CHAPTER NINE

DISPUTED TERRITORIES:
NAGORNO-KARABAKH, NAKHICHEVAN AND ZANGEZUR

Nagorno-Karabakh and Zangezur

After the Russian February Revolution in 1917, the Provisional Government recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Armenia. Nagorno-Karabakh was de facto independent since October 1917. It was governed by an inter-party council consisting of Tatars (Azeri) and Armenians. The Council nominally recognized the authority of the Transcaucasian Commissariat and Seim in Tiflis. After the Transcaucasian Federation had disintegrated and Azerbaijan had declared independence, the Musavat government asked Turkey for military assistance in obtaining sovereignty over the Baku guberniia (province), comprising Nagorno-Karabakh and Zangezur. Thus, in the summer of 1918 Ottoman forces invaded Nagorno-Karabakh.

In June 1918, at the signing of the Treaty of Batumi, the contested regions between Armenia and Azerbaijan were mainly Zangezur and Nagorno-Karabakh. On 5 August 1918 at the First Congress of Karabakh Armenians declared independence in Shusha, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh. A National Council was established, which rejected Musavat authority. Then Turkish troops invaded Nagorno-Karabakh in October 1918. In accordance with Article 11 of the armistice of Mudros, signed on 30 October 1918, Turkish troops left Nagorno-Karabakh in November 1918.

That same month, the Armenian General Andranik captured Shusha (Stepanakert) and Zangezur. The English General Thomson, Commander in the Caucasus, was opposed to this idea, because he held the opinion that all territorial differences should be solved at the Peace Conference.

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1 Chorbajian, 114.
3 Chorbajian, 116.
After Turkish troops started to leave in November 1918, Nagorno-Karabakh was governed by a self-appointed Armenian administration. Upon their arrival in December the Armenian Council of Nagorno-Karabakh was recognized *de facto* by the British.\(^5\)

Thomson, who had occupied the Batum-Baku railway at the end of the war, did however support the temporary appointment on 15 January 1919 of the Azeri Khosrov bey Sultanov as the Governor-General of Nagorno-Karabakh and its neighboring districts, including Zangezur by the Azerbaijani government in Baku.\(^6\) His successor Colonel Shuttleworth also supported this policy. This caused problems since Khosrov bey Sultanov was not accepted by the Armenian majority of Nagorno-Karabakh, and subsequently their National Council continued its meetings.

At the end of March 1919 a meeting of district leaders gathered in Goris. The local governing body was renamed the Regional Council of Zangezur and Karabakh. Its primary objective was to integrate the two
