Richard G. Hovannisian. *The Republic of Armenia.* Volume IV: *Between Crescent and Sickle: Partition and Sovietization.* Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996. xii+496 pp.

With the appearance of the last two volumes of Professor Richard G. Hovannisian's *The Republic of Armenia,* an endeavour that began some thirty years ago as a simple doctoral dissertation comes to a fruitful end. It was a youthful idealisation and romanticisation of Armenian independence, says the author, that initially attracted him to the study of the Republic of Armenia of 1918-20, the first independent Armenian state after centuries-long foreign domination. The young historian planned then to bring the two-and-a-half years of the Republic out from the shadows through a comprehensive study based on multilingual and multiarchival research. He was soon to discover, however, that the task he had set himself would be more complex than he had originally envisaged.

The planned doctoral dissertation ended up as only a prehistory of the Republic, covering the period from 1914 to 1918. Published in 1967 under the title, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918,* it aimed at integrating and analysing the numerous domestic and external, national and international elements which culminated in the emergence of the Republic. This first book was based primarily on documents deposited in the US National Archives and in the Archives of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-20. The Delegation archives are currently housed, along with the Archives of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutiun (ARF-D), in Boston, Massachusetts. They were particularly useful at the time because they included copies of thousands of documents that were sent from Yerevan to Paris to keep the delegation apprised of political developments in the Caucasus. Their originals and many other documents from this period were kept in Yerevan and were thus out of reach for most experts interested in this era of Armenian history. The Soviet authors were portraying the Republic's leaders as lackeys of imperialism, as avowed enemies of the workers and peasants, and as the ruthless suppressers of the progressive elements within the country. Only the heroic intervention of the Red Army and assistance of Soviet Russia in late 1920, they argued, had spared the Armenian people from complete annihilation and had begun the process of fraternal reconciliation among all the peoples of the Caucasus and the entire Soviet Union. Hovannisian's work, which challenged many of these assumptions, was officially ignored in Soviet Armenia and he was denied any assistance when engaged in his momentous task. He now tells how during his many visits to Soviet

Armenia during that period, although he was taken through the State Historical Archives in Yerevan and shown where the restricted materials were kept, the sympathetic smiles of his guides alone were enough to convince him that it would be improper to request access.

It was the author's intent to follow up by writing the history of the Republic in an additional volume, but when he embarked on this research and formulated its outline, he realised that a single tome would not treat the subject adequately. He began planning a three-volume edition. Volume I was indeed published in 1971. Volume II, however, came out only in 1982. Publication was partly delayed because the author had, in the meantime, been consistently expanding his resource base, after having gained additional access to relevant declassified holdings in the British and French national archives and microfilms of the Armenian National Delegation led by Boghos Nubar Pasha as well as many newspapers published in Yerevan, Tbilisi, and Constantinople during the period under scrutiny. Important private papers of diplomats, educators, missionaries and philanthropists who were participants in the events of the time were also consulted.

Following the publication of volume II, Hovannisian had to amend his plans yet again. He decided to allocate two volumes - instead of one - covering developments in the second half of 1920. Furthermore, he had already completed writing the drafts of volumes III and IV when the policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* initiated by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the subsequent Karabagh movement in Armenia led in 1989 to the revision and reinterpretation of the history of the Republic. Soon, the Soviet Union collapsed, and Armenia regained her independence. The national anthem, emblem and flag of the Republic of 1918-20 were restored, and Hovannisian's son, Raffi, was selected as the independent republic's first Minister of Foreign Affairs. These developments made the author a respected and sought after figure among academic and media circles in Armenia. He was frequently asked to compare in public the events of 1917-21 that he had studied with the events accelerating in the Transcaucasus after the collapse of the Soviet order. Then, in 1990, he was elected as a member of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia.

As far as progress on his multi-volume work was concerned, previously classified archival material in Yerevan was unlocked in 1991. For the last two volumes, he has also been able to make use of the Archives of the Georgian Delegation to the Peace Conference of 1919-20 (now deposited at Harvard University). For two years he revised the drafts of the last two volumes to incorporate the new material. This process, he says, "made the volumes fuller and more accurate–without, however, altering any of the previous themes or conclusions" (vol. III, p. xiii). He acknowledges, however, that "the wealth of recently declassified archival material in all parts of the former Soviet Union now makes possible separate monographs on each theme

and nearly every chapter heading included in these five volumes" (III, xi). Indeed, a few steps have already been taken in that direction in Armenia in the last few years, but the difficulties that the publishing business is facing in Yerevan following the collapse of the Soviet order, and the wide chasm that still prevails between research techniques and ideological assumptions in the West and the post-Soviet East will probably prevent the emergence of any work to rival Hovannisian's masterpiece in the English-speaking world for the foreseeable future.

Volume IV of *The Republic of Armenia* carries the narrative to the sovietisation of the Republic in December 1920. The equally significant and controversial developments of the following six months - until the middle of 1921 - are unfortunately touched upon only very briefly in this last volume.

The last six months of the history of the Republic were a period of disillusionment for the Armenian government, already monopolised then by the ARF-D. The Treaty of Sèvres, signed on 10 August 1920, had created a united Armenia with an outlet on the Black Sea. But events soon showed that Armenia alone was too weak to force the compliance of Mustafa Kemal's emerging Turkish Nationalist Movement with this treaty and that the victorious Allied Powers, France and the United Kingdom in particular, were also either unable or unwilling to shoulder that heavy responsibility. Not only the Allied invitation to President Woodrow Wilson of the United States to assume the mandate of Armenia, but also their request that the latter also draw the southern and western boundaries of the new state are interpreted by Hovannisian as moves designed to extricate the Allies from the burden of having to decide whether or not to assign the key city of Erzerum and other strategic places to the new Armenian state. Wilson, in turn, is accused of politicising the Armenian mandate issue for personal gain, of turning it into an object of partisanship and of unnecessarily delaying for weeks his decision on the Armenian boundaries. His decision to request Senate authorisation for an American mandate is described as "either pathetically naive or brazenly cynical" (IV, 1). Rejection, argues Hovannisian, was a foregone certainty because of the internal political situation in the United States, but Wilson was deeply aware of the judgement of history and simply wished to place it clearly on the record that the abandonment of Armenia was not of his doing.

Hovannisian then describes how the Armenians themselves were finding it difficult even to defend their existing territories in Transcaucasia, let alone get hold of additional territory allocated to them at Sèvres. The last six months of the history of the Republic saw direct but protracted negotiations between Yerevan and Moscow over the issue of Soviet recognition of Armenia's independence. These negotiations, says Hovannisian, failed in part because of the broader Soviet desire to improve relations with the Turkish Nationalists and in part because of the pressure exerted on Soviet negotiators from within the Russian Communist Party and its affiliates in

Transcaucasia. The latter were opposed to any Russian-Armenian treaty that might include any provisions short of acknowledgement of Soviet Azerbaijan's absolute right to the disputed regions of Karabagh, Zangezur and Nakhichevan. Their annexation was deemed imperative to bolster the Baku government and forestall renewed anti-Soviet uprisings in the newly sovietised republic.

Indeed, the negotiations were still going on in Moscow when the Red Army occupied Goris and took control of the Goris-Sisian-Nakhichevan road on the pretext of separating the contending Azerbaijani and Armenian armies and halting the interracial bloodshed. In compliance with the August 10, 1920 Armenian-Russian treaty, all Armenian armed forces left Zangezur. Turkish detachments in Nakhichevan greeted the advance of the Red Army, and the government in Yerevan had to tell Garegin Nzhdeh, who was still resisting stubbornly in Ghapan, that hostilities in Zangezur should be shown from then on only as a popular uprising.

However, it was the Turkish Nationalist invasion of the territory of the Republic in September 1920 that sealed the fate of Armenia's short-lived independence. The invasion was, according to Hovannisian, the caustic Turkish response to the Treaty of Sèvres and to the shaping of a united, independent Armenian state. He explains that Mustafa Kemal and his followers believed that Turkey's future depended on the contiguity of its boundaries with Soviet Russia and the world of Islam. They were, therefore, reluctant to make any real concessions to the Armenians. The Turkish attack on Armenia had been authorised as early as June 20. The Commander of Turkish Nationalist forces in the East, General Kazim Karabekir desired to quash the Dashnaks as soon as possible, for he feared that if the Armenians accepted Soviet rule before the Turks moved, Ankara's hands would be tied and the recovery by Turks of any territory beyond the 1914 Russo-Turkish border would be impossible. Kemal, however, had thought then that it would be imprudent to begin military operations against Armenia before coming to a clear understanding with the Bolsheviks and had suspended the attack in deference to a Soviet request. By the beginning of September, however, Karabekir was ordered to wage a limited offensive against Armenia before the early autumn snows blocked the crucial mountain routes to the East. Former Ottoman War Minister, Enver Pasha, also encouraged the Turkish Nationalist army to embark on an attack with the forces at hand, for he too believed that the Russians would not intervene on Armenia's behalf. The Turks prepared for the impending invasion by also seeking Georgia's neutrality and making it implicitly clear that they would not object to Georgia's own occupation of certain territories she disputed with Armenia.

The picture that Hovannisian draws of Armenia's readiness to face the Turkish dangers warrants pity. He says that Armenian leaders did not believe that Mustafa Kemal, beset by so many other problems, would dare to launch an offensive. Arme-

nian commanders and intelligence officers underestimated the organisation of the Turkish forces and overestimated their own strength and potential.

Within the Soviet camp, there were deep disagreements. Foreign Minister Georgi Chicherin thought that part of the provinces of Van and Bitlis should still be given to Armenia so that the Armenian question could be settled fairly and an end could be put to the deep-seated enmity between Armenians and Turks. Within certain sections of the Russian Communist Party leadership, however, the eradication of the Dashnak government and the establishment of Soviet rule in both Armenia and Georgia were deemed to be important and inevitable prerequisites to the desired social revolution in Turkey. This last view was also backed by the future Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin.

Throughout the period of the Turkish invasion of Armenia, the Soviet government continued to provide the Kemalists with financial and military aid. The Soviet leaders had apparently condoned the initial Turkish advances, believing that as long as the Turkish army did not press into the heart of Armenia, there would be no grounds for Moscow's intervention. The Soviets became alarmed, however, when Karabekir captured Kars and moved on Alexandropol (modern day Giumri), and soon Moscow hastened its plans to sovietise Armenia, even through a military intervention, if necessary.

Despite the lethal threat posed by the Turkish invasion, Armenian Prime Minister Hamazasp Ohanjanian remained highly sceptical of Soviet Russia. He was convinced that the Turkish invasion would not have taken place unless it had been endorsed by the Soviet regime. He continued, says the author, to cling desperately and, in the end, futilely to his Western orientation. As Karabekir was pushing eastward, Ohanjanian resumed negotiations with the Soviets only to use Moscow's influence to prevent any Turkish advance. He was determined to stall on substantive issues until snow closed the passes from Azerbaijan, thereby diminishing the threat of Soviet aggression during the coming winter months. He wanted to limit Soviet mediation to political pressure on Turkey, without allowing the Soviet troops into Armenia, certain that opening the way to the Red Army would result in permanent occupation.

The succumbing of the Armenian army to panic and flight, however, led to the quick fall of Kars, Surmalu, Sharur-Nakhichevan and Alexandropol. Meanwhile, the Georgian armed forces had also advanced into the Neutral Zone of Lori and then into Jalal-oghli, Bzdoval, and Shahali. Unfortunately, Hovannisian does not analyse in detail the reasons behind the sudden collapse of Armenian defences, hinting, however, that he considers that psychological reasons should not be ignored. Trying desperately to avoid the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia, the government in Yerevan decided to deal directly with the Turks, calculating that Mustafa Kemal would prefer a small, independent Armenia on Turkey's eastern frontier over a common boundary with a revived and powerful Soviet Russia. It hoped that, somehow, it or

the Western powers could still bargain with Kemal to leave at least Van and a Black Sea outlet to independent Armenia. According to Hovannisian, it was only the uncompromising language of the draft peace treaty that the Turks presented to the Armenians in Alexandropol on November 30, which put to an end the Armenian self-delusion that Kemal desired a stable Armenian state on Turkey's eastern border. Following this Turkish ultimatum, fear of a renewed Turkish offensive compelled the Yerevan government to begin serious discussions about the possibility of proclaiming Soviet rule in Armenia, and all Soviet demands to that effect were promptly accepted the next day.

As regards the rebellion raised by Armenian Communist activists in the town of Ijevan on November 29, Hovannisian says that Soviet strategists resorted to that measure because they wished to avoid the appearance of an invasion. News of the incursion of the Red Army into Armenian territory and the Revolutionary Committee's proclamation apparently caught even the Soviet delegate to Transcaucasia, Boris Legran, by surprise. Finally, Hovannisian argues that the decision of the outgoing ARF-D government to sign the Treaty of Alexandropol on December 2/3 was illegal. However, he acknowledges that the Soviet leadership soon calculated that the need it felt to ensure Mustafa Kemal's goodwill in the future would preclude the inclusion of any substantial changes as regards the territorial settlements in the Transcaucasus to which it had initially declared its opposition. It therefore gradually dropped its insistence on drastically revising the boundaries agreed upon at Alexandropol and eventually enshrined them - without major alterations - in the Treaties of Moscow and Kars it signed with the Turkish Nationalists in 1921.

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