



Қазақстан Республикасы  
Фылым және жоғары білім министрлігі  
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Тарих және этнология институты

# ОТАН ТАРИХЫ

2025. №28 (4)    ОТАН ТАРИХЫ



- ТАРИХ
- ЭТНОЛОГИЯ
- АРХЕОЛОГИЯ



2025. №28 (4)

ISSN 1814-6961  
E-ISSN 2788-9718

ISSN: 1814-6961 (print)  
ISSN: 2788-9718 (online)

**Отан тарихы**  
**Отечественная история**  
**History of the Homeland**

Үш айда бір рет шығатын ғылыми журнал  
2025. № 28 (4)

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Published in the Kazakhstan  
Otan tarikhy  
Has been issued as a journal since  
1998  
ISSN: 1814-6961 (Print)  
ISSN: 2788-9718 (Online)  
2025. Vol. 28. Is. 4. Pp. 1033–  
1049  
Journal homepage:  
<https://otan.history.iie.kz>



FTAXP/ MPHTI / IRSTI 03.20  
[https://doi.org/10.51943/2788-9718\\_2025\\_28\\_4\\_1033-1049](https://doi.org/10.51943/2788-9718_2025_28_4_1033-1049)

## THE GENERAL SITUATION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND RUSSIA IN THE FINAL STAGES OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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**Abstract.** *Introduction.* In the final years of World War I, both the Ottoman Empire and Russia faced deep political, military, and economic crises. The Ottoman Empire was experiencing fatigue from the prolonged war, heavy human and material losses, economic collapse, and social unrest. As defeats on the frontlines increased, the population struggled with hunger and epidemics. In Russia, 1917 brought a radical transformation. The February Revolution deposed Tsar Nicholas II, while the October Revolution brought the Bolsheviks to power. The new administration withdrew from the war and turned towards civil war. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed on March 3, 1918, ended the war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, with the Ottoman Empire regaining Kars, Ardahan, and Batum. *Purpose and objectives.* To analyze the political, military, and socio-economic developments in the Ottoman Empire and Russia during the final years of World War I, and to assess the impact of these developments on both empires' postwar trajectories. *Materials and methods.* The study is based on: Primary sources: diplomatic documents, wartime correspondence, government decrees, and the text of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk; Secondary literature: scholarly monographs and journal articles on World War I, the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian Revolution; Comparative-historical method: used to compare political and social developments in the two empires; Contextual analysis: applied to interpret the war's impact on internal political dynamics and foreign policy decisions; Chronological approach: employed to trace key events leading to the war's conclusion for both sides. *Conclusion.* By the end of World War I, both the Ottoman Empire and Russia were engulfed in profound instability. The Ottomans, though briefly strengthened by Brest-Litovsk, collapsed under the weight of military defeat and economic ruin, leading to the armistice and eventual dissolution of the empire. Russia, embroiled in civil war, shifted from imperial rule to the formation of a new socialist state. The crises of 1917–1918 thus marked the beginning of transformative eras for both societies, reshaping their political landscapes and influencing regional dynamics for years ahead.

**Keywords:** Ottoman Empire, Russia, Allied Powers, Armistice of Mudros, Greek soldiers, Peace decree, Brest-Litovsk, Turkish War of Independence.

**For citation:** Dossymova M.K. The General Situation of The Ottoman Empire and Russia in the final stages of the first World War // Otan tarikhy. 2025. Vol. 28. № 4. Pp. 1033–1049 [in English].

DOI: [10.51943/2788-9718\\_2025\\_28\\_4\\_1033-1049](https://doi.org/10.51943/2788-9718_2025_28_4_1033-1049)

## ПОЛОЖЕНИЕ ОСМАНСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ И РОССИИ НА ЗАКЛЮЧИТЕЛЬНОМ ЭТАПЕ ПЕРВОЙ МИРОВОЙ ВОЙНЫ

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**Аннотация.** Введение. В последние годы Первой мировой войны и Османская империя, и Россия столкнулись с глубокими политическими, военными и экономическими кризисами. Османская империя испытывала тяжесть от затянувшейся войны, огромные человеческие и материальные потери, экономический крах и социальные волнения. По мере учащения поражений на фронтах население сталкивалось с голодом и эпидемиями. В России 1917 год стал временем радикальных преобразований. Февральская революция свергла царя Николая II, а Октябрьская революция привела к власти большевиков. Новое руководство вышло из войны и двинулось к гражданскому конфликту. Брест-Литовский мирный договор, подписанный 3 марта 1918 года, завершил войну между Османской империей и Россией, при этом Османская империя восстановила контроль над Карсом, Ардаганом и Батуми. Цель и задачи. Проанализировать политические, военные и социально-экономические процессы в Османской империи и России в последние годы Первой мировой войны, а также оценить влияние этих процессов на послевоенное развитие обеих держав. Материалы и методы. Исследование основано на следующих источниках и методах: первичные источники: дипломатические документы, военная переписка, государственные; постановления, текст Брест-Литовского договора; вторичная литература: научные монографии и статьи, посвящённые Первой мировой войне, Османской империи и Русской революции; сравнительно-исторический метод: использован для сопоставления политических и социальных процессов в двух империях; контекстуальный анализ: применён для интерпретации влияния войны на внутреннюю политическую динамику и решения во внешней политике; хронологический подход: использован для прослеживания ключевых событий, приведших к окончанию войны для обеих сторон. Заключение. К концу Первой мировой войны и Османская империя, и Россия оказались охвачены глубокой нестабильностью. Османская империя, хотя и временно укрепившаяся благодаря Брест-Литовскому договору, рухнула под тяжестью военного поражения и экономического истощения, что привело к заключению Мудросского перемирия и последующему распаду государства. Россия, погруженная в Гражданскую войну, перешла от имперской формы правления к становлению нового социалистического государства. Кризисы 1917–1918 годов стали началом эпох масштабных трансформаций для обеих стран, радикально изменив их политический облик и повлияв на дальнейшую региональную динамику.

**Ключевые слова:** Османская империя, Россия, Антанта, Мудросское перемирие, греческие солдаты, Декрет о мире, Брест-Литовский договор, Турецкая война за независимость.

**Для цитирования:** Досымова М.К. Положение Османской империи и России на заключительном этапе Первой мировой войны // Отан тарихы. 2025. Т. 28. № 4. С. 1033–1049. [на англ. яз.].

DOI: 10.51943/2788-9718\_2025\_28\_4\_1033-1049

## БІРІНШІ ДУНИЕЖҮЗІЛІК СОҒЫСТЫҚ СОҢҒЫ КЕЗЕҢІНДЕГІ ОСМАН ИМПЕРИЯСЫ МЕН РЕСЕЙДІҢ ЖАҒДАЙЫ

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**Андратпа.** *Kiрише.* Бірінші дүниежүзілік соғыстық соңғы жылдарында Осман империясы да, Ресей де терең саяси, әскери және экономикалық дағдарыстарға тап болды. Осман империясы созылған соғыстық ауыртпалығын, адам шығыны мен материалдық зардаптарын, экономикалық күйреу мен әлеуметтік толкуларды бастаң өткөрді. Фронттардағы женілістер жиілеген сайын халық аштық пен індеттерге ұшырады. Ресейде 1917 жыл түбәгейлі өзгерістер кезеңі болды. Ақпан революциясы патша II Николайдың құлауына әкелсе, Қазан революциясы билікке большевиктерді алып келді. Жаңа билік соғыстан шығып, ел азаматтық қақтығысқа қарай бет алды. 1918 жылдың 3 наурызында қол қойылған Брест-Литвов бітім шарты Осман империясы мен Ресей арасындағы соғысты аяқтап, Осман империясына Карс, Ардаган және Батуми аймақтарын қайтарып берді. *Мақсаты мен міндеттері.* Бірінші дүниежүзілік соғыстық соңғы жылдарында Осман империясы мен Ресейдегі саяси, әскери және әлеуметтік-экономикалық процестерді талдау, сондай-ақ бұл процестердің екі державаның соғыстан кейінгі дамуына ықпалын бағалау. *Материалдар мен әдістер.* Зерттеу төмендегі дереккөздер мен әдістерге негізделді: бастапқы деректер: дипломатиялық құжаттар, әскери хат-хабарлар, мемлекеттік қаулылар, Брест-Литвов келісімінің мәтіні; екіншілік әдебиет: Бірінші дүниежүзілік соғысқа, Осман империясына және Ресей революциясына арналған ғылыми монографиялар мен мақалалар; салыстырмалы-тарихи әдіс: екі империядағы саяси және әлеуметтік процестерді салыстыруды қолданылды; контекстуалды талдау: соғыстық ішкі саяси динамика мен сыртқы саясаттағы шешімдерге ықпалын түсіндіру үшін пайдаланылды; хронологиялық тәсіл: екі тарап үшін соғыстың аяқталуына алып келген негізгі оқиғаларды жүйелі қадағалау мақсатында қолданылды. *Қорытынды.* Бірінші дүниежүзілік соғыстың соңына қарай Осман империясы да, Ресей де терең тұрақсыздық жағдайында болды. Брест-Литвов шарты арқылы уақытша күшейгендей көрінген Осман империясы әскери женілістер мен экономикалық титықтаудың салдарынан ақыры күйреп, Мудрос бітіміне қол қойып, кейіннен мемлекет ретінде ыдырады. Ресей азаматтық соғысқа батып, империялық басқарудан жаңа социалистік мемлекет құру жолына өтті. 1917–1918 жылдардағы дағдарыстар екі ел үшін кең көлемді өзгерістер дәуірінің бастамасы болып, олардың саяси келбетін түбегейлі өзгерітті және аймақтың кейінгі тарихи динамикасына зор ықпал етті.

**Түйін сөздер:** Осман империясы, Ресей, Антанта, Мудрос бітімі, грек солдаттары, Бейбітшілік туралы Декрет, Брест-Литвов шарты, Түркияның тәуелсіздік соғысы.

**Дәйексөз үшін:** Досымова М.К. Бірінші дүниежүзілік соғыстың соңғы кезеңіндегі Осман империясы мен Ресейдің жағдайы // Отан тарихы. 2025. Т. 28. № 4. 1033–1049-бб. [ағылшын тілінде]. DOI: 10.51943/2788-9718\_2025\_28\_4\_1033-1049

**The Relations between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1917–1918.** The First World War, which began on July 28, 1914, saw both sides significantly battered by 1917. The World War had caused millions of soldiers to lose their lives and exposed people to hunger, poverty, and various diseases. Thus, the continuation of the war intensified the economic hardships and living difficulties. Despite this, neither side accepted defeat. However, both the Entente and Alliance groups were weary of the war. A social and political society that did not want war emerged. Austria could not sustain the war with Russia on the Eastern Front and had received help from the Ottoman Empire and Germany. It had also failed to win the war with Italy. Thus, Austria gave the first signs of fatigue against the war. On the other hand, the war began to weigh heavily on the Allies as well. The year 1917 saw the February Revolution in Russia, the defeats of Serbia and

Romania, Italy's rout at Caporetto, etc. During this interval, on January 8, 1918, the President of the United States, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, announced in the American Congress the 14 principles prepared to eliminate the war and for a peace agreement between the two sides [Armaoglu, 1987: 137].

President Thomas Woodrow Wilson of the United States, which remained neutral and outside of the hot conflict of World War I for three years, proposed 14 points. These included the removal of all economic barriers between peace-approving countries, the arrangement of territorial boundaries according to the principle of nationalities, freedom of the seas, and the establishment of an international organization of nations. Unfortunately, later, at the Council meeting on February 1 following the Paris Peace Conference, President Thomas Woodrow Wilson of the United States proposed "the occupation of certain parts of Ottoman Empire territories by certain states", thus acting contrary to the 12th point of his own 14 principles [Köse, 2014: 219].

During the World War, the February Revolution took place in Russia in 1917, overthrowing the Tsarist regime and replacing it with the Provisional Government. The Kerensky Government wanted to continue the war with Germany. However, there was a new government that desired to end the war. On October 25, 1917, the Communist-Bolshevik Party led by Lenin eliminated the Provisional Government in Petrograd and seized power. Lenin, upon taking control, immediately issued a declaration called the "Decree on Peace". The Bolsheviks, intending to strengthen the Soviet regime in Russia, wanted to end the state of war with Germany as soon as possible in order to conclude peace<sup>1</sup> [Armaoglu, 1987: 139-140].

The reasons for the Russians' desire to exit the war were not only to strengthen Bolshevism, but also the severe blows dealt by the Germans to Russian forces on the battlefield, namely the great German victories, the cutting off of the Allied Powers' aid route to Russia as a result of the Turkish victory at Gallipoli, and the outbreak of internal revolution [Kurat, 1990: 579].

On November 26, 1917, the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, Commander-in-Chief N. Krylenko, sent his telegram to the German Command regarding the subject of armistice<sup>2</sup> [Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR, 1959: 25].

On November 27, at 19:50, the initial approval response was received from the German High Command. The text of the German High Command's response to the Russian delegation:

1. The German Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front is ready to begin negotiations with the Russian Commander-in-Chief.

2. The Commander-in-Chief of the German armies on the Eastern Front, with full authority given by the German High Command, agrees to the immediate commencement of negotiation talks.

3. If the Russian Commander-in-Chief is ready to negotiate with the German Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front, a commission consisting of representatives with written authority must be sent to the Headquarters of the German Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front.

4. The German Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front is also forming a commission with special authorities in the same manner.

5. The Russian Commander-in-Chief can determine the date and time of the meeting for both commissions. Timely notification must be given to the German Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front to prepare the emergency train. An indication is needed regarding where the Russian commission plans to cross the front.

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<sup>1</sup> After the February Revolution in Russia and the deposition of Tsar Nicholas II, a "Provisional Government" came to power. This government was sometimes also referred to as the Aleksandr Kerensky government, named after the leader who attempted to govern the country. Armaoglu, Fahir, 20th Century Political History 1914-1980, Turkiye İş Bankası, Cultural Publications (Edition) Ankara 1987, p. 339-140.

<sup>2</sup> At 15:50, ambassadors Vladimer Shneur, military Doctor Mikhail Sagalovich, and Gregoriy Meren reached the front line and by 4:10, they had crossed into the German trenches without any difficulty. The meeting was conducted in French. Later, the proposal to initiate armistice negotiations with the aim of concluding peace on all fronts of the belligerent countries was immediately transmitted to the division headquarters and from there to the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the entire Eastern Front, Prince Ruprecht, and to the Commander-in-Chief of the German Armies. At 6:00 in the morning, the ambassadors were taken by car via the Dvinsk-Ponevezh highway to the Pnissen parish and were officially received by Division General Hofmeister at 6:20 AM. General Hofmeister informed that he could receive a response to the proposal forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief of the German Armies within 24 hours.

6. The German Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front will provide the necessary apparatus to establish a direct line between the commission and the Russian High Command<sup>3</sup> [Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR, 1959: 28].

Thus, a decision was made to establish direct telegraph communication between the representatives coming for peace negotiations and the highest authorities represented by the Council of People's Commissars Government, and to determine the meeting place for the deputies and commission members arriving for peace negotiations. The meeting place should first be accessed via the Dvinsk-Vilno railway line west of the village of Kuhalishki, between the lines of the two commission units, then proceed to Petrograd station, after which a special train would be waiting to bring them to the city of Brest-Litovsk, where the Headquarters of the German Army's Eastern Front High Command was located [Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR, 1959: 27].

On November 28, 1917, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR invited all allied and enemy peoples (belligerent states) to conclude peace and sent an official request to the allied representatives in Petrograd to participate in peace negotiations [Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR, 1959: 28-30]. However, none of the allied powers took this request seriously.

On November 29, 1917, in response to the invitation for a peace treaty from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, the British Ambassador, in a conversation with a Reuters correspondent, stated that the British Government did not recognize the new Russian Government and that the British Embassy had been instructed to avoid any actions that could be interpreted as recognition of the new Russian Government. The British Ambassador also explained that he could not send an official response note to the notes sent by the Russian Government, which was not recognized by his government [Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR, 1959: 31].

The Turkish State gladly accepted the Russians' "Peace Decree" declaration. Because Turkey, like every other country, was tired of war, had entered an economic crisis, and had lost territory to the Russians and the British. In such a situation, it was necessary to begin preparations for peace to be concluded with the Russians, and the Ottoman State was sending its delegation to the peace negotiations that would begin in the city of Brest-Litovsk. As this peace negotiation was very important for the Turks, Talat Pasha himself headed the delegation. What the Turks wanted from the Brest-Litovsk treaty was the recovery of the territory under Russian occupation and especially the return of the Three Provinces (Kars, Ardahan, and Batum sanjaks). The Acting Foreign Minister Halil Bey informed the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini about the articles prepared for the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations. In the text of the articles: 1. The demand for immediate evacuation of places held under occupation by the Russians, 2. Resolution of the issue of abolishing capitulations, 3. If Russian delegates were to bring up the issue of the Straits, this matter should first be discussed with the delegates of the Quadruple Alliance states, but should not be conclusively bound, 4. Turkey will not make any territorial annexation demands from Russia, however, such a demand should be made by (Turkey's) allies. But the Turkish Government is keeping secret that it will demand the Three Provinces from the Russians [Kurat, 1990: 325-361].

On December 16, 1917, during private discussions between L. Kamenev, a member of the Russian delegation, and Zeki Pasha, a member of the Turkish delegation in Brest-Litovsk, the situation in the Russian-occupied area was revealed. Kamenev agreed to evacuate the occupied Turkish territories. However, he set the following conditions:

1. The return of forcibly displaced persons to their former homelands.

2. The supervision of this process by a commission formed by both parties, and after resettling the people, the Turkish Government must guarantee the form of administration for the local population according to their expressed desire to either remain under Turkish rule or be governed autonomously.

The Turks recognized that there was a trap beneath these Russian conditions. Soviet Russia actually intended to settle an Armenian population from the west of Trabzon to Erzurum, Erzincan, and in the provinces of Muş, Bitlis, and Van through Turkish means. Then, with a referendum, an "autonomous Armenia" would be established (which would later accept Russian protection through another referendum). Under these conditions, the occupied territories would be returned to Turkey [Kurat, 1990: 364].

<sup>3</sup> The owner of the letter sent on November 27, 1917, is Lieutenant General von Hofmeister, Commander-in-Chief of the German Eastern Front and division commander. Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR. Volume I. (November 7, 1917 – December 31, 1918) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. — Moscow: State Publishing House of Political Literature, 1959. — 772 pages.

Foreign Minister Ahmet Nesimi Bey had asked German Foreign Minister Kühlmann to pressure the Russians for “the immediate evacuation of occupied Turkish territory”, but the Germans did not pay much attention to the Turks' requests because they themselves did not want to evacuate the lands they had occupied. The Turks firmly rejected the proposal for a referendum in the occupied area (i.e., Eastern Anatolia) to the Russian delegation and responded that there was no Armenian issue in Turkey and that the issues in the eastern provinces would be resolved according to Turkish laws [Yerasimos, 2000: 13].

The Turks had reasons for responding in this way. On January 11, 1918, the Russians attempted to establish “Turkish Armenia” through a “decree” and provided Armenians with the opportunity to immediately establish military and civilian organizations. The Russians implemented a policy of protecting Armenians in the Turkish territories they occupied, trying to transform these areas into a complete Armenia, and the Armenians intensified their massacres against the Turks in the region. The Russians merely stood by in the face of this event. They even turned a blind eye to the bombing of the mosque in Erzincan by Russian military authorities. Thus, by organizing the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia, “the Bolsheviks who entered into peace negotiations with Turkey and its allies” openly engaged in a hostile political movement against the Turks. This was contrary to both international law and Turkish law. When the Turkish delegation in Brest-Litovsk demanded an end to all these unpleasant events, the Russians' response mentioned that “according to the armistice provisions, the forces at the front are content, whereas their forces have not increased”. Despite the fact that the Russian government had no right to nationalize military units in the occupied Ottoman territories, the Russians did not hesitate to withdraw their soldiers and replace them with Armenian units [Kurat, 1990: 367-370]. After this incident, the Turks completely lost their trust in the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks had tried to achieve their goals by inciting strikes and revolutions in Vienna and Berlin. As a result, the Germans also had no trust in the Bolsheviks.

Meanwhile, at the peace negotiations that began on December 20, 1917, in the city of Brest-Litovsk between the Russians and the Germans and their allies, General Max Hoffman, commander of the Eastern Armies, led the German delegation. The Turkish delegation was represented by Ibrahim Hakki Pasha, the Ambassador to Berlin, and his chief advisor, Zeki Pasha, the Turkish military attaché in Berlin. The Soviet Russian delegation was headed by a team of revolutionaries, including Alfred Joffe, Kamenev, (Leon Trotsky), Sokolnikov, and Karahan. Along with them were revolutionary Ms. Bitsenko, a worker, a soldier, a sailor, and peasant representatives.

The delegation led by Alfred Joffe demanded the implementation of the principles of “peace without annexations, without indemnities, and self-determination for nations”. Through General Hoffman, the Germans demanded Livonia and Courland, considered Baltic provinces, as well as occupied Poland, etc. Upon hearing this, Kamenev left for Petrograd to explain the situation to his government. However, when negotiations resumed on January 9, 1918, nothing had changed. German General Hoffman presented an ultimatum to the Russian delegation, demanding the acceptance of the border line determined on the map<sup>4</sup> [Kurat, 1990: 342-345]. Trotsky, who went to Petrograd to consult with his government on the matter, arrives in Brest-Litovsk on January 29 and on February 10, in a declaration read on behalf of the Soviet delegation, refuses to sign an agreement that includes territorial annexations, announcing that the war has ended for them. The Soviet delegation leaves Brest-Litovsk on February 10 [Yerasimos, 2000: 18].

Although the peace negotiations initiated between the Russians and the Germans and their allies ended without result, on December 11, Vehip Pasha once again sent a protest to General Odishelidze to stop the atrocities committed by Armenians against Turks [Yerasimos, 2000: 19].

After Leon Trotsky's declaration, the Germans announced that they would launch an offensive on February 17. The Soviets, who were without an army and powerless, accepted the German terms and sent a delegation to Brest-Litovsk led by Sokolnikov and consisting of members G. Petrovsky, Foreign Affairs Commissar Mdivani, and Chicherin. In the treaty that resumed on February 27, 1918, in Brest-Litovsk, the Germans imposed new conditions in addition to the previous ones. They demanded the separation of all Baltic countries, including Estonia, from Russia. The Turkish delegation also made new demands separate from their previous ones. The Turks requested the cession of Elviye-i Selase (the sanjaks of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum). However, the Russians objected to this, and this time the Germans supported the Turks. The Russian delegation was forced to accept all conditions without objection, as they had done previously with

<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the author notes that Stalin prohibited mentioning and printing the name of Leon Trotsky. This is evidence of Stalin's dictatorship. A dictator is invariably a political leader who possesses absolute power. Kurat, Akdes Nimet, Turkey and Russia. Ministry of Culture, Ankara 1990, p. 590.

the terms put forward by the Germans. Thus, after protesting this agreement that was forcibly imposed on them against their will, the Soviets signed the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty on March 3, 1918. Ibrahim Hakki and Zeki Pasha signed this peace treaty on behalf of Turkey [Kurat, 1990: 382-384].

According to the memoir of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks, Soviet Russia desired a separate peace, but they were compelled to sign this agreement [Lenin, 1956: 102].

Thus, the Russians accepted the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk under very harsh conditions. For the Turks, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was a great victory, as it gave the Turkish Government the opportunity to reclaim the Eastern Anatolian territory under Russian occupation, and furthermore, it enabled them to regain the Elviye-i Selase (the sanjaks of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum). The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk provided the first environment for contact and mutual acquaintance between the diplomats of the Turkish Government and Soviet Russia.

**Draft Plans for Partitioning Ottoman Empire Territories (Secret Agreements).** While the war continued, the Allied Powers had begun to make plans to partition the Ottoman Empire. According to the Allied Powers, dividing the Ottoman Empire's territories would be one of the greatest spoils of the war. Thus, England promised the Arabs that if they fought against the Ottoman Empire during World War I, an Arab State would be established. The Emir of Mecca, Sharif Hussein, wanted to lead a large Arab government that would include the entire Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Syria, and began negotiations with the British. On October 24, 1915, negotiations known as the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence were initiated between Sharif Hussein bin Ali, the Emir of Mecca, and the British government. However, four months earlier, Sharif Hussein bin Ali had declared that he would remain loyal to the Ottoman Empire and always provide his support. Despite this, encouraged by the promises made by England, he turned against the Ottoman Empire and entered into agreements with the British. Meanwhile, in 1916, the British had made a secret agreement with Tsarist Russia and France to divide the Arab geography between themselves and France. This was later announced by the revolutionary Soviet government. Upon hearing this, US President Wilson declared that he would not recognize secret agreements [Armaoglu, 1987: 197].

After the secret relationship between the British Government, France, and the Russian Empire was revealed, it became apparent that the promises of independence to the Arabs were false. In fact, this event meant that while the war was still ongoing, if the Ottoman State were to lose the war, the Allied powers had already begun to divide among themselves the regions under Turkish protection through secret agreements.

Ali Rıza Pasha explains that in the cabinet program article read in the Chamber of Deputies, it was mentioned that independence would be granted to the Arabs under the sovereignty of the Sultan [Jaeschke, 1986: 30].

Meanwhile, if we look at Ali Rıza Pasha's memoirs, this article was promised to Arab deputies by the Sultan before the armistice agreement was made.

At this time, on November 7, 1918, Britain and France issued a declaration about the Middle East to regain the trust of the Arabs. They stated that they were fighting "for the liberation of peoples who have long lived under Turkish oppression" and that the Middle Eastern regions could gain their independence based on free elections. It was later understood that the Allied Powers were playing a new game on the Arabs when they decided to establish a mandate regime in the Middle East at the Paris Conference and then divided the Middle East among themselves at the San Remo Conference. Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, and Lebanon were given to the French. The Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, and Palestine were given to the British [Armaoglu, 1987: 198].

This event has demonstrated that the Middle East cannot establish independent countries on their own. The reasons for establishing Mandate States in the Middle East are: 1. To possess 80% of the world's oil reserves and approximately 50% of natural gas reserves. 2. To control the Euphrates, Tigris, and Orontes river basins, as well as the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Istanbul and Dardanelles Straits. 3. These reasons stem from the geopolitical importance of these regions and their status as holy sites for three major religions.

Thus, the Middle East primarily meant an economic resource for the Allied Powers. Consequently, during the World War years, secret agreements were made among the Allied Powers to partition Ottoman territories. One of the secret agreements made on April 26, 1915, was the Treaty of London. During this agreement, the Allied Powers wanted Italy on their side to achieve their objectives regarding the Straits. To bring Italy into the war within a month, they promised territories during the partitioning of Anatolia. In return, Italy was to be given Trieste, South Tyrol, Northern Dalmatia, Istria up to the west of Fiume, the Albanian coastal areas of Avlona, Valona and its surroundings, and part of the German colonies in Africa.

Additionally, regions belonging to the Ottoman Empire in Western Anatolia, including Antalya, Konya, and especially Tripolitania, were promised to Italy [Gürün, 1986: 15]).

Another secret agreement that persuaded Italy to join the war on the side of the Allied Powers was the Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne Agreement. In this agreement, Italy was promised the territories of Antalya, Konya, Aydin, and Izmir, excluding Mersin [Jaeschke, 1986: 42].

Another secret agreement to acquire the Ottoman Empire's Middle Eastern territories was the Sykes-Picot agreement, signed on May 16, 1916. This agreement was concluded by Sir Mark Sykes, representing England, and Georges Picot on behalf of the French government [Sander, 1989: 217]. For England, the Ottoman Empire's Middle Eastern territories were important for oil and the security of the route to India. Before making a secret agreement between themselves, the British and French had obtained the approval of the Russian Tsardom in March. England, France, and the Russian Tsardom made a secret agreement among themselves. According to the agreement, the Russian Tsardom would receive the provinces of Bitlis, Muş, Van, Siirt, and Erzurum, as well as the eastern Black Sea region up to Trabzon. The French government was given the Syrian coastal region from Palestine to Iskenderun, the entire area from south of Sivas to Çukurova and up to Diyarbakır, as well as the surroundings of Adana and Mersin [Hitapoglu, 2001: 300]. The Baghdad and Basra provinces, along with the ports of Acre and Haifa, would come under the protection of the British Government. An Arab State Federation would be established in the remaining regions. The northern part of the Acre-Kirkuk line of the established Arab State Federation would be under French protection, while the southern part would be under British protection. Alexandretta would be given free port status, and Palestine would be granted international zone status [Erkan, 2023: 267].

During secret agreements, England and France aimed to seize the territories of the Ottoman Empire as spoils following Germany's defeat. In the division of these spoils, England would take the part of Syria that was on the French side. British Prime Minister Lloyd George imposed the text of the agreement regarding Turkey on France, and French Prime Minister Clemenceau refused to sign it. Mikhail Lazarevich Veltman, the authorized representative of the RSFSR's Southern Front, states in his memoirs that England and France were at each other's throats "over the skin of a bear that had not yet been killed" [Pavlovich, 1920: 6-7].

**Developments During the Armistice Period.** After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Russian Government's withdrawal from the war was the most beneficial outcome for the Central Powers. However, the war still continued between the Central Powers and the Allies. The Germans were defeated in the war against the French, British, and American armies. The Allies had a large number of troops and strong military equipment. The British had used new "armored tanks" in the war, which the Germans did not possess. German soldiers were worn out and tired of the war due to the successive intense attacks by the Allied forces. Revolutionary movements emerged at the front. Thus, on November 11, 1918, an armistice agreement was signed, bringing an end to the war [Kurat, 1990: 568-569].

Germany's defeat thus determined Turkey's fate as well. The Balkan route, which had established a connection between the Germans and Turkey during the war, was cut off. Talat Pasha offered to send a Turkish division to strengthen the Bulgarian front. However, the Bulgarian government was looking for ways to withdraw from the war, so they did not accept Talat Pasha's offer and on September 30, 1918, the Bulgarians signed an armistice and withdrew from the war. This event greatly affected the Turks, and the already difficult situation of the Turks became even worse. Meanwhile, Arab sheiks were sold to the British for gold and switched to the British side. Thus, the Arabs betrayed the Turks and joined forces with the British to make a move against Turkish forces. In such a situation, the Ottoman Armies suffered defeat and quickly withdrew from Syria after Palestine. The British gained control of the Palestine, Syria, and Iraq fronts. In this situation, the local population increased their attacks against Turkish forces together with the British. The Arabs were giving the retreating units the food supplies they needed and surrendering them to the British coming from behind. This showed the hatred of the local Arabs towards the Turks. On October 19, 1918, the British occupied Hama. The 20th and 3rd corps under the command of Ali Fuat Pasha and Ismet Pasha, who were under Kemal Pasha's orders, were not sufficient. Mustafa Kemal Pasha and Ali Fuat Pasha withdrew to Aleppo from the joint attack of the British and Arabs, and tried to prevent them from entering Turkey by protecting the Amanos Tunnels, which were considered the gateway to Anatolia. The Turks intended to defend the Amanos tunnels, considered the gateway to Anatolia, until the end. However, in the face of the British offensive, on October 25-26, 1918, the Army Headquarters withdrew to Katma, and at that time, a declaration came that the Entente Powers would accept an armistice with the Ottoman State [Özçelik, 1993: 40-42].

Meanwhile, the armies of Cevat and Cemal Pashas on the Syrian Front had been completely destroyed. Ali Ihsan Pasha's 13th Corps in the Mosul region was in a weakened state. In the east, the 9th Caucasus Division had occupied the Nakhchivan region from the Turkish-Armenian border, which passed six kilometers south of Yerevan, to the Aras River. The First Caucasus Corps was in Tabriz, and the 11th Caucasus Division had occupied Azerbaijan. Thus, there were no enemies left in Azerbaijan. Georgia and Armenia had helplessly come under German protection [Karabekir, 1988: 12]. Thus, as we saw in World War I, the Turkish Army, rejuvenated by Enver Pasha, fought heroically until their last breath despite hardships during a long four-year war.

Moreover, when the armistice decision was announced from Istanbul, Mustafa Kemal Pasha and some commanders stated that there was no need to rush into making an armistice. Nevertheless, those in Istanbul made several attempts to reach a ceasefire agreement. The Turks were divided in their opinion regarding the armistice. Minister of Justice Halil Menteşe Bey, Minister of Education Dr. Nazım Bey, and Enver Pasha wanted to continue the war, while the majority of the second side and Talat Pasha desired to conclude an armistice. Thus, the decision to conclude an armistice was accepted. The Turks applied to the American Presidency through Spain to request Woodrow Wilson's 14 Principles. However, the Turks' repeated applications were not even answered [İzzet, 1993: 16-17].

The Turks seeking an armistice approached British Admiral Calthorpe through the mediation of British General Townsend, and the Turkish request was accepted. Minister of Navy Rauf (Orbay) Bey, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Reşat Bey, and Chief of Staff Lieutenant Colonel Sadullah Bey arrived in Mudros, and on October 30, 1918, the "Armistice of Mudros" was signed [Kurat, 1990: 575-576].

The terms of the armistice consisted of articles that would cause Turkey to lose its independence.

Articles 1, 2, 3, and 6: The mined areas in the Istanbul and Dardanelles straits and the Black Sea will be reported and cleared.

Article 5: Soldiers exceeding the number required to protect borders and maintain internal order will be demobilized, and their weapons and equipment will be inspected.

Article 7: The Allied powers may occupy any place in case their security is threatened.

Articles 10, 12: All telegraph and wireless communications, except for government correspondence, will be monitored. The Taurus Tunnels will be occupied.

Articles 8, 9, 13, 14: The Allied powers will be able to use railways, merchant ships, and repair facilities in ports, and obtain materials such as coal and oil. The destruction of military and commercial equipment will be prevented.

Articles 11, 15, 16, 17: Turkish forces in Iran and the Caucasus will withdraw to pre-war borders. Turkish units in Hejaz, Asir, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Tripoli, and Benghazi will surrender to the nearest Allied commander. The Allied powers can use railways and occupy the Caucasus and Baku.

Articles 19, 23: German and Austrian military and civilian subjects will leave Turkey as soon as possible; the Ottoman government will cease cooperation with these states.

Articles 4, 22: Allied and Armenian prisoners will be released immediately; Turkish prisoners will remain in their hands.

Article 24: In case of any disturbance in the Eastern Anatolian provinces (Erzurum, Sivas, Elazığ, Van, Bitlis, and Diyarbakır), the right to occupy will arise.

Article 25: All hostilities will cease from midnight on October 31.

Meanwhile, as we see, Articles 1, 2, 3, 6 stated that the Straits would be immediately opened to the Allied Powers' navy and occupied, and Articles 11, 15, 16, 17 stated that the Ottoman Empire would not interfere with the occupation of Batum and Baku. The worst of these articles was Article 7, which would make the occupation of the entire country possible [Baykara, 1985:30-31].

Upon the Turks' declaration that they would not allow Greek warships to enter and would not permit military forces to disembark at any point in the country, and Rauf Bey's request to review the armistice conditions again, Admiral Calthorpe sent a letter to London on October 31. In his letter, he stated: "Confidential considerations regarding the requests of the Turkish delegates: Articles 1-2 – To avoid bloodshed as much as possible by preventing Greek soldiers from entering Istanbul and Izmir. Article 7 – It has been strongly requested that the occupation of Istanbul should only be considered in the event that the Turkish Government fails to maintain order and protect the lives and property of Allied subjects" [Jaeschke, 1986: 27].

The response to this letter is described in Gotthard Jaeschke's bibliography titled "Documents related to the War of Independence (British documents)" as follows: First, the British War Cabinet sent a

congratulatory letter to Admiral Calthorpe for successfully concluding the agreement. Secondly, it mentions that the following response was given to his letter regarding the Turks: "In light of the intense national animosity between the Turks and Greeks, it is not understood why it would be appropriate to exclude Greeks from participating in military operations against Istanbul itself. In any case, the presence of Greek forces in Izmir can be avoided; because aside from Turkish opposition to this, there is also the possibility of serious conflicts with Italy over Asia Minor. It is not requested that any assurance be given to the Turkish government that Istanbul will not be occupied. Many strongly feel that the realities can only be effectively impressed upon the Turkish mindset through such an occupation. If this occupation were to take place, they appreciate that it would be correct and appropriate to take all precautionary measures to prevent interference with Hagia Sophia or other Islamic places of worship" [Jaeschke, 1986: 28].

Furthermore, the British War Cabinet informs Admiral Arthur Calthorpe that the Turkish request to prevent Greek ships from entering Istanbul will not be accepted. In fact, on November 1, the British Foreign Office had informed Admiral Calthorpe that the request to keep Greek ships out of Istanbul would not be accepted, but they should be kept in the background. On November 7, Admiral Arthur Calthorpe responded to the Turks, saying, "I cannot prevent Greek ships from coming to Istanbul; I am confident that the Ottoman government will not allow any disturbance to occur". Gotthard Jaeschke explains that when he met with Lieutenant Colonel Sadullah on November 10, he said he was prepared to keep Greek ships away from Istanbul's ports [Jaeschke, 1986: 29].

However, some sources state that Admiral Calthorpe wrote a letter of confirmation indicating that the occupation of the fortifications in the Straits would be carried out by French and British soldiers, and that Greek troops would not be allowed into Izmir [Kurat, 1990: 577].

In his memoirs, Ahmet İzzet Pasha recounts that the Allies agreed to the following requests during the occupation of the Straits: Turkish soldiers would be present alongside the Allied forces, land troops would not occupy Istanbul, the fleets that were to conduct demonstrations in the Istanbul harbor would withdraw to the Sea of Marmara, and only small warships would remain there to maintain naval duties. During this time, the Turks' request to keep Greek ships at a distance was also accepted and promised [İzzet, 1993: 32].

Meanwhile, the Sultan believed that it would be good for Turkey if we accepted the demands of the Allied Powers. In fact, when he learned about the armistice conditions, he told İzzet Pasha, "Let's accept these conditions, despite their being very harsh. I presume that the centuries-long friendship and benevolent policy of the British in the east will not change. We will obtain their tolerance later on" [Jaeschke, 1986: 2].

When Sultan Vahdeddin first ascended to the throne, he wanted to take control of the country's administration into his own hands, but he could not oppose the Unionists, particularly Enver Pasha. Once the Unionists no longer had any authority, and after Enver Pasha and Talat Pasha left the country, he appointed his son-in-law, whom he believed he could control, to form a new cabinet and take charge. No one willingly wanted to be a member of the newly established cabinet. As a result, a weak Tevfik Pasha cabinet was formed, consisting of Damat Ferit Pasha and the president of the Council of State [İzzet, 1993: 39-40].

According to British documents, as soon as Sultan Vahdeddin ascended to the throne, he sought to secure England's support to maintain the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan's closeness to the British led him to say that "Turkey's entry into the war was merely an accident". He stated that if the political situation, geographical position, and national interests had been seriously considered, it would have been seen as a completely foolish move. Unfortunately, the government's lack of foresight had dragged them into disaster. If he had been on the throne, this regrettable incident would not have occurred. The friendly feelings that had long existed towards the Turks in England had not immediately disappeared when the war began. However, the Armenian issue had caused a profound change in the British feelings towards Turkey. He inherited strong feelings of love and admiration for the British nation from his father, Sultan Abdülmecid, who was an ally of the British in the Crimean War. For this reason, he would do his best to renew and strengthen the long-standing friendly relations between his country and Great Britain. Emphasizing the phrase "Do not forget that...", he continued his words. His nation bore no guilt for what had happened. He dared to express hope that the noble British nation would reciprocate these feelings towards the great majority. He could say that the Turkish nation felt the same towards the British, and generally even more strongly... Following this letter, two consecutive letters were sent from the Ottoman Sultan to the British:

1. On December 16, another statement from the Sultan arrived at the British General Headquarters, appealing to the British government "to take control of Turkey's administration as quickly as possible".
2. On January 10, 1919, a letter was sent to Lord Balfour, stating that he (the Sultan) had always been a friend of the British, that he had pinned all his hopes on Britain, that he wholeheartedly desired to be good

friends with all allies, and that his statement about expecting genuine help and friendship from the British was definite... He asked if there was any way to get in touch with the High Commissioner, whether His Majesty's government would support him in his position as Caliph, and that he attached importance to this matter [Jaeschke, 1986: 3-4].

Thus, British documents claim that the Ottoman Sultan was convinced that protecting his own person and throne would only be possible with the help of England.

The cabinet re-established by Tevfik Pasha did nothing but support Sultan Vahdettin's view from the first day, resulting in resignations from the cabinet. To resolve this issue, the Sultan formed a new cabinet with Damat Ferit Pasha and new ministers. After Damat Ferit Pasha's appointment, they prepared a project together with the Sultan. Gotthard Jaeschke published the memorandum in his bibliography titled "British Documents Related to the War of Independence". "England will occupy the necessary places for 15 years to ensure Turkey's independence against foreigners and maintain internal peace in the provinces under the direct suzerainty of the Sultan, as well as those benefiting from autonomy in Europe and Asia. England, moved by feelings of friendship, will consent to the appointment of British undersecretaries by the Sultan to the necessary positions in Ottoman ministries. Furthermore, the British Government will appoint a British consul general to each province, and these consuls will serve as advisors to the governors for a period of fifteen years. Provincial Municipal Council elections and the election of parliament members will be conducted under the control of British consuls. England will have the right to strictly control finances both in the capital and in the provinces. The constitution will be simplified in accordance with the political aptitude and capability of the eastern people. The Sultan will be absolutely free in conducting the Empire's foreign policy" [Jaeschke, 1986: 5].

Sultan Vahdettin's purpose in writing these letters and accepting the armistice conditions, despite them being very harsh, might have led the surrounding Pashas, Gentlemen, and the people of Turkey to entertain false hopes, thinking it was compulsorily accepted to curry favor with the British. However, we can consider the Memorandum prepared by the Sultan and Damat Ferit Pasha as a policy that drove Turkey to the brink of disaster.

To benefit from the British, Damat Ferit Pasha annulled all the laws passed by the parliament during the Young Turk (Jön Türk) period. This action turned the Government into a puppet of the Allied Powers. As a result of the crude, unwise attitudes of the Allied Powers and the Ottoman Government, other officials and public employees were dismissed due to political distrust, creating a large, helpless mass of demobilized soldiers and returning prisoners of war [GARF, F. 5402. Book 2. File 25. 107 rev.].

In fact, the Allied Powers had decided to capture Istanbul, arrest the Ottoman Sultan, liquidate the Turkish heritage, and divide Anatolia among themselves. However, France and Italy were afraid of the disruption of the international balance and the ultimate transfer of hegemony in the Mediterranean to England's hands [GARF, F. 5402. Book 2. File 25. 59-60 rev.].

Thus, the British government abandoned the project of expelling the Ottoman Sultan and the Turkish Government under his rule from Istanbul, indicating its readiness to recognize the Sultan. Consequently, the British government decided to occupy Istanbul and turn the Ottoman government into a puppet government of Britain.

**Implementation of the Armistice and the Situation of the Ottoman State.** Based on the seventh article of the Armistice of Mudros, the Allied powers began to occupy Turkish territories in order to claim the lands they had secretly agreed to divide among themselves. They first landed troops in Alexandretta, Mosul, Çanakkale, and Batum. They also settled in places such as Konya, Eskişehir, Samsun, Ereğli, and others [Akyüz, 1988: 72].

Thus, the Allied Powers implemented the first and seventh articles of the Armistice of Mudros, which the Turks had feared. On November 13, the Allied Powers' Fleet crossed the Black Sea and set out towards Batum, and according to Article 15, the British deemed it appropriate to occupy Baku. The Ottoman Empire could no longer defend Baku from the British even if it wanted to. The Turks withdrew from Baku, handing it over to the Azerbaijani Government. Consequently, Arthur Calthorpe's promise to the Turks proved ineffective. Moreover, the entry of four Greek warships, in addition to the Averoff, into the large fleet entering the Bosphorus greatly pleased the Greeks of Istanbul. The British not only brought Greek warships but also, after completely occupying the Black Sea coasts on November 21, enabled Greek troops to enter Turkey by sea [Kurat, 1990: 576].

When Franchet d'Esperey, the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Eastern Armies, entered Istanbul with warships, the Sultan's Government held a welcoming ceremony. However, deeming this ceremony

insufficient, the French General, intending to demonstrate his superiority over the British and to intimidate and subjugate the Turks, had an even more magnificent ceremony arranged for himself. He was mounted on a white horse and, with excessive pride, proceeded to Beyoğlu, supported and applauded by Greeks, Armenians, and other Christian minorities [Akyüz, 1988: 73].

Upon hearing that Franchet d'Esperey would be making his second entry into Istanbul, writer and journalist Süleyman Nazif said, "I have read such mockery and criticism in the French press about this fake-proud fellow that I believe the English scoundrels want to exploit our blind admiration for the French by parading such a charlatan in a false historical identity..."

The author, who witnessed the French General's second entry into Istanbul, wrote an article titled "A Black Day" for the *Hadisat* newspaper, stating: "The Ottoman minority citizens, who owe their existence, language, and religion to the tolerance of the Turks, have betrayed this homeland by welcoming the French Occupying General with frenzy. This has opened an eternally bleeding wound in the hearts of the Turks, and we will pass on this pain to our children and grandchildren" [Akyüz, 1988: 74].

Thus, despite the verbal promises made to the representatives of the Ottoman Empire, the Allied Powers began to bring their military forces to Istanbul by sea, and later by train over land, and Istanbul became filled with the soldiers of the Allied Powers. Barracks, schools, private spaces and workplaces, and even the gold in the Ottoman Empire's treasury were taken from the Turks under the pretext of war taxes [İzzet, 1993: 45].

According to the information provided by Rauf Bey, who signed the "laying down of arms" at Mudros, as recounted in Yunus Nadi's memoirs, this armistice was made in both written and verbal forms. The written part consists of 25 articles. As for the verbal part, according to Rauf Bey, "Admiral Calthorpe ensured the prevention of the Greek navy and soldiers, whose presence would undoubtedly be a heavy burden on Turkish national sentiments, from coming to Istanbul among the other allies". He also notes that it was agreed between Rauf Bey and Admiral Calthorpe that troops would not be landed in Istanbul. In fact, Admiral Calthorpe made statements such as "We insist on no foreign troops landing in Istanbul. We will ensure the protection of ships entering the dock with Turkish soldiers" [Yunus, 1978: 13].

However, those who believed in the British Admiral realized the situation when Admiral Calthorpe entered Istanbul on November 13, 1918, with Greek ships behind him, revealing that the verbal agreement between Admiral Calthorpe and Rauf Bey, made only to avoid arousing suspicion from the Allied Powers other than England, was a lie.

Meanwhile, after the occupation of Istanbul, the French demanded Iskenderun based on articles 7, 10, and 16. Despite the Turks' insistence that they would not advance on the armistice, the notification from the British stated that Iskenderun would be occupied. Thus, Iskenderun fell into French hands. After Iskenderun, the French also occupied Cilicia, Kilis, Antep, and Maras [İzzet, 1993: 51]. Moreover, on November 2, General Cassel informed Ali İhsan Pasha, the commander of the VI Army, that Mosul would be occupied under 16 articles. Upon learning this, İzzet Pasha requested an explanation from Calthorpe on this matter. The next day, the War Office replied that "the British request for the surrender of the Mosul garrison was clearly justified in light of the 16 articles". In response, Ali İhsan stated that the Iraqi border should be determined by diplomats. Thus, after a long discussion between the two sides, when General Marshall asked Ali İhsan Pasha if he would "forcibly prevent the British advance", Ali İhsan Pasha had no choice but to allow the British occupation of Mosul, saying, "I do not wish to cause the resumption of war between two nations that should become eternal friends in recent times. I will withdraw my troops under protest..." On November 8, the British occupied Mosul. The British demands did not end there, and they entered the province of Diyarbakır. The Turks protested these advances by the Allied Powers, and Arthur Calthorpe reported the protest to London. London's response to the Ottoman Empire's protest was: "None of the armistice conditions dictated to the defeated Ottoman Government are of a nature that would justify such a protest", immediately rejecting the note [Jaeschke, 1986: 31-35].

The French had dressed local Armenian fugitives in French military uniforms and incorporated them into their armies. For example, on December 11, 1918, a detachment of 400 Armenian fugitives dressed as French soldiers entered the town of Dörtyol, raiding houses and looting. Thus, the French landed troops on the shores of Adana. French and Armenian soldiers entered Adana on December 21, and Pozanti was occupied on December 27. French and Armenian soldiers plundered the places they occupied, arrested Turkish soldiers, and inflicted all kinds of torture on Turks. For instance, Captain Mustafa Bey, the commander of the Amanos labor battalion, was killed by the French. Even the guards at the Red Crescent facilities were disarmed. The Allied Powers had emptied the warehouses in the occupied areas and had even

taken the weapons from the hands of Turkish soldiers [Alpargu, Ozcelik, Yavu, 2001: 103-104]. Thus, they had advanced on one side to the Gülek Pass, and on the other side towards the direction of Urfa. Along with these, the Italians also occupied Antalya, Meis Island, and Kuşadası, landing troops towards the vicinity of Konya and had begun to advance [İzzet, 1993: 45].

Later, based on the seventh article of the armistice agreement signed in Mudros, which stated “The Allies shall have the right to occupy any point in case of a situation threatening their security”, the Greeks occupied Izmir in May 1919. The decision for the Greek occupation of Izmir was made at the Paris Peace Conference, which began on January 18, 1919.

At the Paris Peace Conference, Mr. Venizelos attempted to revive the Megali Idea [Kutay, 1961: 9456], which had been a dream of the Greeks since the Byzantine era and had awakened during the Committee of Union and Progress period in the Ottoman Empire with the uprising of 1908.

In February 1919, in Paris, the Greek representatives and the authority of the Megali Idea (Great Idea), Mr. Venizelos, Politis, and Romanos, requested the Allied Powers to allow Greek forces to reclaim Northern Epirus, Thrace, the Dodecanese (Twelve Islands) seized by Italy in 1913, Cyprus which England was prepared to relinquish, and Anatolia, claiming these were territories belonging to Greeks under occupation. Thus, Venizelos revealed his intention to establish the Greek State and revive the Byzantine Empire [Büjak, 1939: 176-177].

Not content with this, in 1915 in London and in 1917 in the Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne agreement, the Greek representative wanted to take Antalya and Izmir for himself, which had been promised to Italy. Additionally, he demanded Western Anatolia, Thrace, and all the Aegean islands. In response, the Italian Government, based on the London and Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne agreements, persistently demanded the territories that had been promised. However, the Allied Powers did not take the Italian Government seriously, as it had not provided significant assistance during the World War. In the end, they approved the Greek occupation of Western Anatolia [Esmer, 1944: 46-48].

The defeated states were invited to the Paris Peace Conference only to listen to and sign the decisions made. The French Prime Minister Clemenceau said the following to the Ottoman Empire's delegation at the Paris Peace Talks: “Gentlemen! You entered the war without cause. You closed the Dardanelles for years. You caused the war to extend for four years and the death of millions of people! Therefore, the treaty terms we are offering you today are very harsh. We will neither negotiate nor discuss any of the articles within it! We want you to examine it as a whole and accept it exactly as it is within a few days!” He behaved in an extremely harsh and unpleasant manner. Not stopping there, French Prime Minister Clemenceau reacted to the Ottoman Empire's representative Ferit Pasha's speech defending the pre-Balkan borders at the conference and asked the Turkish delegation to leave Paris. The delegates of other victorious states also responded harshly to the Ottoman representative's speeches (<http://www.ozbelgeler.com/harman/harman20.htm>).

The Greeks, with the intention of initiating the occupation of Anatolia, claimed that the Anatolian Christians and Armenians were being persecuted by the Turks and needed to be liberated from Turkish rule [Jaeschke, 1986: 36-37] on May 15, 1919, under the false pretext of [omitted], they had sent their First Division to Izmir. The battleships Averof and Lemnos had landed their disembarkation detachments, occupying the quays and the customs house. Meanwhile, the fifth infantry regiment occupied the Kadifekale (formerly known as Pagos) on the hilltop [Büjak, 1939: 178]. The Allied Powers, after World War I, aim to forcefully dismantle the Ottoman Empire by implementing the Armistice of Mudros. However, in the verbal promise of the Armistice of Mudros, it was pledged that Greek warships would not enter the Black Sea, and even though passage through the straits was prohibited, it was promised that they would be allowed to pass through at night [Alpargu, Ozcelik, Yavuz, 2001: 101]. In other words, some articles of the agreement did not allow for the dismemberment and destruction of the Ottoman Empire. Intending to achieve its goals, England wanted to judge the Ottoman Empire as “guilty in the Armenian Issue”. In fact, the British representative in Istanbul, Admiral Webb, stated in a telegram sent to England, “Everyone who persecuted Armenians from among the Turks should be executed en masse as punishment. High-ranking officials should be tried and punished in an exemplary manner”. However, they were unable to prove the alleged Turkish genocide against Armenians in the military courts established in Batum to implement this. In other words, they could not find any written or verbal order documents given by the Ottoman Empire to “exterminate the Armenians”. Later, the British appealed to the United States of America to find evidence of “Turks exterminating Armenians”, but neither the USA nor the British could find any evidence. On 23.07.1921, the USA officially gave the following response to England: “No evidence against the Turks has been found in American archives” [Şimşir, 1985: 70-80].

Although the Allied Powers had brought Allied officers to various locations, especially railway crossings and important military dispatch and administration points, the Turkish people did not even consider the possibility of the Greeks occupying Izmir. In his memoirs, Kazım Özalp recounts that it was thought Italian and British soldiers would be deployed to fortifications near Izmir, and that a control committee consisting of Italian, French, and British soldiers would be brought to the city of Izmir. He even states that he himself did not consider the possibility of Greek forces occupying Izmir. On May 14, the news that Izmir would be occupied by the Greeks was announced to the Turkish people by Muvaffak Bey, the Financial Inspector of Izmir, after information was provided by the religious leader of the Greeks in the church. When this news was heard, it had the effect of a thunderbolt striking everyone; it is reported that the people were in a state of excitement and anxiety, as if sensing an atmosphere of death [Özalp, 1988: 4-5].

An eyewitness to the joy of the Greek forces and Greek population arriving to occupy Izmir describes the event as follows: "It suffices to say that this was a festival of hearts, flowers, and flags. The entire Greek fleet is there; bells are ringing with all their might. Military bands are playing national anthems. Ships' whistles are joining this celebration with their sharp sounds. The Metropolitan and clergy are kneeling before the liberating flags, kissing them while crying and singing hymns. Army and navy soldiers are being carried on the hands of the ecstatic people (Greeks), passing through the streets covered in flowers. After five centuries of captivity, Izmir is regaining its true identity of Greek freedom". Along with the Greeks who welcomed the Greek soldiers with such joy, there were also many foreigners (Armenians and other Christian minorities) in Izmir [Büjak, 1939: 179].

From the moment Greek forces set foot in Izmir, they began to oppress the Turkish people. They beat, brutalized, and killed those they captured. Greek soldiers had killed local Turkish civilians, Turkish soldiers, officers, and even the governor and commander. An example of such an incident was when Greek soldiers forced the local Turkish people and Turkish soldiers to shout "Long live Venizelos". Those who opposed were beaten and even killed. For instance, Staff Colonel Martyr Süleyman Fethi Bey, who bravely opposed such an incident, was beaten so severely that he only survived for two days before passing away. Thus, the Greek soldiers occupying Izmir set an example for the local Greek, Armenian, and other Christian populations in brutalizing the Turks. The Greeks occupied Turkish villages in the immediate vicinity of Izmir, burning and destroying them, and even attempting to exterminate the population through mass killings [İzzet, 1993: 61]. For example, in Boncuk village, Greek gangs would raid Turkish villages, first killing the men, then looting the village, and finally burning it down. A similar situation occurred in the Urla region. The British conducted an investigation into the massacres carried out by Greek forces and local Greeks, claiming that this action by Greek gangs was planned before the occupation of Izmir. For instance, Greek gangs distributed weapons sent from Prophet Elias to Greeks, and from there, the Turkish hunt began. In just the first few days in Izmir, Greeks killed approximately two hundred to three hundred, and seven hundred to eight hundred defenseless Turks. The number of wounded was even higher [Turhan, 2018: 119-120].

Encouraged by the Greek forces, local Greeks pursued and captured defenseless Turkish civilians along with Turkish officers, subsequently imprisoning and torturing them. While there were other individuals killed by the Greeks, twenty officers among the soldiers were martyred [Ozkaya, 1988: 66].

In his memoirs, Kazım Ozalp describes the Greek forces' occupation of Izmir as follows: "In any incidents that might occur in Izmir, the Turks would be entirely blameless; events could only be brought about by the soldiers the Greeks had landed in Izmir. It was quite evident that the Greeks came to Izmir with the preconceived notion of assaulting the Turkish population. If there was resistance from the people against these assaults, this must be considered sacred. It was the legitimate right of the Turks to resist any aggression. When Greek soldiers landed in Izmir and began to assault the people and enter homes, naturally, the duty to resist fell to the armed patriots of the country. Of course, they would be able to resist aggression and injustice" [Özalp, 1988: 8].

The native people of Izmir had not even anticipated such torture by the Greeks. For this reason, they had not established resistance organizations against the occupations of the Allied Powers. As a result, the Allied Powers occupied the defenseless Turkish lands and inflicted the tortures they knew on the local population, doing as they pleased. After seeing that the Ottoman Sultan was only concerned with protecting his own throne, and that the Ottoman Government, which had received news of the occupation much earlier than May 15th, remained silent and even concealed this from the people, they thought they would occupy the Turkish lands, which they assumed to be defenseless and powerless, and invade every part of Anatolia [Özkaya, 1988: 65].

Therefore, when the “Milne” line defense was sent to the British by Turkey, despite knowing that the Greeks' oppression of the local Turkish population had gone this far, they still deemed it necessary for Izmir to remain in Greek hands [İzzet, 1993: 61].

All these atrocities and ruthless tyranny committed by Greek forces and local Greek, Armenian, and other Christian populations against the Turks resulted in strengthening the people's anger towards the Greeks and led to the organization of the people of Izmir and Turks in Anatolia. The occupation carried out by the Greeks on May 15, 1919, was met with hatred by the Turks, and national societies and Kuva-yi Milliye (National Forces) organizations were established everywhere. European writers made such a prediction by saying, “If the Greeks had not landed in Izmir, Anatolia would not have organized itself so quickly and in such a disciplined manner” [Özkaya, 1988: 65].

In his memoirs, Rüştü Bey explained that when the Turkish people first heard that Izmir would be occupied by the Greeks on May 15, they were anxious and in a state of terrible anticipation. In order to show that the number of Turks was not less than that of Greeks, they invited families to gather at the site of the Jewish cemetery. He further explained that the Greeks later tried to claim there were resistance organizations in Izmir in an attempt to justify themselves [Öktem, 1991: 62].

In his memoirs, Kazım Özalp also mentions that the people of Izmir learned about the Greek occupation of Izmir on May 14th when they went on an excursion to a beautiful scenic area called Kızıl Çula. He even states that Necati (later Minister of Education), Haydar Rüştü (later deputy of Denizli), one of the reporters of Anatolia newspaper Reşat, Ragıp Nurettin (later Director General of Primary Education), and Halit (merchant) tried to obtain information from him about whether the Greek occupation of Izmir was true or not, and that even he himself did not consider it probable [Özalp, 1988: 4-5].

When the people of Izmir received news of this occupation, they gathered in the square, and from there they assembled in the High School building. However, Governor İzzet Bey requested the crowd to disperse, warning that otherwise the High School would be shelled by Allied ships. At the meeting, he advised against doing anything that might offend the Allied Powers and proposed that the people submit to the Greek occupation. But the people paid no heed to such a proposal. The people absolutely could not tolerate seeing Greeks in Izmir. There was no doubt that after the occupation of Izmir, the Greeks would try to annex Izmir to their own territory and would take every precaution to not leave Izmir. Knowing this, the people decided to establish the “Rejection of Annexation Committee” as a foundation for an organization that would spread throughout Anatolia, in order to partially limit the occupation to a military nature and to prevent the city from being transferred to either the Greeks or any other foreign power in the future. Officers, soldiers, gendarmes, police, and civil servants, along with the public, had agreed on a definite plan. They had resolved to defend the weapons and ammunition in the depots by any means necessary. On the evening of May 14, the people of Izmir were calling out in the streets, shouting “Those who love their homeland, come to the Jewish cemetery” [Özalp, 1988: 6-7]. Thus, the beginning of the National Struggle of all Anatolian people was marked.

While all villages in Izmir were being massacred by the Greeks, the Istanbul Government was not doing what was necessary to save Izmir. Meanwhile, the Ottoman sultan, Damat Ferit Pasha, Minister of Interior Ali Kemal, Adil and Mehmet, Ali Beys, and Sait Molla were trying to defend British mandate in Istanbul by becoming members of the Anglo-Turkish Society (British Friends Association), protecting their own interests and assets. The members of this association, led by Priest Fru and receiving financial support from the British, later attempted to oppose the War of Independence in Anatolia [Atatürk, 1974: 5].

Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who had voluntarily relinquished his rank and official position, threw himself into the struggle for liberation and independence, considering it a privilege to serve as an individual member of the nation [Yunus, 1978: 38] he established the first Society for the Defense of Rights in Havza. He held the first organizational meeting at the Stone School (now the Central Primary School), and also conducted the first rally and the first protest against the occupation of Izmir in Havza. In fact, his first circular was also published in Havza. Thus, it is said that Atatürk took the first and important steps for the National Struggle in Havza over the course of 18 days [Akçakayalıoğlu, 1988: 56].

On May 20, 1920, Atatürk sent a telegram to the Grand Vizier regarding the situation of Greek occupation, stating that it had wounded the Nation and the Army internally to an unimaginable and indescribable degree, and that the nation and the army would not accept or tolerate this unjust aggression against their existence [Özkaya, 1988: 67].

Mustafa Kemal Pasha was deeply saddened by the Izmir incident. He sent telegrams to the Societies for the Defense of Rights and the Rejection of Annexation, promising to stand with the nation, and made a personal vow to himself [Özkaya, 1988: 69].

Mustafa Kemal Pasha was the nation's only hope to liberate Turkey from the occupying Allied Powers and the massacres and oppression carried out by local Christians.

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GARF – Gosudarstvennyi Arhiv Rossijskoj Federacii [State Archives of the Russian Federation]

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