiyye Ahmedova, “Rusya’nın ‘Türkiye Ermenistan’ı’ Politikası (1917-1920),” *Yeni Türkiye* 60 (2014): 9.



Image 8

As Anastas Mikoyan evaluated the Communist Party's attitude regarding the 'Armenian Question', he presented his own approach to the public mandate on 'Turkish Armenia'. Regarding this subject, he indicated that the Bolsheviks displayed approaches according to the conditions before and after the war. That is to say, until World War I, the Armenians in the lands of 'Turkish Armenia' did not constitute a significant ratio of the population and did not constitute the majority in many areas. He explained that their national struggle for independence was a revolutionary event against the feudal despot regime in Turkey, but the situation had changed during and after the war. Insisting on the previous approach regarding the 'Armenian Question', supporting the 'Turkish Armenia' idea would mean collaborating with the 'Fascist government' of the 'Caucasian Armenia'. Mikoyan, who referred to the Armenian Fascists as the Allied Powers' agents in Turkey, approved acting in accordance with strategic aims formed after the war. He considered the Eastern Muslims' revolt against imperialism, the memorandum regarding the independence of 'Turkish Armenia' issued in order to hinder the process of classification and domestic social and political development among the Muslim communities as a grave error.

He expressed that this memorandum regarding the independence of 'Turkish Armenia' achieved no positive results, on the contrary, it had

caused not only the Turkish Muslims, but also Caucasia's Muslims to revolt against the Soviets. Along with a small group of his Armenian friends, Mikoyan stated that he opposed the announcing of the memorandum regarding 'Turkish Armenia' from the very first day and that it was too late to correct this error. Presumably, the thought and approach of Anastas Mikoyan, who had joined the Baku Bolsheviks on the autumn of 1917 and who was a member of the party's Baku Committee governing board, could not have overcome the thought and logic of Stepan Shaumyan, who was named the 'Caucasian Lenin'. That is to say, S. Shaumyan, who was the source of inspiration for the idea of 'Turkish Armenia's autonomy and the practitioner of its memorandum, had conducted various declarations and practices. An approach was displayed towards this subject based on the self-determination."¹⁴

By the assignment of the Committee on 1919 October, the Caucasus Regional Committee of the Russian Communist Party member Mikoyan crossed the Denikin front, arrived in Moscow and met with Lenin. In the 16-page report that Mikoyan had written in Moscow during early December, he explained his arguments regarding the situation in Caucasia and the policies that need to be conducted. Here is the Mikoyan's report:

Russian Communist Party (B) Caucasus Committee member Anastas Mikoyan's "The Caucasus Issue" report sent to Lenin (Moscow, 1919 Early December):

Regarding the "Turkish Armenia" issue

1. Until today, our party's central organs had placed a *special* importance more on the Armenian issue than, for instance, the Georgian issue or issue of other Caucasian nations. The reason for this is related to the Armenians' conditions before the war and this was based on the subjects regarding "Turkish Armenia". In the situation that occurred after the war, it became evident that these policies regarding the "Armenian issue" turned out to be unreasonable, wrong and even harmful in the sense of the interests of the world revolution and the war against imperialism.
2. If the Armenians had constituted a significant part of the population of Turkish Armenia until the war, if they had been the majority in many places, and had their battles in the name of national independence been against Turkey's feudal-despotic regime, it would have been interpreted as an objective revolutionary factor, albeit not a fully judicious one.

14 Ahmedova, "Rusya'nın 'Türkiye Ermenistan'ı' Politikası (1917-1920)," 4-5.

However, our observations during and after the war demonstrate that the situation is exactly the opposite. (...)

Mikoyan stated in his argument that the region was left without Armenians as a result of this situation and underlined that the Muslim population had also suffered greatly in the war. He continues his arguments as follows:

3. ... Armenian chauvinists, with the help of the allied imperialist forces and the extreme reactionary Gen Denikin, still cherish an illusion that has become a criminal idea of creating a “Great Armenia” in its historical areas from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean made up of seven provinces. The absence of Armenians and presence of exclusively Muslim population on these territories does not embarrass them. The “Great Armenia” cannot rely on the will of the majority of the population, but it will be forced upon it through the power of the imperialist arms, will be spread by blood and iron on a pile of rubble and corpses of innocent “foreigners” by cleansing “Armenia” from the “criminal elements” of Muslims. The program of creating such a hell and nightmare of violence are successfully supported by the allied imperialist forces, hoping to find the best, the most capable and dedicated agents in the person of the Armenians through whom it wants to rob Turkey, turning it into a colony, an area of the financial capital of allies...
4. Can the Communist Party support this plan, the idea of “Great and Independent Armenia”? The chauvinists are telling us to reckon with this newly emerged realistic situation and refusing an independent Turkish Armenia would signify taking sides with the Turkish despots and butchers, validating the plans and hopes of those who are annihilating the Armenians and abolishing the Armenians’ right to self-determination. (...)

While our party is sincerely grieving for the innocent Armenian victims, we cannot agree with the views of the Armenian nationalists and their imperialist allies and cannot become the executioner of thousands of new innocent victims and at least that many enslaved Turkish poor in the name of the Armenian chauvinists’ gang of murderers. Our party cannot argue for any Turkish Armenia ‘Great’ or ‘Small’. The right of self-determination of nations is not a *historical* but a *real* right for us.

5. To maintain our previous stance on the Armenian question, to support an independent Turkish Armenia, to form a unity against the millions of Muslims, that have already raised the rebellion flag against the marauding plans of a chauvinist reactionary government that has

‘liberated’ the Caucasian Armenia, their patron the League of Nations, the Allied Powers and their Armenian chauvinist agents, in the East and the Anatolian Muslim population which is surging like the sea, do not only mean restraining the Eastern Muslims causes against imperialism, but also to halt their domestic societal-political development processes and the class disintegration amongst the Muslim communities in Turkey.

6. In this regard, Soviet Russia’s manifesto on Turkish Armenia’s right to self-determination (1917) was a grave mistake. No positive results were achieved, it had caused not only the Turkish Muslims, but also Caucasia’s Muslims to revolt against it. By legally recognizing all the Armenian peoples’ leaders and remaining silent for the Muslims, the Soviet government displayed an image in the eyes of the Muslims of siding with the Armenians while siding against the Muslims. (...) We have had this view from the first day of the declaration of the manifesto together with a small group of Armenian comrades in the Caucasus. It is too late to correct this mistake. However, it is necessary to establish a new correct orientation in regard to the Armenian Issue as soon as possible. The following must be accepted:
 - a/ The Armenian nationalist movement, as a result of the dialectic evolution, transformed from a cause of freedom to its opposite, to reactionism; it has critically reached a state of an occupying ‘imperialist’ movement.
 - b/ The idea of a Turkish Armenia and a ‘Great, United and Independent Armenia’ in general is a detrimental, criminal, and reactionary pipe dream that our Party must certainly fight against.
 - c/ The Armenian Issue, due to its most important part being the Turkish Armenia issue, has lost its former historical significance; it stopped being an international issue of Europe and became a specific Russian issue limited to the Armenian masses of Caucasian Armenia, exactly like in the Georgian, Azerbaijani etc. issues.
7. There is only one thing to do regarding the Turkish Armenian immigrants residing in the Caucasus; sending them back to the last locations in Turkey where they had been residing after the Soviet government is established in today’s Caucasian Armenia, after the “Great Armenia” idea is rejected for real and not supposedly, after they stop nursing a grudge against the Turks, after they end their policy of pursuing the Muslims in Armenia for good, after ensuring the trust for the Muslim masses, and after good relations are established with the

Turkish people. This is the only way out that can be realized in the situation of today.

8. The communist activities amongst the Turkish Armenians cannot be conducted by the hand of the alleged Armenian National-Communist Party, which defends the idea of a United Caucasia and Turkish Armenia, presents Armenian chauvinism under the guise of communism, conducts Muslim massacres under the name of fighting against the counter-revolutionaries for the Soviet rule. Based on the events created by the states' forms and borders, our Party's Central Committee must suggest to the sincere Armenian communists who want to work amongst the Armenians in Turkey to establish the only *Turkey Communist Party* with the Turkish communist groups and to establish an Armenian section within it, if necessary. The Central Committee must emphasize to them that the communist practice must not be conducted with the aim of forming a separate state border or establishing a same state and that the central and main issue is the revolutionary movement being the class struggle of all nationalities' laborer masses and developing the collective struggle of the workers and the peasantry against the oppressors. Only through this way can political development be achieved through the close cooperation of the revolutionary movement of the Armenian laborers and the peasantry with the Muslims in Turkey. In case of the exact opposite situation occurring, if a successful endeavor is conducted only among the Armenians and is not conducted with the Muslims of the region, it will inevitably take on an Armenian chauvinistic character and would lead to provocations and objectively result in counter revolutionary consequences.¹⁵

Under the other subheadings of his report titled "On the Caucasus Issue" written in early December 1919, the Armenian Bolshevik leader Mikoyan touches on points that closely concern the Armenian question and cites the practices of the Dashnak government. Mikoyan describes the Dashnak government regime as one engaging in national massacre and banditry-pillage, and states that the government was conducting systematic carnage and massacres against the Muslims with the aim of 'Armenianizing' the country. Additionally, Mikoyan expresses that a significant majority of the Armenians, apart from a small minority residing in villages, were disposed to chauvinism.¹⁶

These views of his did not overlap with the views of another Armenian leader -Stepan Shaumyan. In fact, it was quite different.

15 Rusya Toplumsal Siyasal Tarih Devlet Arşivi (RGASPI) f. 80, 1.3, d. 20, y. s. 1-4.

16 Mehmet Perinçek, "Ermeni Bolşevik Önderi Mikoyan'ın Lenin'e Raporu," accessed from www.turkishnews.com.

“S. Shaumyan, who was conferred special authority regarding the protection of the rights of the Armenians in Turkey, was supporting the active position of the Armenians in Caucasia. S. Shaumyan, who ‘has devotedly defended the borders of Caucasia for 3 years and has left ten thousand of his brothers in the battlefield and in the Armenian mountains’ [these are the words of S. Shaumyan], was warning the Armenians regarding keeping weapons belonging to the Russian Republic. He acknowledged the Armenians that were fighting in the Caucasus Front, as well as presenting Andranik, who was the leader of the Turkish Armenians and had acquired fame [or rather, infamy] for his massacres against the Muslims in Caucasia, as a “folk hero”. Andranik himself was also mentioning with appreciation the “Armenian heroism” that S. Shaumyan was describing as three years of sacrifice which materialized by means of the Russian State hegemony. Moreover, he had written the following in the telegraph he had sent from Yerevan to the President of Russian State Duma Rodzianko on 15 May 1917: ‘The I. General Assembly of the Turkish Armenians in Yerevan expresses its deep gratitude to the great and free Russian people for very sincere hospitality and providing sanctuary for our suffering and expelled people for 3 years.’”¹⁷

Shaumyan, Andranik, and the Issue of “Turkish Armenia”

“Andranik, who had a regular army and gathered Armenian bandit troops, was demanding the Muslims to submit themselves to the Armenian government. He was stating that they would otherwise be removed from the regions they were living in.”¹⁸ Shaumyan, an Armenian Bolshevik trusted by Lenin, was supporting Andranik in every respect regarding this subject and was even suggesting to view him as the ‘closest ally of the Bolsheviks’.

“To actualize the ‘Armenian State’ plan, as the Tsarist Government and the Temporary Russian Government was implementing, the first step of the Bolshevik rulership, issuing a public mandate regarding ‘Turkish Armenia’ was the first sign of this support.

However, public mandate about the ‘Turkish Armenia’, which became officially inexecutable with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, could not make any progress from being a declaration.”¹⁹

17 Rusya Devlet Sosyal-Siyasi Tarih Arşivi (RDSSTA), f.71, s.33, iş.101, v.26. Cited in: Ahmedova, “Rusya’nın ‘Türkiye Ermenistan’ı’ Politikası (1917-1920),” 7.

18 Ahmedova, “Rusya’nın ‘Türkiye Ermenistan’ı’ Politikası (1917-1920),” 8.

19 Ahmedova, “Rusya’nın ‘Türkiye Ermenistan’ı’ Politikası (1917-1920),” 8.

“The ‘Turkish Armenia’ public mandate could not be executed firstly due to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and afterwards due to the national freedom struggle carried out by the leadership of Mustafa Kemal during the 20s of the 20th century ending in victory and due to the collaborations established with Soviet Russia. Stepan Shaumyan, who was assigned to actualize this task, could neither actualize the autonomy of ‘Turkish Armenia’, nor establish Soviet dominance in Caucasia or Baku.”²⁰

“Shaumyan, who was assigned to the Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus, was given the task to Sovietize Caucasia by the 13th Decree and warrant to establish an Armenia in the Turkish lands occupied by the Russian army. Acting with this aim, Shaumyan first arrived at Tbilisi and called for Caucasia to join the Soviets on January 22. In response to this attempt, the Transcaucasian Commissariat, which was already opposed to the Bolshevik Revolution, forced Shaumyan to leave the country in 24 hours. As a result of this situation, Shaumyan and the people with him took refuge in Baku.”²¹

“After the endeavors made during this time period, on 29 December 1917/11 January 1918, Soviet of People’s Commissar (Sovnarkom) acknowledged the reputable public mandate regarding the ‘Turkish Armenia’, known more commonly as the 13th decree. Two days later, with the signatures of Lenin and Stalin -on 13 January 1918- this decree published in the ‘Pravda’ newspaper was going to direct the Turkish-Russian and particularly the Turkish-Armenian relations. The 13th decree was as following:

‘The Soviet of People’s Commissar declares to the Armenian people that the Russian Workers’ and Peasants’ Government supports the rights to self-determination for the Armenians of ‘Turkish Armenia’ under Russia’s occupation, until full independence is obtained in fact. According to the Soviet of People’s Commissar, obtaining these rights will only be possible with the pre-acquiring of certain measures that will ensure the Armenian people will conduct a referendum freely. The Soviet of People’s Commissar believes that these measures will be as follows:

- 1- The Russian army withdrawing from the ‘Turkish Armenia’ region and quickly establishing an Armenian People’s Militia with the purpose of

20 Ahmedova, “Rusya’nın ‘Türkiye Ermenistan’ı’ Politikası (1917-1920),” 9.

21 Enis Şahin, “Bolşevik Hükümeti’nin Ermeni Siyaseti ve ‘Türk Ermenistanı’ Meselesi,” *Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* (2010): 44.

ensuring the security of the personal property belonging to the community in ‘Turkish Armenia’.

- 2- The Armenian immigrants and Armenian refugees scattered in various regions being able to return to the country of ‘Turkish Armenia’ without facing any obstacles.
- 3- The enabling of the Armenians who have been forcefully sent to the inner provinces of Turkey during the war to freely return to the ‘Turkish Armenia’; while the peace negotiations are being maintained with the Turkish offices -the Soviet of People’s Commissar will persistently place emphasis on this issue.
- 4- It has been decided to establish a temporary administration in the ‘Turkish Armenia’ under the title ‘The Soviet Armenian Peoples’ Representatives’. Stepan Shaumyan, the temporary Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus Affairs has been appointed for the application of the 2. and 3. articles to the community of ‘Turkish Armenia’ and with providing any kind of assistance regarding the formation of the joint commission which will regulate the Russian soldiers’ eviction from the field of ‘Turkish Armenia’ (Article I).

Addendum: The geographical borders of ‘Turkish Armenia’ will be designated and determined by the Armenian people’s delegates elected in accordance with democratic principles, the delegates of the other provinces’ (Islam and other) communities elected in accordance with democratic principles together with the temporary Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus Affairs.

President of the Soviet of People’s Commissars V. Ulyanov (Lenin)

The People’s Commissariat of Nationalities I. Chugashvili (Stalin)

Manager of Affairs of the Soviet of People’s Commissars V. Bonch Bruevich

Secretary of the Soviet of People’s Commissars N. Gorbunov’

In short, according to the Decree; issues such as Russia’s withdrawal from the Turkish lands it had occupied during the war and the establishment of an Armenian militia force for the protection of the civilian community in the region in response to this withdrawal, the Armenians who have fled their homes due to the forced relocation being able to freely return to their homes, and Stepan Shaumyan coming to power at the temporarily established ‘The Soviet

Armenian Peoples' Representatives' were being solved 'according to the Russians'. There were certain reasons of shaped by interests as to why the Bolsheviks approved such a decree and became 'defendants' of the Armenians; there were many Armenians amongst the Russian socialists and Bolsheviks. The Bolshevik leaders had assumed it as their duty to protect the rights of the 'poor' Armenians who were under the 'Turkish oppression' with the intention of finding favor with the socialists in Europe and America."²²

22 Şahin, "Bolşevik Hükümeti'nin," 39-40.

CHAPTER THREE

Anastas Mikoyan's Activities in Baku

Why Did the “27th Commissar” Survive?

As mentioned in his memoirs, Mikoyan had arrived in Baku with a specific instruction. It is also written in his memoirs that although he was a Bolshevik party member, he had arrived for the Armenian national cause.

For which duties did Mikoyan come to Baku to fulfill? It will be seen afterwards that he was frequently meeting with Shaumyan and even advising him. Mikoyan writes about his arrival to Baku as follows:

“Late in the evening on my return to the city, I stopped off again at the Baku Party Committee headquarters and this time I found Shaumian there. I told him my reasons for coming to Baku and presented the envelope from Shaverdian.

This is what Shaverdian had written to Shaumian on the back of his visiting card:

Dear Stepan! The bearer of this note, Anastas Mikoyan, is a newly baptized Social Democrat who has had good training. I send him to you to help in the struggle against the Dashnaks. He is a very able young fellow. (...) He'll tell you about the current state of affairs.

Yours, Danush”²³

The “for the struggle with the Dashnaks” expression has a metaphorical meaning here. While Shaumyan had assigned Mikoyan to work with the oil workers, his essential objective would be revealed. For certain, Mikoyan did not conduct propaganda in only the oil fields. In the further chapters of his memoirs, it is explained that he was assigned with specific instruction of Shaumyan to work at Baku’s oil fields and that this was conducted with a special aim. It is understood from here that Mikoyan was sent to Baku with a special assignment regarding Baku’s oil resources. He had also made the offer for the expropriation of Baku’s oil:

“The issue of expropriating the Baku’s petroleum industry had surfaced. Starting from February 1918, this subject was repeated and became a subject of discussions. Some high-level officials were stating that Soviet Russia can only remain standing as a result of the expropriation of petrol production. These were technical personnel and the administration of the oil fields, etc. The amount of fuel sent from Baku could have

23 English translation of the aforementioned part taken from Mikoyan, *Memoirs*, 70.

determined the fate of the Soviet rule in Russia. Shaumyan had repeatedly held consultations with Lenin regarding this subject. Lenin had supported Shaumyan in the decision for immediate expropriation. The decision of the Council of People's Commissars had been approved.”²⁴

When the Bolsheviks came to power in Caucasia for the second time, they made tactical changes to their aforementioned policies regarding the “Turkish Armenia”. Some of the Caucasus communists, who were stating that the experience of 1918 was a mistake, were holding discussions in accordance with the realities of the new geopolitical environment in 1920. The Armenian nationalists that were opposing them did not want to accept the actual situation and were interpreting the rejection of the independence of “Turkish Armenia” as “siding with the Turkish tyrants and executioners.”

As an Armenian-Bolshevik coalition was being formed in Baku under the presidency of commissar extraordinary Shaumyan, Mikoyan was included to that committee. Such a young newcomer to Baku joining this coalition was suspicious. By this way, Shaumyan, Mikoyan, Emiryan, Korganov and the other representatives of the Dashnaksutyun party were conducting the policy of making Baku a part of the “Great Armenia” under the Bolshevik flag. They first took action to form an Armenian regular army in Baku. Shaumyan was obtaining weapons from the Russian soldiers who were discharged or fled from the Caucasus front and arming the Armenians in Baku. He knew that it was not possible to have complete dominance in Baku without a strong military unit. At the same time, he was making every attempt to prevent the armament of the Turks. Thus, the Bolsheviks had quickly armed the Armenians before the March 1918 massacre²⁵ Grigory Korganov was in charge of the primary military group. He was previously the Chairman of the Revolutionary Army in the Caucasus. Mikoyan had taken part in this group together with Avakyan and Stamboltsyan.

The army that the Bolsheviks established in Baku being constituted of Armenians had been admitted by the Soviet historians as well. One of them was Y. Ratgauzer. The author expressed that the Red Army formed by the Soviets did not have the strength to fully prevent the issues and uprisings of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and property owners. Therefore, the Soviets took advantage from the Dashnak military troops settled in the city. Mikoyan, who was Bolshevik, wrote in his memoirs that the Dashnak troops would contribute to the city being cleansed of Muslims. There were well-armed military troops who were affiliated with the Dashnaksutyun Party and

24 А. И Микоян *Так было*, 39.

25 The massacre of March 1918 carried out by Armenians against Azerbaijanis in Baku.

Armenian National Council in Baku. A large number of weapons was inherited to them from the previous Russian army. At the same time, Armenian National Council, which had a significant amount of money, was purchasing weapons from the discharged Russian soldiers. The Armenian Dashnak military troops were well-trained and were “educated” to have a deep hatred against the Turks. On the eve of the March genocide, 80% of the Red Army, whose Chief of the Staff was Dashnaktsutyun Party member Armenian Zaven Avetisov, consisted of Armenians.

In his memoirs, Anastas Mikoyan wrote that “a week prior to the beginning of these uprisings, he had halted all of his propaganda activities, stopped going to the worker’s meetings, and that he completely focused on the issue of the establishment and armament of the armed troops.”²⁶ Whereas, according to the memoirs of A. Baranov, who had been a Bolshevik party member since 1917, Anastas Mikoyan was at the helm of the operation launched at the Baku fortress gate and even got his foot wounded during the events in March. This indicates that, Mikoyan himself had participated in the March genocide conducted against the Azerbaijani Turks.

Stepan Shaumyan had prepared a plan to annex Baku to Russia. Mikoyan was aware of this plan. The implementation of this plan was to commence on March. According to the plan, the Turkish-Muslims were to be cleansed out of all the regions from Baku towards the North. Mikoyan had stated to Shaumyan that this plan would be difficult. According to Shaumyan, as Southern Caucasia was a region where various nations were living, the results of the separation of this region from Russia could lead very bad consequences. Baku and the north of Azerbaijan had to be under the control of Russia. In addition, it is seen that he could not fully detach himself from the concept of nationalism. Traditional Armenian nationalism was also present in Shaumyan. It was present to the extent that he would vehemently argue against the autonomy or independence ideas of the nations in South Caucasia and state that while the form of government of these regions were being discussed, the future of the Armenian people and the fate of the Armenian minorities in the Ottoman State could be ignored and that “if they decide to unite with Russia, they must unite with Armenia.” Moreover, under the convenient circumstances in the future, Baku would also be united with Russia. Mikoyan, who was appointed as the Political Commissar of the 3rd Brigade, had maintained this policy of Shaumyan.

“The cooperation between Shaumyan and Mikoyan continued during the period in which the struggle for independence of Azerbaijan was

26 А. И. Микоян *Так было*, 77.

taking place. Especially when the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was declared, Shaumyan accelerated his activities against the members of the Musavat Party with the support of Mikoyan and Emiryan. In his letter sent to the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on 24 May, Shaumyan stated that the Turks were aiming to capture Northern Iran and march towards Baku.

Shaumyan sent a telegraph to Stalin on 22 May stating 'The governors of Elizavetpol [supporters of the Musavat Party] have initiated a new march against us. Yesterday, there has been a clash between the cavalries and our groups guarding the road to Baku in the Hajigabul district. It is necessary to immediately send soldiers and weapons.' Although Soviet Russia was sending the necessary aids to the Baku Soviet, especially in the military field, this did not please Shaumyan. In this regard, he presented his plans of preventing the Turkish army's charge and fending off the Musavat Party supporters from Ganja to the Soviet. However, Shaumyan thought that South Caucasia had to be separated into three provinces and made the following classification: 1- Beyond West Caucasia (South Caucasia): The provinces of Kutaisi and Batumi and a part of the Tbilisi province, 2- Beyond East Caucasia: Yerevan province, a part of the Tbilisi province, provinces of Kars and Elizavetpol, 3- Baku province: part of the Elizavetpol province and the Dagestan province."²⁷

"The attack on Ganja at that time did not yield any result. In a telegraph that Shaumyan sent to Moscow, he wrote;

'It would have been better if we had marched directly to Ganja with a very small force after the civil war in Baku.

On 10 June 1918, Stalin informed that aid was sent to Baku and Shaumyan informed that Kurdamir was captured after Sığırlı. As a result of the Baku Soviet's attack on Ganja initiated by Shaumyan's order on 12 June, the existence of the Republic of Azerbaijan was in grave danger. By means of the immediate support sent by the Ottoman State due to the 4. Article of the 4 June 1918 Treaty of Batum, it was possible to prevent this danger. Following the fight between 27 June-1 July in the vicinity of Goychay, the combined Azerbaijan Turkish forces defeated the Baku Soviet's soldiers, preventing their march towards Ganja. The Red Army's defeat in Goychay and Nuri Pasha's

27 Nesrin Sarıahmetoğlu, "26 Bakü Halk Komiserleri ve Stephan Şaumyan Yeniden Sorgulanıyor," *A. Ü. Tarih Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 14 (2000): 298.

counterattack invalidated the aims of Shaumyan, Mikoyan, and Emiryan. In addition, it further intensified the dispute that had been present for a long time in Baku. The military support he requested from Russia consisted of a 170-men cavalry unit coming from Astrakhan, a 780-men foot soldier unit under the command of Petrov sent from Ukraine by the directive of Moscow, and a few cannons. The support sent was very insufficient and there was an urgent need for other aid. Two options were at the forefront. One of them was Colonel Bicherahov, the other was the British soldiers under the command of Dunsterville. The Bolsheviks did not lean towards the British. Especially Shaumyan preferred Baku to be governed by a different force than being seized by the British. Finally, the Baku Soviet People's Commissars accepted Bicherahov's aid. However, instead of defending Baku, he withdrew to a region 60 km south of the city, moving away from Baku's political environment and began initiating attacks on the Turkish army from where he was. Bicherahov had failed and withdrew his troops from the front and turned towards the North. While all of these were happening, the Russians were claiming that Azerbaijan was being invaded by the Ottoman armies, that Azerbaijan actually did not consider the issue of independence, that this country considered itself a part of the Ottoman State. According to the Baku Soviet and the Armenians, the Treaty of Batum signed separately by Shaumyan with the British and the Ottoman State with Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia meant for the Armenians that a 'large part of Armenia would be crushed under the boots of the Turkish janissaries.'²⁸

"The commissars stated their resignations on 31 July 1918. The Socialist Revolutionaries representing the right wing, the Centrocaspian Dictatorship [the Central Committee of the Caspian Military Fleet] consisting of the Mensheviks and Dashnaks was established on 1 August 1918. To start with, this government ensured the arrival to Baku of the British forces at Enzeli, which is a port of Iran. On 4 August 1918, the British under the command of General Dunsterville arrived in Baku with the justification of resisting the Turkish army. The following developments were the Islamic Army of the Caucasus' entry to Baku on 15 September and ending the hegemony of the Socialist Revolutionaries and Dashnaks. The commissars who were arrested during the period of the Centrocaspian Administration and were called 'the 26's' were removed from prison with the help of a group of Bolsheviks. The Baku People's Commissars were brought to the Krasnovodsk prison and were executed by a firing squad on 20 September 1918 in Agcakum.'²⁹

28 Sarıahmetoğlu, "26 Bakü Halk Komiserleri," 299.

29 Sarıahmetoğlu, "26 Bakü Halk Komiserleri," 300.

The 27th Commissar Mikoyan survived. This was questioned afterwards as one of the dark pages of his life. Mikoyan wrote in his memoirs that he had attempted to save those arrested commissars, but his attempts were in vain. Actually, Mikoyan's attempts to save the commissars resulted in the following: they were sent to the Krasnovodsk City (now Turkmenbashi) by boat, not to Astrakhan from Baku by boat (this was not under the dominion of the Bolsheviks). Death was awaiting them there. Who were these 26 Baku commissars who had been executed by firing squad?

1. Bagdasar Avakyan: Commander of Baku
2. Meshadi Azizbekov: Gubernial Commissar of Baku
3. Tatevos Amirov: Commander of A Cavalry Unit
4. Arsen Amiryan: Redactor of the Baku Worker Newspaper
5. Meyer Basin: Member of the Military Revolutionary Committee
6. Eizgen Berg: Sailor
7. Anatoly Bogdanov: Clerk
8. Solomon Bogdanov: Member of the Military Revolutionary Committee
9. Armenak Boriyan: Journalist
10. Mir Hasan Vezirov: People's Commissar for Land Allocation
11. Ivan Gabyshev: Political Commissar of a Brigade
12. Prokopius Dzhaparidze: Chairman of The Executive Committee of the Baku Soviet for Workers, Peasants, and Army and Navy Soldiers
13. Yakov Zevin: People's Commissar for Labor
14. Mark Koganov: Member of the Military Revolutionary Committee
15. Grigory Korganov: People's Commissar for Navy Affairs
16. Aram Kostandyan: Deputy People's Commissar for Food and Grain Storage Affairs
17. Ivan Malygin: Deputy Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Caucasian Army
18. Irakly Metaksa: Shaumyan's bodyguard
19. Isay Mishne: Secretary of the Military Revolutionary Committee
20. Ivan Nikolayshvili: Dzhaparidze's bodyguard
21. Suren Osepyan: Chief Editor *Izvestia of the Baku Council* Newspaper

22. Grigory Petrov: Military Commissar of the Baku Region, Red Battalion Commander
23. Vladimir Polukhin: Collegiate Commissar for Navy Affairs
24. Fyodr Solntsev: Military officer
25. Ivan Fioletov: Chairman of the Soviet of People's Economy
26. Stepan Shaumyan: Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus
27. Commissar must have been Anastas Mikoyan.

As it is seen, the great majority of the executed were Armenian. Mikoyan being absent from this list led to investigations afterwards. In 1925, a commission was established, of which Dzerzhinsky, Orjonikidze and Kirov were members of, to investigate Baku's "subject of rescuing the 27th Commissar".³⁰ However before this, according to the information, the 23-year-old Mikoyan had begun chairing the Bolshevik organization in Baku. There is too little information regarding this organization as well. Moreover, Mikoyan himself did mention these in his memoirs at all. After his friends were killed on February 1919, Mikoyan returned to Moscow and successfully kept his ties with his party and continued his political activities. Despite him being the "27th Baku Commissar", the events in Baku did not have any influence on him. The investigations did not bear any results either. As for the Chairman of Temporary Executive Committee of the Transcaspien Government Fyodor Funtikov, he was unseated and arrested. He did not accept the accusations regarding the execution of the Baku commissars and blamed the British for all the events in order to evade responsibility. However, he was arrested once again in 1926 and was accused of the death of the 26 commissars. On 5 May 1926, he was sentenced to death and executed.

So, did it really happen like this? Currently, nobody knows the truth, and as such, this case is very mysterious. This is one of the dark pages of Mikoyan's life. In 2009, when the tombs of the Commissars were moved from the center of Baku to a different location, there were not 26 but only 23 bodies found. This is also among the dark and mysterious pages. Where are the bodies of the other 3 people who were executed? In his memoirs, Mikoyan writes that Stalin had told him the following in a talk during the years of repression between 1937-38: "The date in which the 26 Baku commissars were executed in that manner and how another of them -Mikoyan- survived is dark and confusing. And you, Anastas, do not force us to solve this mystery..."³¹ Was this a threat by Stalin?

30 Станислав Тарасов and Дмитрий Ермолов, "Под псевдонимом «лакербая»," *Российские вести*, января 28-февраля 03, 2009, <https://rosvesty.ru/1945/interes/5328-pod-psevdonimom-lakerbaya>.

31 Микоян *Так было*, 312.

Stalin knew what Mikoyan had done during that period and that maybe he had saved himself by leaving the commissars to die. Stalin had need for such men; men who lived with the fear that Stalin could imprison them anytime he wanted...

During the days of the Baku massacre, on March 1918, Mikoyan also had a contribution to the “victory” of the Bolsheviks. The end of the Baku Commune was close. In the mid-September, the organized Islamic Army of the Caucasus seized Baku with the support of the forces of the Musavat Party. Mikoyan, who was considered the instigator of the horrible massacres in Baku, was taken away from the arrestees in custody and had succeeded in escaping Baku by boat. Armenian historian Hranush Kharatyan writes the following regarding this subject:

Afterwards, in 1925, the commission established to investigate the subject (the commission’s members were Dzerzhinsky, Orjonikidze and Kirov) proceeded to investigate the ‘survival of the 27th Commissar’. Before this, according to the information given, the twenty-three-year-old Mikoyan had formed an underground Bolshevik organization in Baku. Information on this is scarce, yet big matters derive from small matters.

According to Kolpadiki who was studying the intelligence activities during those years, Mikoyan had given the young Lavrentiy Beria in Baku the directive to form an intelligence service for the Musavat Party government for the independent Azerbaijan.³² Beria was Mikoyan’s agent. This is also among the dark pages in Mikoyan’s life.

... It is not known what Beria had done and how he worked with the Musavat Party. Interestingly, Beria had killed the only witness of the years he had worked with the Musavat Party government. In 1953, after Beria being arrested, he wrote the following in his autobiography dated 1923: ‘In 1919, I joined the intelligence service of the ‘Himmat’ (National Social Democratic organization) organization in Azerbaijan, worked with comrade Musevi. Approximately until 1920 – until March, after comrade Musevi was killed in an assassination, I left the counterintelligence and began working in the Baku customs administration shortly after.’³³

Before these memoirs were revealed, probably only one person knew about this information, as in the Beria-“Musavat Party” relations. That person was

32 А.И. Колпакиди, *Энциклопедия секретных служб России*, (М., 2003).

33 Тарасов and Ермолов, “Под псевдонимом «лакербая»”.

Mikoyan. However, he did not feel the need to mention this. There is no information regarding this in his memoirs.

Afterwards, Beria was appointed as the Deputy Chairman to the Chairman of Azerbaijani Extraordinary Commission (Azerbaijani Cheka) Baghirov. In 1921, Azerbaijan's communist party and intelligence mechanisms criticized Beria of malpractice and an investigation was launched. However, Mikoyan got involved and Beria was exculpated. The NKVD chief Dzerzhinsky had stated the following at the time to the League of Nations Emergency Commission Special Representative Yakov Berjozin: "Stalin called and said that Mikoyan vouched for Beria and asked for not taking harsh measures against him."³⁴

Anastas Mikoyan had clearly written the following in the report he presented on 2-6 March 1919 to the Armenian Communist Party's Third International, First Congress of the Communist International: "Turkish Armenians, the victims of the Dashnaks' short-sighted and adventurous policies".

The same report indicated the following:

"...The grave danger that has surfaced is this: Bourgeoisie nationalist parties are further strengthening their destructive policies by utilizing the people's right for self-determination, inflating their dark national desires and, with the cloak of the people's right to self-determination, they are making the entire country an arena of national conflicts."

What else was in the report? Was Mikoyan aware of these? Was Mikoyan the author of this report? The Director of National Archives of Armenia Amatuni Virabyan affirmed that there are sufficient documents and evidence that Mikoyan was involved in the atrocities and stated that he was the original author of this report.³⁵

While Bolshevik Mikoyan's statue was being planned to be erected in the Isahakyan-Koryun streets in the center of Yerevan, amongst the people who were opposed to it was Amatuni Virabyan. He stated that "Anastas Mikoyan had 'lived a complex political life and had not been a beneficial figure for the Armenians. We do not understand why a statue of him is being erected.'" According to Virabyan, there are many documents with Mikoyan's signature.

34 Виктор Мясников "Люди совести и долга," *НГ-Военное обозрение*, (December 2006), http://www.pressmon.com/cgi-bin/press_view.cgi?id=1992790#ixzz2u8Hy9HXG.

35 Irina Hovhannisyan, "Soviet Leader's Statue Planned in Yerevan," *RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am)*, May 2, 2014, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/25371147.html>.

For example, a document dated 22 September 1937 alone proved that Mikoyan was an enemy of the Armenian people. According to this document, thousands of innocent Armenians were executed under the name of “cleansing Armenia of the elements opposing Soviet rule.”

The director of the “Armenian Genocide” Museum-Institute Hayk Demoyan stated that in the 1937-1938 documents, it is evident that Mikoyan was among the ones who decided for the annihilation of the Armenians and was even among the ones who wanted to increase the number of people who would be killed. It was Mikoyan -and not a Russian or a Turk- who made the offer to increase the number of arrests and executions. According to Demoyan, there were thousands of politicians and intellectuals among those who were executed.³⁶

Anastas Mikoyan:

“The Republic of Armenia: an impertinent fraud...”

“The insidious policy of the counter-revolution has created very harsh conditions, especially in the regions where the Armenian-Tatar [Azerbaijani] population lived together. On one hand the Armenian bourgeoisie’s party Dashnaktsutyun, on the other hand the Muslim governors’ Musavat Party were calling for massacres. Armenians provoked by these demons were butchering the Muslims and the Muslims were butchering the Armenians. Brothers were killing brothers. (...)

These politics of provocation have reflected on the laborer masses in a painful way. The awakened Muslim peasants and the Armenian laborer masses approaching the revolutionary sides changed their minds and they became a sightless gun in the hands of demons pretending as if they are friends.

Meanwhile the demons split their interests among two uncompromising camps according to their interests, sat in two separate rooms and enjoyed the feast. While they were clinging their wine-filled glasses, they drank the blood of the Armenian and Muslim masses, gnawed on their bodies. They became intoxicated from wine and blood and shouted in unison from separate places at the same time with their demonic smirks: Divide and conquer! (...)

36 Hovhannisyan, “Soviet Leader’s Statue.”

The Turkish Armenians, because of the Dashnaks' short-sighted and adventurous policies, suffered between 300 and 500 thousand casualties.

For what did the Dashnaks cause the cleansing of the Armenians? The party for the physical degeneration of the Armenians dreamed of turning Armenia's 'free' mines and wealth into the free Armenian bourgeoisie's property. An Armenia without the Armenian laborer. This did not concern the Armenian bourgeoisie, the Dashnaks and the British and American imperialists fond of Armenians at all. The capital of the Armenian bourgeoisie increased very much under the auspices of the European states. The physical existence of the Armenian capitalists was not in danger no matter what the circumstances were.

The more Armenian bourgeoisie was protected and the more it filled its pockets, the more Dashnaksutyun sucked the blood of the Armenian laborer masses. (...)

Today, Armenia is ruled by the Pogos Nubar Pasha with the help of the British command and by whip in the hands of the British generals and Enfiants, the tobacco producer and the famous servant of the British.

Without a doubt, the shining British gold is blinding the eyes of the sycophants.

However, the British imperialists do not hesitate to grab the last bite of the Armenian laborers and they abandon the Armenian people to hunger and disease. The latest news reports and even the nationalists' own sources prove this.

Tens of thousands of Armenians have been dying of hunger and disease.

In Armenia, children steal chewed-up bones from dogs.

Corpses left to their fates in the streets are rotting. No one picks them up or buries them.

Yet the 'humanist British' and 'our glorious allies' are turning a blind eye and a deaf ear. (...)

1/ The "patronage" of the European states' charlatans has turned into a shameful slavery of the Armenian people.

As a result of the imperialist plunderers interfering in our internal affairs, Armenia is indisputably losing its population. Ten of thousands of

unburied corpses are rotting in the streets of the cities and villages. Dogs are feeding themselves with corpses of people who died of hunger and disease. On the other hand, the famished children of Armenia steal chewed-up bones from dogs. Millions of people are waiting for death from hunger in a hopeless and weak state.

The labor classes of Armenia, whose blood has been sucked dry by global imperialism, are certainly protesting any kind of imperialist interference to Armenia's domestic affairs. (...)

The Armenian Communist Party declares war on the Anglo-American whelps.

2/ The Armenian 'socialists' of the yellow international, who obeyed Wilson and Lloyd George's League of Nations and took decisions at the Bern Conference parallel with them, can never represent the Armenian proletariat and peasants.

The 'Armenian socialists' of Bern belong to the social-traitors who have shamelessly murdered hundreds of thousands of innocent Armenian laborers.

The "Armenian socialists" of Bern are the loyal mercenaries of Anglo-American imperialists. (...)

3/ The Armenian government is a group of sycophants that consists of plunderers, blackmailers, and executioners.

The "ministers of Armenia" are jackals who feed on human flesh, the leftovers of the Armenian people, and the loyal servants of Anglo-American imperialism.

The Armenian Communist Party has vowed in the name of its people to wipe out these dogs from the surface of the earth."³⁷

Armenian researchers think that Mikoyan was the actual author of these ideas and that Aikunin, the Third Communist International Delegate, Armenian Communist Party Central Committee member, and a Congress delegate, only presented the report.

In February 1921, uprisings surfaced in Armenia. The National Liberation Committee President Sarkis Vratsyan commented on the causes of the

37 RGASPI fond 488, liste 1, dosya 10, yaprak 12, 12 arkasi, 13-28.

Armenian uprising in February 1921 and stated that this was mainly related to the incorrect policy of the Bolshevik officials.

The annihilation of the Armenian army and civil servants, and the Bolshevik leaders of Armenia's inability to solve problems with the country's neighbors and the arrests, expropriation, and oppression they carried out led the people towards an armed uprising. S. Vratsyan touched upon the results of the uprising and emphasized that the Armenian people proved that they were ready to obtain their rights once again. According to Vratsyan, the result of the uprising was the moderation of the anti-people policies of Bolsheviks in Armenia. The alliance established between Turkey and Russia in South Caucasia had created a new situation. Following the future Soviet administration in the "current" (Caucasus) Armenia giving up on the "Great Armenia" idea not only in words but also in practice, returning the Turkish and Armenian refugees living in the Caucasus to their "homeland" was being suggested. Moreover, by forthright halting the policy of perturbing and oppressing the Muslims in Armenia, they were envisaging that they would obtain the trust of the Muslim masses, form positive relations between the Turkish people and the Armenians in order to achieve the return of the Armenians to the residential areas in Turkey. This was envisioned as the only solution to overcome the situation. One of the architects of this idea was Mikoyan.

"Anastas Mikoyan writing 'Caucasian' in parentheses for the 'Armenia' expression explains the real geopolitics. Another one of the geopolitical results created by the World War was 'Caucasus Armenia' state. The Armenian Communist Party's representative in the I. Congress of the Third Communist International described this state as: 'The Armenian Republic -an impertinent fraud, the distortion of the Armenian peoples' actual self-determination.' There was another striking aspect in the Armenian Communist Party representative's speech. As he stated that the 'suffering Armenian' people suffered 30,000 casualties due to the Dashnaks' 'vile game', he compared it with the losses of the Turkish Armenians. Despite the Armenians accusing the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish State, and the Turks of committing a genocide against the Armenians and continuing to spread claims that 1,5-2 million of their kin were murdered, the Armenian communist stated in the international scene that the Turkish Armenians had lost 300 or 500 thousands victims. The representative stated that this loss of the Turkish Armenians was a result of the Dashnaks' 'short-sighted and adventurous policies.' The number that the Armenian communist had stated and the reasons they gave for this number at the end of the World War and around the 1915 events completely contradict the claims of the Armenian politicians and intellectuals of today. As a result of the Turkish national war for liberation and the relations born of alliance with Soviet Russia, the

‘Turkish Armenia’ issue was frozen for a long time. In fact, A. Mikoyan of the Armenian communists offered communists of his own ethnicity to unite in the Communist Party of Turkey and establish this party’s special Armenian division if necessary in order to be engaged in communist activities amongst the Turkish Armenians. Mikoyan did not consider Armenia’s political power named as the National Communist Party to be sufficient in engaging in communist activities amongst the Turkish Armenians. In fact, he was characterizing this party as espousing Armenia ‘as a whole’ (Caucasus and Turkey), spreading ‘Armenian nationalism under the cover of communism’, and massacring the Muslims under the name of struggling for the Soviet dominance. A common thought regarding the display of a special attitude towards the ‘Armenian Question’ was not yet predominant. As is known, after the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, the Russian government’s attitude towards the ‘Armenian Question’ did not change. For the new Russia, the ‘Armenian Question’ comprised of the Armenians’ condition before the war and the issue regarding ‘Turkish Armenia’. The atmosphere after the war made it obligatory to change this attitude.”³⁸

Mikoyan was among the communists who considered the traditional approach towards the “Armenian Question” as unfounded, incorrect, and even detrimental in the new geopolitical conditions. Armenia’s first Prime Minister Hovhannes Kajaznuni also understood that these were incorrect policies and mentioned the following in a report that he presented to the Dashnaksutyun Party’s congress:

“Half of historical Armenia – ‘the same half where the foundations of our independence would be laid according to the traditions inherited by European diplomacy’ – that half was denuded of Armenians: The Armenian provinces of Turkey were without Armenians. (...)

To complain bitterly about our bad luck and to seek external causes for our misfortune - that is one of the main aspects of our national psychology from which, of course, the Dashnagzoutiun is not free.

One might think we found a spiritual consolation in the conviction that the Russians behaved villainously towards us (later it would be the turn of the French, the Americans, the British, the Georgians, Bolsheviks - the whole world- to be so blamed). One might think that, because we were so naive and so lacking in foresight, we placed ourselves in such a position and considered it a great virtue to let anyone who so desired to betray us, massacre us and let others massacre us. (...)

38 Ahmedova, “Rusya’nın ‘Türkiye Ermenistan’ı’ Politikası (1917-1920),” 11.

(...) We were not able to establish order by means of administrative methods, in the Muslim regions; we were obliged to use arms, send troops, demolish and massacre. We were not successful even in these; so much so that this failure shook the prestige of the central authority.

(...) we had not done all that was necessary for us to have done to evade war. We ought to have used peaceful language with the Turks whether we succeeded or not, and we did not do it. We did not do it for the simple reason -no less culpable- that we had no information about the real strength of the Turks and relied on ours. This was the fundamental error. We were not afraid of war because we thought we would win. With the carelessness of inexperienced and ignorant men we did not know what forces Turkey had mustered on our frontiers. When the skirmishes had started the Turks proposed that we meet and confer. We did not do so and defied them. (...)

The Turks knew what they were doing and have no reason to regret today. It was the most decisive method of extirpating the Armenian Question from Turkey.”³⁹

By the summer of 1920, Azerbaijan was being supported by the Bolshevik leader Joseph Stalin together with Turkey. Soviet Russia was sending aid to Turkey. The Armenian Bolsheviks were obliged to support this policy. This policy also played a role in Mikoyan’s change of opinions.

39 English translation of the aforementioned paragraph taken from Hovhannes Katchaznoui, *Dashnagtzoutiun Has Nothing to Do Anymore: Report Submitted to the 1923 Party Convention*, edited by Mehmet Perinçek, trans. Lale Akalın (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2007).

“Document of Betrayal”

Armenian press: “The anti-humanitarian and anti-Armenian document of A. Mikoyan and S. Kasyan”

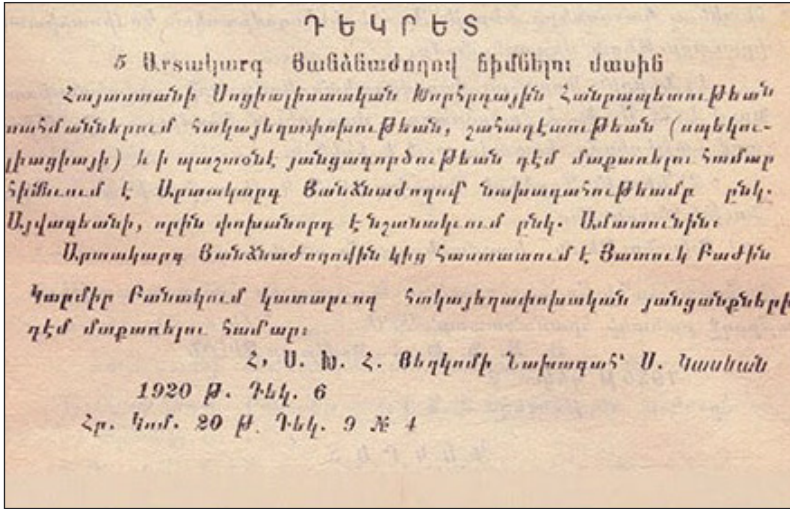


Image 9: “Document of betrayal”⁴⁰

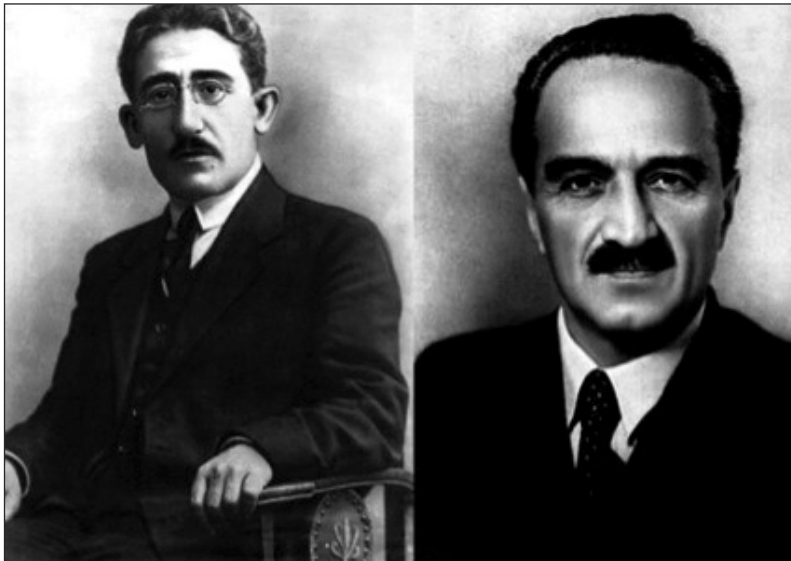


Image 10: Sarkis Kasyan (left), Anastas Mikoyan (right)

40 Also called in Armenian media as “The anti-humanitarian and anti-Armenian document of A. Mikoyan and S. Kasyan.”

This document is the first decree-public mandate that the chairman of the Soviet of the SSC People's Commissars of Armenia S. Kasyan signed in 6 December 1920. It is a document that has been newly discovered by Armenian researchers. This document was named the "document of betrayal" in Armenia. Some articles were published in the Armenian media under the title "The anti-humanitarian and anti-Armenian document of A. Mikoyan and S. Kasyan."

An extraordinary commission was established in Armenia with this mandate. Ayvazyan became the head of the revolutionary commission and the Bolshevik named Amatuni became the vice president. The essential objective was to judge the leaders of the previous government of the Dashnaks and to remove them from the political scene. Sarkis Kasyan, who was acting according to directives from the central office, sent 21 people who had conducted politics of hostility against Turkey to jail. Those who were considered heroes in the battle of Serdarabad against the Turks, including Gorganyan and Hamazasp, 21 political and military Armenian figures were jailed. Avis Nurijanyan, who had passed through Azerbaijan in 29 November 1920 and entered Armenia together with the 11th Red Army, was personally beating these prisoners and humiliating them.

The foundations of the Bolshevik-Kemalist cooperation were being laid; the first steps were actualized by Halil Pasha. Another pasha, Ali Fuat, set out towards Moscow in February 1921 as the first ambassador. In late 1919, Halil Pasha came to Baku with the order of Mustafa Kemal and subsequently met with Foreign Minister Chicherin in Moscow and afterwards with Karahan. He explained to the Russians the details of the condition in the Turkish provinces and spoke of the plans of the Armenians and the British. He emphasized the Turks' determination to defeat the British government. He convinced the Bolsheviks that a new government would be formed soon. He emphasized that the establishment of relations would be beneficial for both countries and persuaded the Soviets to send weapons and ammunition.

Baku had become a center for the activities of the Kemalists. On 20 July 1920, Halil Pasha returned to Baku from Moscow and was received by the Soviet officials solemnly and with a ceremony. In Qusar, where volunteers were gathering, registration and military education were expedited. The new Islamic army was immediately organized. The Soviet government supported Halil Pasha by covering the army's expenses, clothes, weapons, and ammunition. The man at the head of the army was a Soviet officer. Muslims from various regions in Russia, volunteer Muslim groups from Crimea, Kazan, Ufa, and Turkistan joined the army. Halil Pasha also accepted Turkish prisoners returning from Siberia into the army. The military troops were swiftly preparing. Halil Pasha was going to pass Karabakh and Zangezur and reach

the Turkish border. The Bolsheviks were helping in the formation of such an army. Mikoyan was also a part of this.

The newspaper titled “Lragir” published in Armenia featured an interesting article with the signature of Vahram Tokmachyan (member of “The Conscious Citizens Association”). The title of the article was: “The anti-humanitarian and anti-Armenian document of A. Mikoyan and S. Kasyan.”⁴¹

A proposal presented by one of the Armenia’s political organizations, “Yelk” (“Way Out”), was put to discussion. They proposed to rename of the Kasyan, Mikoyan and Frunze streets in the capital Yerevan. They thought that these figures did not deserve to have street names. According to them, what was the anti-Armenian activity carried out by Kasyan?

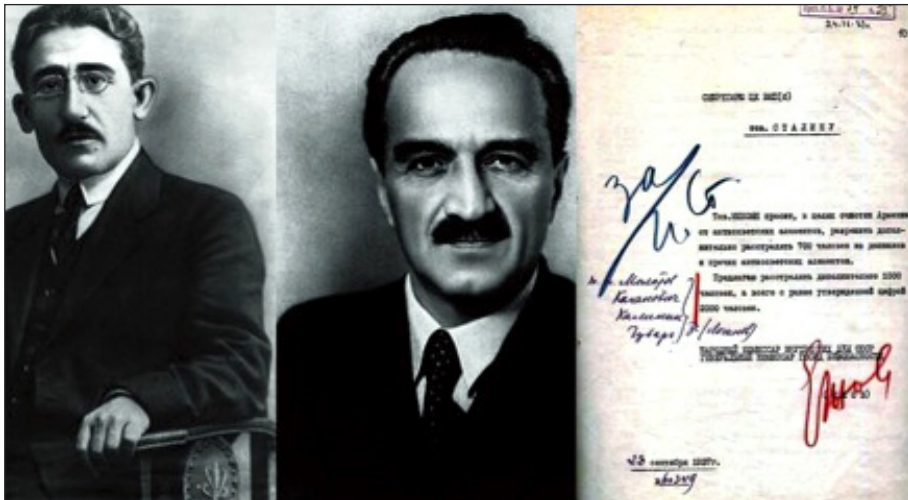


Image 11: “The anti-humanitarian and anti-Armenian document of A. Mikoyan and S. Kasyan”

With the agreement dated on 2 December 1920, the power in Armenia was seized by the Bolsheviks. The true administrative body of government was the Revolutionary Committee of Armenia under the chairmanship of Sarkis Kasyan. Before coming to power in Armenia, Kasyan had succeeded to flee the country and was taken into custody twice in Georgia due to anti-government activities. During the Turkish-Armenian war, he and some other Armenian officials sent a letter to the Bolsheviks in Armenia. According to this letter, the main task of the Armenian Bolsheviks had to be:

41 “Ա. Միկոյանի և Ս. Կասյանի հակամարդկային ու հակահայկական էջերը,” *Lragir.am*, Սեպտեմբերի 4, 2017, <https://www.lragir.am/2017/09/04/159776/>.

“...To destroy the battling Armenian army by any means necessary, namely:

- a) To orchestrate the dissolution of the army and to prevent the army’s mobilization in any way;
- b) To ensure that the soldiers at the battlefronts understand this: they should not open fire on the advancing Turks, they should retreat from their positions and return to the rear front.
- c) They should refuse to obey the orders of their commanders and eliminate them if necessary.

Together with all of these, there was something more important: It was necessary to explain to the soldiers of the Republic of Armenia that “the victorious Turkish soldier is a soldier of the revolution, he does not only not allow any bad acts against the defeated country, at the same time, he will support the Armenian nation in being emancipated from the imperialist tool Dashnaktsutyun.”

It must be explained again and again that to be emancipated from the Dashnaktsutyun’s hegemony would mean that Armenia would be eternally associated with Russia, that the war would end permanently, that the country which was ruined by famine and continuous conflicts would reach the bread of Russia and that it would contribute to the great pursuit of the world revolution.

Note: This letter must be read at a closed meeting and burnt immediately after reading it.

The Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party members; S. Kasyan, A. Mravyan, A. Nurijanyan, Sh. Amirkhanyan, I. Dovlatyan, A. Hovhannisyan.

No: 218, Baku, September 20, 1920.”

There is another matter here that angered the Armenians. Shortly after 2 December, without looking at the agreement’s provisions, the government under the chairmanship of Sarkis Kasyan issued arrest warrants. After reaching Yerevan, the Bolsheviks quickly began conducting mass arrests with the support of the 11th Red Army. They jailed many members of previous government. Approximately 1000 members of the previous government and officers were arrested. On 24 January of 1921 alone, approximately 1400

surviving Armenian officers were banished to Russia without clothes or food. With the decree of the Revolutionary Committee, some Armenian political and military leaders in the Yerevan prison were executed by a firing squad.

According to the contemporary Armenian opinion, Anastas Mikoyan had “betrayed” his people during those years. As early as 1919, Mikoyan had suggested through his letter to Lenin that the “Armenian Question” and the “United Armenian State” issue should be dropped and argued that his people should abandon their traditional causes. By this, he had opposed the will of the people... Due to these views of his, Mikoyan is openly being branded in Armenia as having been “pro-Turkish”.

The Karabakh Issue and Mikoyan

In 19 June of 1920, Mikoyan was not pleased about Njde and Dro being engaged in actual war with Azerbaijan in Zangezur. In 1920, after Karabakh and Zangezur were seized by the Bolsheviks, Mikoyan sent this letter to the Russian Foreign Minister Chicherin:

“The Armenians are in actual war with Azerbaijan. As for Karabakh and Zangezur, which are the constituent part of Soviet Azerbaijan but are sought to be turned into disputed territories, we are informing with certainty that these lands must be indefinitely be situated within the borders of Azerbaijan.”⁴²

During that time, Anastas Mikoyan was a member of the Caucasus Bureau of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). He wrote the following in a report that he had sent to Lenin:

“The Dashnaks – the agents of the Armenian government, want to bind Karabakh to Armenia. However, this would mean depriving the people of Karabakh from a source of life such as Baku. To bind these people to Yerevan is a very pointless endeavor. The Armenian villagers accepted the administration of Soviet Azerbaijan at their own congress and concluded to stay under its dominion.”

Levon Mirzoyan, another one of the party’s executives, also supported Mikoyan. In 1923, Mirzoyan wrote the following:

“There is no complete solution to the Karabakh issue. The Armenian peasants are stating that Karabakh cannot live without establishing close

⁴² Джамиль Гасанлы, “Нагорный Карабах: старые заблуждения в новой интерпретации,” *Regnum.ru*, accessed July 25, 2011, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1428880.html>.

relations with Baku and Akdam. A guarantee is needed regarding security and cultural development.”

All of this meant that the people of Armenian origin did not want to live separately and isolated from Azerbaijan and Baku. The Armenian peasants' 6th congress decision supported this. In August of 1919, when Azerbaijan's Prime Minister and Minister of War came to Karabakh, Armenians hanged a sign with their own writing in the Armenian market of Shusha which read: “Long live the Republic of Azerbaijan!”

After Azerbaijan and Armenia joined the Soviet administration, the Caucasian Bureau would be in charge of discussing the subjects of territory. The Caucasian Bureau approving Armenia's statement of Nagorno-Karabakh belonging to the Armenians naturally led to Azerbaijan's harsh reaction. Afterwards, during the ongoing process, the Armenians nevertheless obtained the status of autonomy in Nagorno-Karabakh with the support of Moscow despite having no right for it. This was the basis for future problems. However, Azerbaijani Turks were collectively residing in Armenian lands, the right to autonomy should have been given to them as well. However, none of these happened. The Armenian ideologues, who made peace with Nagorno-Karabakh remaining under the administration of Azerbaijan (actually there was no way beyond this for the Armenians) and considered this as a “great victory” for themselves for a certain period of time, implemented the tactic of cutting off the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) from Azerbaijan during the period of its existence.

Mikoyan, who was against this, was one of the people who brought the issue of Karabakh being united with Armenia to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during the 1920's. There were those who wanted to benefit from the situation after World War II in order to sever Karabakh from Azerbaijan. The Armenians tried to use previously tried methods in order to prove that Nagorno-Karabakh belonged to them and to prove their views: making statements in the media of various countries, publishing books and translating them into other languages etc. The Armenians began their claims regarding Karabakh during the 1920s. However, during these years, they could only convince readers in Russia and other countries with their lies such as “Nagorno-Karabakh is Armenian homeland”, “Nagorno-Karabakh is Armenia's province with a high cultural level”, “Artsakh is the former Armenian homeland.” Yet, they could not go beyond this. The prohibitions of the Soviet regime impelled the Armenians to be patient for a certain period. During the years of World War II, when the country was facing its own problems, they initiated provocations regarding Nagorno-Karabakh to be given to Armenia once again. On November of 1945, the Armenian Communist Party Central Committee Secretary Arutyunov requested from

Joseph Stalin by a letter for the joining of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to Armenia. This letter was sent to the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party Mir Jafar Baghirov as well. In Baghirov's response letter to Moscow, he stated that these requests of Armenia were made up of destructive, provocative, baseless, foolish thoughts and that he sternly opposed this idea. Below are the lines from Baghirov's response letter:

“... We consider it is necessary to present to the attention of our party's Central Committee that if the issue of giving the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to the Armenian SSR is discussed, then the issue of the Ezizbeyov, Vedi and Karabağlar regions, which are on the Armenian SSR's border with the Republic of Azerbaijan and where generally Azerbaijanis reside, being given to the administration of the Azerbaijan SSR must also be discussed. Taking account of these regions being direfully devoid of cultural and economic development, giving those lands to Azerbaijan can enable the improvement of the people's tangible and social situation and the level of cultural-political service.

We request that the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Georgia approach the following matters in addition to the matters presented above: The Georgian comrades present the issue of the Azerbaijan SSR's Balaken, Zaqatala and Qakh regions being given to the administration of the Georgian SSR. Although the populations in the presented districts is 79,000 and 9000 Georgian-Ingiloyes reside there, we do not object to this proposal being discussed. However, this issue must be discussed together with the Georgian SSR's Borchaly region, where only Azerbaijanis reside and is notably on the border of the Azerbaijan SSR, being given to the administration of the Azerbaijan SSR. And finally, we request that you to discuss the issue of Daghistan ASSR, which was previously a part of Azerbaijan, being included to the Baku Guberniya's administration and the lands of Derbent and Kasımkent, which are on the border of the current Azerbaijan SSR, being given to the Azerbaijan SSR administration. The population of these regions generally consists of Azerbaijanis, more than half the population which labors in stock farming reside in the plateaus of Azerbaijan's lands nine months of the year. To be able to prepare suggestions for all the issues that have been laid aside, we approve the establishment of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Georgia in which every Republic's representative is included.

10 December 1945 No. 1330. Baku.”

One of the main aims of Mikoyan was to always keep Azerbaijan under control to do whatever the Soviet Union wanted in this prosperous country. Mikoyan was close with Sergo Ordzhonikidze. He would deal with matters which he could not interfere in himself through Ordzhonikidze.

Sergo Ordzhonikidze was also someone who did not like Azerbaijan. During the 1920's, Nariman Narimanov revealed the true face of Sergo Ordzhonikidze, who clearly objected to Azerbaijan Turk Baghirov being assigned to Azerbaijan as an administrator after the Armenian Ruben:

“The center only gives credit to Sergo Ordzhonikidze. Sergo takes ill-natured people into his service. These people curry favor to Sergo for their own benefit and report the situation in Azerbaijan to him very inaccurately. But this appealed to Sergo...”

Anastas Mikoyan, who could not dare to set foot in Azerbaijan during the period of Mir Jafar Baghirov, also became a “persona non grata” for Nariman Narimanov at one time. Nariman Narimanov referred to Mikoyan as “the enemy of all of Azerbaijan and the Caucasian Turks” and added; “They say that until the revolution in Azerbaijan, comrade Mikoyan was constantly repeating ‘I have to return to Baku soon...’” Baku was an important place for him and according to Narimanov, he wanted to continue his previous schemes here. However, as Baghirov understood what his aim was, he did not make it possible for Mikoyan to maneuver in Azerbaijan. Before that, Mikoyan had made a special plan for Narimanov as well: “We prefer Narimanov as the Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee and we would make such a blockade for him that he would not be able to use his own influence anymore.”

Actually, blockade as method against his opponents had worked in Mikoyan's political life. Mikoyan had “formed a blockade” for Nariman Narimanov, and many others afterwards, even Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev. But he could not openly oppose Mir Jafar Baghirov. While Mikoyan was the one suggesting bringing to the agenda the subject of Nagorno-Karabakh separating from Azerbaijan and being connected with Armenia, he was hoping that Stalin would look positively on this subject. However, that did not happen. Anastas Mikoyan was also the architects of the idea that the Armenians' returning from foreign countries to the USSR after the Second World War and resettling them in Armenia. The “27th Commissar” Mikoyan was the undertaker and organizer of the emigration of Azerbaijani Turks from their ancestral lands. These were being “evaluated” in Armenia. It is openly stated that Mikoyan was the “secret advisor” of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party Grigory Arutyunov's request in June 1945 to the Kremlin regarding the case of connecting the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to Armenia. The Armenian author

Ruben Anqaladyan, who has written a book about Mikoyan, stated the following in an interview:

“I think that Grigory Arutyunov would not have had the courage to send such a letter without consulting with Mikoyan, since Mikoyan was that period’s greatest Armenian politician. Besides, Arutyunov was a close relative of Mikoyan. Arutyunov’s daughter was the wife of Mikoyan’s son Aleksei. They would meet often. Mikoyan thought that the subject of Armenia’s economic development would be considered after the war and that Stalin would approve of the NKAO being given to Armenia.”

However, Stalin’s “slap” hit Mikoyan hard. In the 19th Congress of the Party, Stalin heavily criticized Mikoyan’s political line. According to what Mikoyan’s close relatives stated, Mikoyan thought that he was in danger of being arrested at any moment during that time. When at home, his gun would be ready under his pillow and in the cabinet of his study room. But Mikoyan did not commit suicide. Armenia’s preeminent political figure Arutyunov was accused of being nationalist and was dismissed. The “architect” of his dismissal was again Mikoyan.

During these years and the previous years of oppression, Mikoyan succeeded in disposing every man who was against him. It was said about him that “The rascal was able to walk through Red Square on a rainy day without an umbrella [and] without getting wet. He could dodge the raindrops.” He came out “dry” from the rain again this time...

Despite the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh being given to Armenia was prevented, Armenia eventually succeeded in forcing at a state level the Azerbaijanis, whose number had reached 100 thousand in between 1948-1953, to migrate from their country where they had been living for thousands of years.

At the same time, Mir Jafar Baghirov’s famous speech on “Armenian nationalism” came forward. Director of National Archives of Armenia Amatuni Virabyan stated in his study that “during those years the matter of ‘Armenian nationalists’ and ‘Dashnaks’ were opened in the Kremlin.” This was likely connected with the Armenians’ revision request regarding the annulment of the 1921 Treaty of Moscow and Treaty of Kars.⁴³

43 РГАСПИ. Ф. 17. Оп. 171. Д. 474 Л. 72-85. Копия. Машинопись, Записка члена Комитета Партийного Контроля П.Комарова Н.С.Хрущеву о решении КПК по делу М. Багирова с приложением справки, -РГАСПИ, Ф.17, Оп.171, Д.474, Л.72-85 Копия Машинопись В кн Дело Берия Приговор обжалованию не подлежит, page 438;
http://istmat.info/files/uploads/27101/delo_beriya.pdf.

Mikoyan: “Karabakh and Zangezur belongs to Azerbaijan”

Another letter signed by Mikoyan (this time Nuriyanyan’s signature was missing) was sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. “We believe that it is our duty to inform the C.C. of our concerted opinion about Karabakh and Zangezur; the decision which is planned as intermediate in the talks with Armenia will contradict the interests of the revolution in Caucasus.”⁴⁴

Mikoyan did not find this sufficient and considered it his duty to send a letter to Sergo Ordzhonikidze on 29 July 1920: “We are all enraged by the Center’s policy toward Karabakh and Zangezur. You should defend our opinion in the Center. We have nothing against peace with Armenia, but not at the expense of Karabakh and Zangezur.”⁴⁵

A Different Document...

The documents in Armenian language that were recently discovered are substantial in understanding the unknown aspects of the Turkish-Armenian relations. The discovered document with the Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissar of Armenian SSR Sarkis Kasyan’s signature, dating back to November 1920 when the Bolsheviks had taken over the administration in Armenia from the Dashnaks, is a subject of discussion in Armenia even today. Sarkis Kasyan had signed a memorandum on 9 December 1920 with the aim of investigating issues with Turkey and forming new relations with it, and this document was kept confidential until now. Anastas Mikoyan, who was one of the important leaders of Soviet Armenia and the USSR, highlighted in his report written to Lenin on December 1919 that;

“Until today, our party’s central organs have placed a *special* importance more on the ‘Armenian Question’ than, for instance, the Georgian issue or the issue of the other Caucasian nations. The reason for this is related to the Armenians’ conditions before the war and this was based on the subjects regarding ‘Turkish Armenia’. In the situation that occurred after the war, it became evident that these policies regarding the ‘Armenian Question’ turned out to be unreasonable, wrong, and even harmful in the sense of the interests of the world revolution and the war against imperialism.”

44 Письмо Нариманова, Мдивани, Микояна, Нанейшвили, Весника, Левандовского и Михайлова в ЦК РКП (б) 10.07 0, 1920 // АПД УДП АР, ф.1, оп.44, д.118, л.25-27 /1428880.html); English translation of the aforementioned sentence taken from Jamil Hasanli, “Formation of Armenia on the Political Map of the Caucasus and Karabakh Issue (1918-1921),” *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 38 (2018): 42.

45 English translation of the aforementioned sentence taken from Hasanli, “Formation of Armenia,” 44.

Mikoyan also wrote:

“... Armenian chauvinists, with the help of the allied imperialist forces and the extreme reactionary Gen Denikin, still cherish an illusion that has become a criminal idea of creating a ‘Great Armenia’ in its historical areas from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean made up of seven provinces.

The absence of Armenians and presence of exclusively Muslim population on these territories does not disturb them.

The ‘Great Armenia’ cannot rely on the will of the majority of the population, but it will be forced upon it through the power of the imperialist arms, will be spread by blood and iron on a pile of rubble and corpses of innocent ‘foreigners’ by cleansing ‘Armenia’ from the ‘criminal elements’ of Muslims. The program of creating such a hell and nightmare of violence are successfully supported by the allied imperialist forces, hoping to find the best, the most capable and dedicated agents in the person of the Armenians through whom it wants to rob Turkey, turning it into a colony, an area of the financial capital of allies...”⁴⁶

During the beginning of December 1919, the Caucasian Bureau of the RC (b) Party member Anastas Mikoyan’s report sent to the Soviet leader Lenin “On the Caucasus Issue” reveals what the Armenians’ plans consisted of. According to him, this memorandum regarding the independence of “Turkish Armenia” had achieved no positive results, on the contrary, it had caused not only the Turkish Muslims, but also Caucasia’s Muslims to revolt against the Soviets. Along with a small group of his Armenian friends, Mikoyan stated that he opposed the announcing of the memorandum regarding “Turkish Armenia” from the very first day and that was too late to correct this error. Presumably, the thought and approach of A. Mikoyan, who had joined the Baku Bolsheviks on the autumn of 1917 and was a member of the party’s Baku Committee governing board, could not overcome the thought and logic of S. Shaumyan, who was named as the “Caucasian Lenin”. That is to say, Stepan Shaumyan, who was the source of inspiration for the idea of “Turkish Armenia”’s autonomy and the practitioner of its memorandum, had conducted various declarations and practices. An approach was displayed towards this subject based on the self-determination.

46 English translation of the aforementioned paragraph taken from “A. Mikoyan describes the idea of ‘Great Armenia’ as criminal.”

Mikoyan: “2000 Armenians Should Be Killed Instead of 700!”

Is the Newly Discovered Document in the Russian State Archives Authentic?

After Hancyan, who was at the administration of Armenia, was killed in 1936, Anastas Mikoyan “visited” Armenia during the autumn of 1937 together with Lavrentiy Beria. They had in fact come to purge the party and state officials and indeed to destroy them. A new document dated 22 September 1937 has been found in the Russian State Archives. In this historical document with Yezhov’s signature, Yezhov states to Stalin that Mikoyan requested that the number of “Dashnaktsutyun and other ‘anti-Soviet constituents’” who will be shot to be increased to 700 people. In the same document, Yezhov himself suggests adding 1500 people to the previous number of people who will be shot, making it reach 2000. The document was signed by Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovic, Chubar and Loginov.⁴⁷

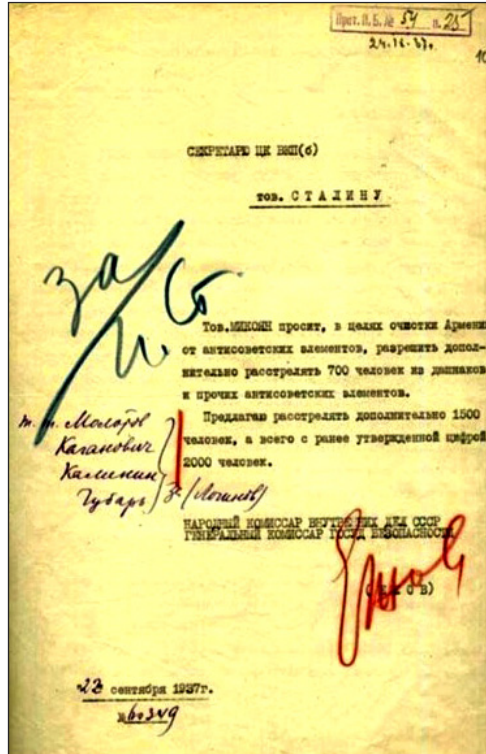


Image 12: New document dated 22 September 1937 has been found in the Russian State Archives with the signature of Yezhov

47 “Ա. Միկոյանի և Ա. Կապյանի հակամարդկային ու հակահայկական էջերը,”

Stalin sending Mikoyan to Armenia cannot be considered as a coincidence. Stalin knew that Mikoyan would have revealed the nationalists in the Armenian administration and do what was necessary. He even knew that as Mikoyan signed the list prepared by Malenkov of the 300 people who were to be executed immediately, he would add to this list. The name of Shahverdian, a person who had played an important role in the political life of Mikoyan, was also on this list. In 1915, Shahverdian had given a reference to Mikoyan for him to be accepted into the Bolsheviks Party. He had also sent Mikoyan to Shaumyan in Baku. Mikoyan owed this man a duty of loyalty. However, Mikoyan could not prevent his execution, because Stalin had deliberately added Shahverdian's name onto this list.

“Top Secret”

There is another document that has been uncovered recently. The title of this new document uncovered in the National Archives of Armenia with the “top secret” code is “Tactical Movements of the Party Organizations Associated with the Communist Party of Armenia during the Turkish-Armenian War.”⁴⁸ It is stated in this document that it was understood that the Armenian Bolsheviks taking directives from Moscow were at war with Turkey, that they conducted a policy of hostility, and that this would be harmful. In this document that we present as an example, the Central Committee of the Communist (Bolsheviks) Party of Armenia was informing all the institutions overseeing military regions, especially the Kars garrison, to conduct propaganda against the war and spread brochures that cover the following points:

1. Turkey is not the old Turkey and does not have an offensive intention towards Armenia.
2. The Kemalist Turkey is Soviet Russia's ally and is carrying on her fight for national independence against imperialism (Britain, France, Greece).
3. Armenia's victory over Turkey could mean the strengthening of imperialism in the Middle East and thus may afterwards endanger the victory of the Soviets in the East and the revolution in South Caucasia.
4. The duty of the Armenian Communist Bolsheviks should be to expedite the defeat of Armenia; this would expedite the sovietization of Armenia.

48 Ermenistan Ulusal Arşivleri, fon 1022, liste 3, Dosya 275, s 1.

Another document is presented as a “document of treason”. In his article published in the “Pravda” newspaper (4 December 1920), Joseph Stalin was proudly mentioning the Sovietization of Armenia. Stalin was explaining that the issues between the Muslims and the surrounding minorities were resolved. In this article of Stalin, he expressed his contentment with the cooperation and fellowship established between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey and stated: “Russia will save all of the Armenians from the hands of the ‘Armenian Dashnaks’ together with its ally, the ‘Bolshevik Turks’.”⁴⁹

The Armenian Bolsheviks honestly believed this. On 24 August, the Russian government signed a “preliminary treaty of friendship” with the Mustafa Kemal government. The Russians and the Armenians were to send military aid to Turkey for “fighting against” imperialism and to prevent the “intervention” of the Allied states.

Another important point of the agreement was this: The Turkish Grand National Assembly government was not acknowledging any treaties until that day (including the Sevres Treaty). The Turkish Grand National Assembly government also did not acknowledge any previous treaties signed with Armenia. Soviet Russia’s international treaties signed with a Turkish government were also included. Armenian researcher Yuri Barseghov, who considered this treaty as a crime against Armenia, stated that this meant “Russia’s betrayal of Armenia.”⁵⁰

On 1-7 September, one week after the signing of the preliminary treaty of friendship with Turkey, the First Congress of the Peoples of the East was organized in Baku. Russian Bolsheviks Zinoviev and Radek attended this congress, as well as Enver Pasha, Bahaeddin Shakir and Halil Pasha. The Bolshevik A. Mikoyan also attended this important conference and stated many truths in his memoirs that the Armenians do not accept.⁵¹

Of course, the Armenian Bolsheviks also attended the Congress of the Peoples of the East. During that time, in 20 September, a directive-document with a “top secret” code was sent from Baku to the Central Committee of Armenian Bolsheviks Party. According to this directive, “The fight against the Turkish soldiers should be abandoned, the army’s mobilization must be ended, the destruction of the Dashnaks working for imperialism should be supported.” The Armenian Bolsheviks had understood that being at war with the Turkish

49 И Сталин, *Сочинения Том 4* (М., Госкомиздат 1954), 413-414.

50 АВПР, Ф.04, Оп.39, П. 322, Д.52997, Л.35-36, հրատարակված է Ю.Барсегов, *հատոր 2, փսու 1, էջ 151-152.*

51 А. И. Балабанова, *Моя жизнь – борьба. Мемуары русской социалистки 1897-1938*, М., 2007, էջ 258-259.

soldiers would bring the end of this country. The document was signed by Sarkis Kasyan, Askanaz Mravyan, Avis Nurijanyan, Shavarsh Amirkhanyan, Isahak Dovlatyan and Ashot Hovhannisyen. Those who signed this document knew well that peace with Turkey would be to the benefit of Armenia. In 29 September, a decision was taken at the Politburo of Russian Bolsheviks. Monetary and military aid would be made to the Kemalists.⁵² The Armenian Bolsheviks were also going to support this.

Afterwards, in his report presented in the Dashnaktsutyun Party's Congress in Bucharest, the first Prime Minister of the Armenian Republic Hovhannes Kajaznuni would state:

“We had created a dense atmosphere of illusion in our minds. We had implanted our own desires into the minds of others; we had lost our sense of reality and were carried away with our dreams. (...) At the beginning of the Fall of 1914 when Turkey had not yet entered the war but had already been making preparations, Armenian revolutionary bands began to be formed in Transcaucasia with great enthusiasm and, especially, with much uproar. (...) We had embraced Russia whole-heartedly without any compunction. Without any positive basis of fact, we believed that the Tzarist government would grant us a more-or-less broad self-government in the Caucasus and in the Armenian vilayets liberated from Turkey as a reward for our loyalty, our efforts and assistance. (...) Our people were well rested and our army was well armed with British arms. (...) Finally there was the Sevres Treaty and it was not simply a piece of paper in those days, it was an important gain against Turks. (...) The Sevres Treaty had blinded everyone's eyes.”⁵³

The Armenian Bolsheviks began benefitting from the historical luck that the Dashnaks did not take a lesson from. Consequently, the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic was established in the lands of the Yerevan Khanate. The Bolsheviks also managed to connect Zangezur with Armenia.

52 РГАСПИ, Ф.64, Оп.1, Д.21, Л.172.

53 English translation of the aforementioned paragraph taken from Katchaznuni, *Dashnagtzoutiun*, 31-32.

Was Anastas Mikoyan the Culprit of the Katyn Massacre?



Image 13

The European Court of Human Rights has acknowledged Anastas Mikoyan as the culprit of the Katyn massacre. According to ethnographer Gayane Shagoyan, Anastas Mikoyan being identified as a culprit in light of these authentic documents was shameful for all Armenians. The question “who will stand trial for this crime?” comes into the picture.⁵⁴ The documents in The European Court of Human Rights’ (ECHM) files on the Janowiec and Others v. Russia case regarding the culprits of the Katyn massacre indicate that Mikoyan had signed the decision to kill 14,700 Polish prisoners of war during the Second World War and 11,000 people arrested in Ukraine and the west of Belarus. The above-mentioned trial was reviewed on 19 November 2007 and 24 May 2009 by the ECHM upon the application of 15 Polish citizens according to the 34th article of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and on the basis of grievances by the Russian Federation.

⁵⁴ Տաթև Հարությունյան, “Մարդու իրավունքների եվրոպական դատարանը Անաստաս Միկոյանին հանցագործ է ճանաչել,” *Aravot.am*, Հունիս 14, 2014, <https://www.aravot.am/2014/07/14/479802/>.

The presented documents revealed that on 17 September 1939, when the Soviet Red Army marched into the Polish lands during the Second World War, the Polish army did not display any armed resistance to protect the Ukrainians and Belarussians living in the Eastern part of Poland.

The USSR occupied and gained control of the region and declared that Poland's 13.5 million citizens were citizens of the Soviet Union on November 1939.

As a result of the Red Army's advance, approximately 250,000 Polish soldiers, border guards, police officers, and other functionaries were taken into custody and arrested.

Moreover, in the ECHM trial, we come across a document regarding Beria, head of the Soviet Intelligence, submitted to Stalin, Secretary General of the USSR Communist Party:

“ (...) a proposal to approve execution by firing squad of Polish prisoners of war on the ground that they were all ‘enemies of the Soviet authorities filled with hatred for the Soviet system of government’ who were (...) ‘conducting anti-Soviet agitation’. The proposal specified that the prisoner-of-war camps accommodated 14, 736 former military and police officers, of whom more than 97 per cent were Polish by nationality, and that a further 10,685 Poles were being held in the prisons of the western districts of Ukraine and Belorussia.”⁵⁵

The proposal was negotiated in the meeting Stalin, K. Voroshilov, A. Mikoyan, V. Molotov, M. Kalinin, and L. Kaganovich attended and they decided to all of them to be killed. These peoples' signatures were under this decision.

14,700 persons remaining in the prisoner-of-war camps (former Polish army officers, government officials, landowners, policemen, intelligence agents, rangers etc.) were arrested. New investigations would be conducted against 11,700 people and they would be executed in the end as well.

This tragedy is known as the “Katyn massacre”. As the massacre was conducted in the location known as the “Katyn Forest”, it is called the “Katyn genocide”.

What is more interesting is that, among the documents belonging to the years 1942-1943, there was a report of a commission that consisted of 12

⁵⁵ English version of the aforementioned paragraph taken from “Case of Janowiec and Others v. Russia,” European Court of Human Rights, accessed March 20, 2020.

forensic experts. This report proves that the responsibility of the massacre had belonged to the Soviet authorities. However, in the statement of the Russian Federation regarding this, it is stated that; “The responsibility for Katyn massacre had been attributed to Fascist Germany for a long time. As a result of the investigations, it has been revealed that the culprit of this tragedy was the Stalin regime...”

As we have stated before, Anastas Mikoyan was among the people who signed this massacre decision. It is understood from the material contained in the file that on one hand, the Soviet offices accepted these facts, on the other hand, they were including them into the list of missing people. It is obvious that Mikoyan played a role in the Katyn incident. Independent Polish legal experts also conducted investigations regarding this matter. The first objection to the decision of erecting Anastas Mikoyan’s statue in Yerevan came from Poland.⁵⁶

“Armenian Scholars Are Also Opposed to the Erection of Mikoyan’s Statue”

Armenian scholars opposed the erection of Mikoyan’s statue in Yerevan. A group of known scholars sent this disputable letter to the then Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan, Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandyan. The letter states:

“We would like to draw the attention of the government. On 30 April 2014, the Yerevan City Council’s scandalous decision regarding the erection of Anastas Mikoyan’s statue has disturbed us. As the information given to the members of the Yerevan Council of Elders of the Republic of Armenia were false, they approved a wrong decision concerning this issue. They approved of Mikoyan’s statue being erected in the Yerevan city center, overlooking the pages of Mikoyan’s oppressive activities during the years of Stalin’s regime. Mikoyan was the culprit of the massacre of thousands of people. He had a finger in the massacre in Armenia, in Russia’s Irkutsk province, in Katyn and scholars and historians have brought to the attention of the public opinion the contents of these massacres. Moreover, his role and stance in the Karabakh issue, the Armenian genocide, and West Armenia issue did not reflect the will of the Armenian people. The erection of this statue may also harm Armenia’s relations with Poland. Poland’s Ambassador to Yerevan, Zdzislaw Raczynski’s criticism in the press are justified.

⁵⁶ Հարությունյան, “Մարդու իրավունքների.”

Thousands of people were killed in the Katyn genocide that was conducted with Mikoyan's signature. Poland refers to this event as a genocide.

In our view, this decision of the Yerevan Council of the Elders is truly shameful, and the most correct step will be its annulment. Additionally, the decision regarding Mikoyan's name being given to a street (on 30 April 2008) must also be annulled.

Signatures:

Gayane Shagoyan, Historian, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

Levon Abrahamyan, Historian, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

Yulia Antonyan, Yerevan State University, Chair of Cultural Studies

Harutyun Marutyan, Researcher, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

Hamlet Petrosyan, Doctor of Philosophy, Head of Department at Yerevan State University

Suren Hobosyan, Head of the Department of Ethnography at National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

Hamlet Melkumyan, Researcher, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

Tigran Sargsyan, Researcher, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

Luzin Harratyan, Ethnographer

Gohar Stephanyan, Researcher, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

and others"⁵⁷

57 "Մի շարք անվանի գիտնականներ բարձրաձայնում են, որ Ա. Միկոյանի արձանը տեղադրելու որոշումը «խայտառակ է»,» *ilur.am*, April 21, 2014, <http://www.ilur.am/news/view/29677.html>.

“We have become scum...”

These are words Mikoyan has used in his memoirs. It can be considered as a final confession of what he lived through and caused.

Anastas Mikoyan stated the following in his memoirs: “Мы были мерзавцами”, its English version can be read as: “We have become scum.”

Upon the scandalous decision to erect Anastas Mikoyan’s statue, the disputes in Armenia continued.

“The people who reside in Armenia and the former Soviet Union geography know this expression and they understand well what Mikoyan meant. When this decision to erect this Bolshevik’s statue in between Yerevan’s Isahakyan park and the Koryun street routes came out, this line began being expressed prevalently again: “Why are we erecting a statue for this ‘bastard’?” As we found what has been written in the Armenian press regarding this scandal interesting, we include it in this chapter.



Image 14

... A request regarding the erection of Mikoyan’s statue was presented to the Yerevan Municipality by Yerevan’s chief architect Tigran Barseghyan. The Yerevan Municipality gave an affirmative decision. The justification of the decision was based on: “Anastas Mikoyan was a ‘solid and political figure’ who conducted ‘revolutionary activities’ until the 1920’s and was rewarded with medals during the Great Patriotic

War, he had a clean record. During the period of Stalin's political repression in the 1930's, there was no 'treason' in Mikoyan's activities, he was Armenian and he represented the Armenian people for over 40 years."⁵⁸

“Azatutyun” (Freedom) Radio, 14 May 2014

“...3 people from the ruling Republican Party's 'Hello, Yerevan' bloc and the director of 'Armenian Genocide' Museum-Institute Hayk Demoyan have opposed this decision. Demoyan presented a document prepared by Mikoyan dated to the years 1937-1938 as a justification to the Council and stated that he will not accept the erection of a statue for a figure who has a questionable biography. When Anastas Mikoyan was serving in the USSR administration, he had suggested to increase the number of arrests and executions in Armenia. According to Demoyan, there were thousands of politicians and intellectuals among those executed. In his objection, Demoyan referred to the document of 22 September 1937 that we have mentioned above. Demoyan stated that the aim of 2000 people being executed by firing squads was to 'cleanse Armenia of anti-Soviet factors' and underlined that erecting a statue for a person who had participated in such a massacre would be an insult to the Armenian people. The committee chairwoman and 'Prosperous Armenia Party' representative, former Minister of Culture Tamara Poghosyan agreed with these ideas and expressed that they did not have these documents when this decision regarding Mikoyan was being made. She stated 'What Demoyan has said was not present in the biography presented by the municipality and I was not aware of such information.' In his statement to the 'Azatutyun' Radio, the Armenia State Archives Director Amatuni Virabyan expressed that there are many documents in the national archives regarding Anastas Mikoyan's direct involvement in Stalin's oppression.”⁵⁹

The issue of Mikoyan's statue also reflected onto the Armenian people. The Armenian youth reacted by writing “Enver” (meaning Enver Pasha) on a street sign with his name.

“‘If Mikoyan's statue is put in black and white, I'm not against this, but there should be a murdered baby in his one hand and a white dove in the other’, these ideas are belonging to parliamentary Lyova

58 Four people voted against the decision in the council meeting.

59 Իրինա Հովհաննիսյան, “Սկանդալ բոլշևիկ Անաստաս Միկոյանի արձանը տեղադրելու որոշման շուրջ,” *Azatutyun.am*, Մայիս 2, 2014, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/25370626.html>.

Khachatryan. According to him, Mikoyan should be portrayed like this because Mikoyan wrote in his memoirs ‘We have become scum’ (Russian: ‘мы были мерзавцами’). ‘If that is the case, then we must portray him as he was. I see Mikoyan half black, half white, I would like to see Anastas Mikoyan under white, and written in black as ‘мерзавец’, or ‘scum’.’⁶⁰

“Stalin had offered Mikoyan to review the list of Armenians to be executed...”

“‘Stalin should not be hated, if we look at his life and work in the prism of that era, then maybe your attitude might not be negative,’ said Mzia Nauchashvili, head of the exhibit department at the Joseph Stalin Museum in Gori, speaking to Aravotam. She also stated the following: ‘In his words, many celebrities have expressed such an opinion in their memoirs. A group of Armenian journalists has recently left for Georgia at the invitation of the country’s National Tourism Board. (...) They have witnessed in their visit to the Stalin Museum that ‘the general atmosphere of the museum is cold and gloomy. The reporters even joked: ‘Here’s Stalin’s soul.’ One photograph stood out: from the left to right Mikoyan, Stalin, and Suren Spandaryan, another photograph on the right is Stalin’s mother. ‘Mrs. Nauchashvili was aware of Mikoyan’s story and responded to our observation: ‘Do you know the continuation of the story? Stalin suggested Mikoyan to revise that list.’ In response to the question of whether to increase or decrease the number of people, the museum official said, ‘Review in a positive way.’”⁶¹ Mikoyan responded: ‘Yes, of course.’ But have they done this?”

60 Տաթև Հարությունյան, “Անաստաս Միկոյանն իր հուշերում գրել է. « Мы были мерзавцами»,” *aravot.am*, June 2, 2014, <https://www.aravot.am/2014/06/02/466627/>.

61 Նելլի Բաբայան, “Ստալինը Միկոյանին առաջարկել է վերանայել գնդակահարման առաջարկվող հայերի ցուցակը,” *Aravot.am*, Մարտ 20, 2015, <https://www.aravot.am/2015/03/20/553033/>.

CHAPTER FOUR

Final Remarks

Stalin Is Dead! Long Live Stalin!

During the last years of Stalin's life, Mikoyan was waiting to be arrested or executed at any moment. His son remembered that Mikoyan had kept a gun under his pillow at home and at his room in the Kremlin. He could have committed suicide at any moment. In 1952, during the plenum (meeting) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Stalin suddenly broke into his speech and said: "Look: A new Frumkin has showed itself... You will see that he is working on a clear and principal matter so that he and we become confused." After this meeting, Mikoyan could have attempted to commit suicide at any moment. But Stalin died in 1953. A Politburo official had written the following during that time: "When the horse dies, the dogs rejoice."

Mikoyan made a change in position and became a "loyal cavalier" that consistently supported the new administration. In 1956, he supported from the bottom of his heart the idea that condemned the "cult of personality" developed in the name of Stalin. For this, Khrushchev made Mikoyan one of his most trusted people. With that, Mikoyan advanced even further in his career than during Stalin's era. He was now not only a trade minister, was also fulfilling the diplomatic duties of the secretary general. He resolved the "crisis" that was present for a period of time between Tito and Stalin. He was the person to make contact with Yugoslavia. During the Cuban crisis, he invited Fidel Castro, who wanted a preventative nuclear attack against America, to "calmness". These actions were organized by Hacaturov, S. Mikoyan, Ter-Akopov and other Armenians under the leadership of A. Mikoyan. Actions were taken to lay down the foundation of the socialist system in Cuba in parallel with the campaign of the Armenians seeking to make Uruguay recognize the "Armenian genocide". A. Mikoyan, who presided over the program to establish the socialist system in the countries of the American continent, conducted some official and unofficial visits to some countries. In fact, as he was returning to Moscow from one of the countries close to the United States, his plane was ordered to land onto a military airport. He and the crew were subsequently held hostage. After diplomatic negotiations, A. Mikoyan was "delivered" back to the USSR. During the same days, A. Mikoyan's wife suddenly passed away and he could not attend the funeral ceremony. After Mikoyan being held "hostage", the ideology of "establishing socialism" slowly began to fade in the countries of the American continent.

New domestic "maneuvers" in the country were decisive for Mikoyan's political future. As it was in the Beria case, Mikoyan partially joined the conspirators and criticized Khrushchev who had been unseated. Three months prior to Khrushchev's resignation, he was appointed as the Chairman of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet of USSR. At that moment, he was *de jure* at the highest position in the country (in reality, the country's leader had always been

the party's first secretary or secretary general). These were the last days of Mikoyan being at the peak of power. In addition, he resumed being the Secretary of the Central Committee and remained in this position until 1976.

Anastas Mikoyan died on 21 October 1978. He remained as a candidate or member of the Politburo for 40 years and a secretary of the Central Committee for 54 years. This had been a noteworthy accomplishment that no other party leader could achieve.

Sayings That Are Remembered about Anastas Mikoyan

“The man who has lived from Ilyich to Ilyich (from Lenin to Brezhnev) without suffering a heart attack or stroke.”

“The 27th Baku Commissar”

“The rascal was able to walk through Red Square on a rainy day without an umbrella [and] without getting wet.”

“Anastas seems to care more about types of cheese than about Marxism and Leninism.” (Stalin)

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Anastas Mikoyan was a prominent figure who served in particularly important positions during the Armenian insurrection and Soviet-era Russia. He had very contradictory views regarding the Armenians' struggle for independence, the Turkish-Russian-Armenian relations, and Armenian politics during the Soviet Union period. For example, according to Mikoyan, the idea of establishing a 'Great Armenia' that comprised seven Ottoman provinces from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean was a complete fantasy. He maintained the necessity for regions such as 'Zangezur and Karabakh' to be inside the borders of Azerbaijan and argued that Karabakh could not remain standing without Azerbaijan and thus had to be a part of Azerbaijan.

Despite such ideas that contradict the ones held by other prominent Armenian figures, Anastas Mikoyan is barely known in Turkey. His confessions and disclosures, which could turn Armenian historiography upside down, are almost unknown. For this reason, this work written by Gaffar akmaklı Mehdiyev based on the Russian and the Armenian resources is of great importance. In this work, the reader will find highly important information regarding the 'Armenian Question' and Turkish-Armenian-Soviet Union relations that have not been brought to light yet.

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